Australians at War Film Archive

Norman Goldsbrough (Goldie) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:44 **Thanks very much for talking to us and the archive and we really appreciate it and perhaps we could start with a summary of your life, just briefly, places, without going into too much of the detail at this stage, we'll come back to it, but where you were born and...**

And why.

01:00 **Well if you like.**

Well I was first born in Manly, and I believe I was born at home in Crescent Street, Manly. I can remember being told that. But at a young age, before I went to school my father bought a house out at Balgowlah. And I can remember my pre school days

01:30 there. And then I went to school at Balgowlah Primary and after that I put in one year at Mosman High and had to travel by tram down to the Spit, walk across the Spit Bridge, and tram up the over side and went to Mosman High for a year and decided that

02:00 I wasn't really interested in French and Greek and things that they were putting into us there. I was more interested in using my hands. So coincidentally my parents moved up to Turramurra. And I decided,

02:30 my father and myself we decided to change over to Crows Nest Technical College and there I learnt woodwork and metalwork and technical drawing.

What was your father doing?

My father was a bricklayer, bricklaying contractor. He had a gang of bricklayers working for him and they did the brick work on various buildings and so on, and moved on. And I wanted to get into the carpentry side of it. I was interested in the woodwork, so I

03:00 did my time there.

Did you complete your apprenticeship?

I did my four years there. What they call leaving certificate. The higher school certificate I think they call it here now. And then I started looking for a job. I was only sixteen, just turned sixteen and started looking for a job and whilst it may not have been quite as hard as it is now to find work, even then there was a lot of

03:30 competition. And I did get work at a woodturning place, out at Ashfield, and I had to travel by train from Turramurra, right through to Ashfield, and I was only there a while and became a bit over-confident with the circular saw and lost the top of that thumb.

04:00 So I was off on 'compo' and I also had decided by then that wasn't the type of woodwork I wanted. It was all machine work, turning and that sort of thing, and I wanted hand planes and saws and bench work. And a tender came up for an apprentice to a firm called Armstrong Brothers

04:30 in Crown Street, Sydney down at Surry Hills, for one apprentice, and they were showcase cabinet makers and general joinery and out of quite a few applicants, and after three or four interviews I got the one and only apprenticeship. I was only in my third year

05:00 with them, it was a five year apprenticeship, I was in my third year with them when I enlisted at nineteen in the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force], as aircrew, and that was a bit of a problem too. Because I had to get a release from the manpower people, because I was in a restricted trade, or whatever

05:30 they called it, because of the war being in progress then, tradesmen were in the restricted section

where you didn't have to serve, but you would be used by the manpower people for work on military establishments, building huts and so on. So I had to get a release from them,

06:00 but I also had to get a signed agreement from my employers that if, and when, I returned they would re-employ me to finish my apprenticeship and I had to get permission from my father and that was the hardest one. 'Cause he'd served in World War I, in the trenches in France, and he didn't think very much of that. And he also didn't thing very much of this flying business,

06:30 because his memories of World War I flying was watching the World War I planes milling around and coming down in flames and no parachutes and that sort of thing, and I think he envisaged World War II being much the same. But anyway I did succeed in getting his signature and then I was put onto Aircrew Reserve and I was issued with a lapel badge,

07:00 Aircrew Reserve lapel badge, which came in handy at least once, because I was wearing my jacket and a lady wanted to present me with a white feather, only being in civilian clothes. So I pointed the badge out to her and explained to her what it was all about. So that got over that alright. But during that period which was

07:30 some three months I think, round about, I had to do, I think it was two or three evenings a week, at a place in York Street with RAAF instructors and other Aircrew Reserve chappies, where we did Morse and navigation exercises and theory of flight and that sort of thing, which we would be having to do when we

08:00 were called up, and the other two nights of the week I was still doing an apprenticeship and I had to go to tech at the old Darlinghurst Gaol. So it was four or five nights a week, I didn't get home to all hours of the night, having to travel back to Turramurra. Anyway I got called up and went into primary training at

08:30 Redfield Park, at Lindfield, where we did, well carried on doing what I had been doing plus drill and athletics and that sort of thing. And whilst there we had to go down to a naval base at Balmoral where being aircrew

09:00 we had to go through the decompression chamber. And this decompression chamber was fitted out with a bench down each side, with room for about four or five on each side, oxygen masks hanging on hooks, and we were slowly decompressed up to, I don't know, twenty thousand feet or something,

09:30 from memory. And whilst being slowly decompressed we were given a writing pad and pencil and an instructor chappie in with us, gave us little problems, little mathematical problems to do and that sort of thing. And then as the pressure dropped he put his oxygen mask on

10:00 and kept on giving us problems, and then suddenly I saw one of the fellows (demonstrates) and the instructor bloke got over and took an oxygen mask down and put it on and turned the oxygen on and he said then, "Is anyone else feeling faint or anything?" "No, we're alright, we're alright." "Righto," and go up a little bit higher and then we started to rock around apparently and we all got oxygen mask put

10:30 on. And then they re-compressed us down to ground level and showed us the pads we'd been writing on and there was nothing but scribble when getting towards the finish, when we thought we were quite legibly writing and doing problems and things, it was nothing but scribble. It was to impress upon you the effects of anoxia and

11:00 to prove to you, you had to have oxygen. In the air force it was over ten thousand feet. Ten thousand feet onwards you used oxygen. So from there I went to Narrandera, elementary flying training on Tiger Moths [De Havilland fighters], and whilst there, this is just a little story, whilst there

11:30 I went down very badly apparently with flu and I didn't realise just how bad I had been, until I got my records through this Freedom of Information. And I was hospitalised, and after a short period, I don't know, a few days, I was released from the hospital.

12:00 This was the base hospital, in the base, and I found myself back in hospital and don't know how I got there. It appears that I had collapsed after being released and I was back in again for a while. And then they sent me home on sick leave, and after being on sick leave for a few days I was recalled. And I had to see the adjutant

12:30 and he said, "We've recalled you from sick leave because your course," which was Number 19 Course, by the way, "has been held up because they're not ready for you for your secondary flying training," which was to be on the Wirraways [training aircraft]. Service Flying Training it was called. "And we feel that if you like to knuckle down, and really get into it, you could catch up and

13:00 pass out with your own course." So consequently, I'd already been solo of course, and done a lot of solo training, consequently I was given a lot of exercises to do solo, with strict instructions to do them and practise them, which I did, and then came my final air test with the chief flying instructor,

13:30 and it happened to be a dust storm day. And anyway off we went and went through the various things I had to do until it came to the blind flying part. Well in the Tiger Moth they pull a canopy over the cockpit and lock it down and the instructors in the front seat and he can see everything that's going on

14:00 and he gives you instructions through the speaking tube, what he wants done next and what you've got to do and you've got to do these things with a very sparse instrumentation in the Tiger Moth. Such as spinning blind, and then getting out of a spin, blind, and various things like that. And we're out for about an hour or so and then he said, "Ok, I have control, put your hood back and

14:30 come out." So I put the hood back and had a look around and the dust storm had thickened tremendously and he said to me, "Do you know where you are?" And I had a look out the side and as luck had it, I did. I'd been doing so much solo flying that I'd really got to know the area. I said, "Yes sir," and he said, "Well I'm glad you do, because I'm buggered if I do." He said

15:00 "Take me home." And he'd been so engrossed in looking for other aircraft in this dust, so that we didn't collide, that he hadn't taken any notice about where we were going. And the visibility was such that obliquely you couldn't see much but straight down I could, so I took him back. So I passed out ok there, and above average, by the way.

That's great Norm. If you could perhaps take us through

15:30 **in summary form, just quickly through your service details, where you served and what aircraft and we can catch up on this.**

From there I went to Wagga [Wagga Wagga], on Wirraways, but we were only there for a couple of weeks and then we moved over to Deniliquin, on Wirraways and we finished our training there on Wirraways. And then we got our

16:00 wings and our rank. I was given a sergeant's rank. And home on Wings Leave, as it was called and then we had our Wings Leave and we were recalled then back to Bradfield Park, which by then had become No 2 ED, Embarkation Depot. So we were locked up in there, not allowed out. No telephone calls, no nothing.

16:30 So after a short period there, a couple of weeks, I suppose, we were shipped out on a troop ship, from Sydney. A bomb of a ship which was built in 1900, an old coal burning tramp steamer, cargo steamer. And it had been carting, built in 1900 mind you, and

17:00 it had been carting horses and cattle, we discovered by talking to the officers who were Dutch, between India and Australia. And the whole ship just reeked of urine and whatnot, and all they'd done was rip the cattle stalls and things out of the holds and hosed them down and put in hammocks

17:30 for us and we mutinied, and when we got to South Africa we refused to go any further. And we were all ready to walk off the ship. So they took us off the ship at Cape Town and put us in a camp at Pollsmoor, just outside of Cape Town, and we were there for two or three weeks. And they apparently got a British ship for us. It again was a cargo ship,

18:00 but it was nice and clean and it was one that had refrigerated holds, stainless steel, and apparently took refrigerated food and stuff, and it again was fitted up with hammocks and things, but the ship was clean. And we set sail from Cape Town, got to Freetown, pulled up outside Freetown,

18:30 and never went ashore, weren't allowed ashore. We were anchored off the shore there for two or three days and on the second night out, heading northwards, and the sea was full of phosphorescence. You could see the wakes of the ships, and that sort of thing, quite brightly. And on the back of the ship there was a 4.7 [calibre]

19:00 anti-aircraft gun, and I was up there this evening, talking with a naval gun crew and we saw these two streaks of phosphorescence coming in at us, at ninety degrees, on the port side. And I said, "What are they?" "Oh my God." One of the navy blokes raced to the bulkhead there with a little phone on it and he cranked the phone up and bellowed into it, "Hard to port,

19:30 torpedoes." And the ship heeled over to starboard and over we go to port and we were waiting where we were, just waiting, and nothing happened and then we had a look out to the starboard side and there's these two streaks going away. They'd just missed us. And talking afterwards with the crew, we came to the conclusion that we'd apparently opened our mouths too much in

20:00 Cape Town, all us aircrew skulking around, because we got day leave, every day, and talking with the locals and that, and of course there were a lot of German people in Cape Town and we feel that whilst we were in convoy, with merchant ships, why did they pick us? Our one particular ship. Anyway our escort vessels started

20:30 running around in circles and dropping depths charges, so they must have definitely thought they had a submarine there. Eventually we went up and around the north, right up round north of Ireland and by this time it was just before Christmas, bitterly cold.

What year was this?

1942, Christmas 42, this would have been, yeah.

21:00 And down the Irish Sea and up into Liverpool, then by train to Bournemouth.

Norm, without going into any stories or details of your extensive time in England, which we will come back too, can you just take us through briefly, very briefly, the places you served and the aircraft types.

Well from Bournemouth I went to a place called Shellingford, where we flew around in Tiger Moths, flying navigational exercises for

21:30 navigators, only there for a month or so. And from there we went to Annon, no, Longtown, Longtown in Scotland where we got onto the Hurricanes [Hawker Hurricane fighter planes]. And we did our training there on Hurricanes and passed out as fighter pilots. So then the Typhoon had just come onto service and I went down to Plymouth, to a place called Horrabridge

22:00 and I was only there a month, never flew a Typhoon, because there was never any serviceable enough to fly, and they were flat out having enough serviceable to do their patrols. So I got myself posted back to Hurricanes, by request, and when to a place called Portreath in Cornwall, where I did what they called a 'short landings course', which now days they call

22:30 'stoll'. And I was two weeks there doing that, and then they said, "That's your Hurricane, you've been flying, you're off to the Scilly Isles tomorrow." And I didn't even know where they were, or even heard of them. And I said, "Oh well, beaut, I'm getting a sea trip, as well as flying." "What do you mean a sea trip?" I said, "Aren't I going to Sicily and haven't I been practising deck landings to take my Hurricane with me?"

23:00 "No way." So he showed me where the Scilly Isles was, and he said, "You've been practising short landings because you've only got four hundred yards down there on the Scilly Isles, and it's only grass." So I got there, flew the Hurricane over there and was there for twelve months. And was still there come D Day and we all went to Normandy, on D Day,

23:30 and we flew patrols round the landings there and then we re-fuelled at a place called Predannack in Cornwall, and then we flew back to St Mary's and this went on for five or six days and then we were disbanded and sent on leave and then whilst I was on leave, I

24:00 phoned my mate who'd been flying with me on the Scilly Isles, for twelve months, a Yorkshireman by the name of Johnny Payne, and said, "I'm going to volunteer for another tour, Johnny." 'Cause if you didn't do any more operational flying, which you didn't have to do, after having served one tour, you either got to fly a desk or instructing, so Johnny said, "Right." So we met in London and

24:30 by arrangement with the RAAF, we volunteered for a second tour and we had to go and be interviewed. And when I got there the group captain, I think he was, he said, "Now you one tour men are privileged to be able to choose what aircraft you would like to fly, seeing as you volunteered for a second tour."

25:00 And I said, "Well I'd like to have a go at Spitfires [Supermarine Spitfire fighter plane] , I've been flying Hurricanes." I was a warrant officer by this time, not commissioned. He said, "I'm very sorry but I have a list of two expired men wanting to fly Spitfires and quite frankly they will outrank you." I said, "Oh well, commissions take precedence I suppose." So I choose the Typhoon, which had been in service then for twelve

25:30 to eighteen months and had pretty well ironed out its problems and it was doing what they called tactical air force, ground attack work with rockets. And I thought 'that sounds good, I'll be in that.' And I said, "Will I be going to Second TAF [Tactical Air Force], across to Europe?" And he said, "Yep." And I said, "Right that will do me." So Johnny and I went in with the 'Tiffies' [Typhoons] and went across to Europe.

26:00 And we were based at a, with 184 Squadron, at a base at Volkel, in Holland, not far from Eindhoven, and we went into action there. And during the winter, when the Army couldn't advance, we used to do what they called armed reconnaissance,

26:30 armed 'reccies' [reconnaissance], and you went out and attacked any military target, of any source, whatsoever. And we hit aerodromes and V2 launching sites and trains and any military things, whatsoever, rockets and cannon and so on. And then when the spring came and the advance went on, we went

27:00 into close support work with the army and knocked out targets ahead of them so that they could advance. And we were involved in the crossing of the Rhine at Wesel and then when they'd established ground in Germany itself, they knocked out an airstrip at a place called

27:30 Gogh, in Germany, G-O-G-H, and laid down this metal tracking and we moved over to Germany then and well that was it. I was there then.

That's where you were at the end of the war?

No, not quite. Exactly one month before the end of the war I came back from a trip, and exactly what happened I'm not

28:00 sure, but somehow or other, climbing over the top of the cockpit, which in the Typhoon was about nine

feet from the ground, and you had to climb out over the top of the cockpit, my foot caught and I went over backwards, all the way to the ground, and smashed this wrist pretty badly. Finished up it's been bone grafted in there and I finished up in an RAF Hospital

28:30 at Raughton, near Reading in England, and was there at the end of the war. That was on, I think it was April the 5th from memory, I did that. It's in my log book. And I was there when the war finished.

VE or?

VE [Victory in Europe] Day, yeah VE Day, didn't finish in Japan until months later.

And what happened after the war? Briefly what happened in your life?

29:00 Well I did marry a Scillian girl, as a matter of fact, who's sitting out there in the kitchen, I think still. I haven't heard my daughter-in-law come. And I worked over there in the carpentry trade, by day, and in the evenings I

29:30 worked in the only two pubs there, behind the bar, and I liked the place and I liked the people and we got on well. Nice, quiet, laid back life. Only a few vehicles on the island, because you didn't need a vehicle. And the farmers, of course, had their farm vehicles and the odd one had a car, but not much.

30:00 I obtained a bicycle and did my riding around on a bicycle and then eventually my wife and myself and two children came out in 1952. We decided in 1950 that we would come out. My wife it was, who made the suggestion, and I said to her, "Well I'm quite

30:30 happy here." And my formative years were in England with the RAF. I was seconded to the RAF by the way, I didn't fly with Australian squadrons, and my friends are ex-RAF people. "All my friends here on the island are my friends and I'm quite happy here. But if you want to go out to Australia, by all means, but

31:00 don't become one of those whinging Poms [British] we hear about." So we decided to book to come out and I said, I got onto Australia House and said we wanted to come out, as immigrants, ten pound a head job, and they said, "You can't immigrate to your own country, no, you can't do it."

31:30 Well I said, "How about my wife and the kids?" "No, they're considered Australian." Which I thought was strange and turned out later not to be true. Anyway they said, "You have to pay your own way." So I got onto the Orient Line and said I wanted to travel in a four berth cabin

32:00 in tourist class, they called it then, economy class you'd call it now. "No, there was no tourist class anymore, it's all been ripped out and put into dormitories for the immigrants, but you can pay tourist class fares and travel in the dormitories with the immigrants." I said, "I have no objection travelling with the immigrants. I wanted to in the first place, but I'm not going to pay full fare and still travel in those conditions."

32:30 You'd be separated, all the men were in dormitories, women were in dormitories, and they said, "Well you'll have to travel first class." I said, "Ok, if we're travelling first class, I want a cabin on B deck." They said, "Right, you'll have to wait two years for it." So we did, and it was 1952 by the time we sailed. And in the meantime my people had moved to Goulburn so we

33:00 came straight to Goulburn.

Your mum and dad?

Yeah.

And what did you do for your professional life once you got to Goulburn?

Went into carpentry and my father was building here then, and I went in, working for him and then we formed a company. I did have a younger brother but he's passed away a few years ago,

33:30 so we formed a company, M Goldsbrough & Sons, and we did a lot of building around here for years, then in about 1962, there was a recession and building was pretty dead. And we had to put, what men we had working, we had to put them off, one at a time, until there was only us three left.

34:00 And my brother got a job down at Canberra with the public service and Dad decided he'd retire. And I said, "Well it's about time anyway," and I went to work for Walton's, as a door salesman. What did they call us? Company rep [representative], company rep, yeah, door-to-door [sales]. I did that for twenty years.

34:30 **Selling door to door?**

Yeah. And it wasn't hard sell, it was customers, established customers, that lived out in the country areas and I used to go to Yass and Braidwood, down Moss Vale, Mittagong way.

What were you selling?

Household stuff that Walton's sell.

35:00 You know Walton's, they still got, Walton's is still in Park Street there, but we had a store here and there was a store in Canberra.

It was a local area company though, Walton's?

Well they belonged to Walton's, we were branches and as a company rep you were given a run of five hundred established

35:30 customers that paid at the door and ordered off catalogues and that sort of thing. So whilst there were a few in Goulburn mainly it was country areas and I enjoyed the travelling and enjoyed meeting the people and it was, I enjoyed the job, it was quite good.

36:00 You could just sell off catalogues and you didn't have to go knocking on strange doors and getting abused and all that sort of thing.

Did you consider taking up your flying again when you got back to Australia?

I did. I belonged to the aero club and when we decided, my father and myself we decided to pack it in, when the recession was on and I approached the

36:30 local air ag [agriculture] company out here, because I knew the manager, he was a friend of mine, and he said, "Yes, I could do with a pilot like you." He said, "Take some of the load off, take some of the administration off me, as well as flying." So he said, "Tomorrow we'll fly down to Sydney and see Bob Jarvis." Bob Jarvis

37:00 was then head of the DCA [Department of Civil Aviation], the government registry of licences, and because of our RAAF training we were the equivalent of a commercial licence. We had all the blind flying certificates and all the rest of it. So down we went and Bob Jarvis said, "You've got to be dead

37:30 unlucky Norman," he said, "it's only a couple of days ago that they've clamped down on issuing you fellows a commercial licence, just because of your air force record. You've now got to go through the whole commercial flying training and do the lot." I said, "Well how long is that going to take?" And he said, "A couple of years and x amount of dollars, thousands."

38:00 I said, "No, I can't afford it, I'm out of work." So I went to work for Walton's, 'cause they were looking for somebody at the time. That's how it came about, so I didn't get into the flying.

We might go back to the beginning and start in some detail now, that's a very good summary. Thanks Norm. We might also change tapes.

Tape 2

00:31 **Norm, we'll go back, as I said, and talk about in some detail then, can you tell about what your early family life was like? Was it a happy house growing up in Manly?**

Yes, here a couple of, three years ago, on Father's Day, the Mayor organised the local paper here to

01:00 interview some fathers here, on their fathers, right? How they got on with their fathers, see it was Father's Day. And I was one that was selected and I can remember saying in the interview, which is in one of those cuttings I've got there, that my father never physically chastised me, but he always got the message across.

01:30 And that's written in there, and that was something that I followed with children, talk to them. You just don't lash out and say 'because I said so.' If you said so, you explained why you said so. And we got on, we had a very happy family life, Mother, Father, and myself and my younger brother.

02:00 And I joined the Boy Scouts, the Balgalla Troop, and rose to the exalted position of a Patrol Leader, in charge of the Penguin patrol, probably because I'm a little bit of a short one myself, and I was still with them when we moved up to Turramurra, so unfortunately that was the end of that.

02:30 **What sort of bloke was your dad?**

Beg your pardon?

What sort of bloke was your dad?

He was like me, short and stocky, smoked a pipe, which I took up myself in the air force, but haven't smoked now for about, I don't know, ten or twelve years, or something. But he was a gentle man and he was not, not quick to rise

03:00 but if he did you had to watch out. And I'm speaking about not me, not the family, other people, other fellows. He just didn't lay back and take it if he didn't like it, but he was a great man.

Was he a drinker?

Oh he did drink, but I can't remember him drinking, that's how long ago he gave

03:30 it up.

Did he go off with his Anzac buddies and?

No, he wasn't, well cause it was only since we came, only since I came back here, that I've had anything to do with him post-war, sort of thing. And he didn't, a couple of times he came on Anzac Day with me here, because I've been involved with it all the time that I've been here in Goulburn,

04:00 because I joined the RSL [Returned And Services League] Sub Branch and I've been through the executive positions and I was President for seven years and so on. But my mother and my father are both quiet people and kept pretty much to themselves. And he didn't march on Anzac Day except

04:30 two or three times, well he didn't march then either, he came in a cab with me, two or three times before he passed away.

When you were growing up did he talk about his service in France?

Very little. He lost two brothers in France, Uncle Roy and Uncle Hector. I can remember the names and remember him talking about them, but I don't think I ever remember them. But he didn't talk much about it.

05:00 I can remember him saying that in the trenches there they were so short of everything, that he said they'd scratch out the bottom of their pockets in their heavy felt uniforms that they had in those days, and smoke the fluff and dust and grit and anything that they could get, just to have a smoke.

05:30 Scrape out the pockets, turn them inside out and scrape the things out. He was gassed there, in the trenches and he did finish up with emphysema. That was part of his demise, his emphysema and he got that through gassing, but he didn't speak much else about it. Except

06:00 apparently he was a, like I say, like I said earlier, he was not quick to rise but when he did he got into it, and consequently he apparently got into trouble a few times, with superior ranks for answering back and that sort of thing. And he said,

06:30 "'I had lance corporal stripes up and down so long," he said, "I didn't bother sewing them on, I just stuck them on." They weren't there long enough to be sewn on. And he was in trouble apparently when his unit went to France and as punishment he'd been made a batman. Well that wasn't the sort of job to give Dad. You know some of these snooty officers giving orders.

07:00 It wasn't so much that they would give a legitimate order, it was the way that they would do it. Like 'you do what I say mate, you do what I say', and so on. And he got into trouble and he was a batman [officer's servant] and his unit sailed, and his unit was sent to France and they said he couldn't go because the officer he was batman too, wasn't going. So he just joined in with them and

07:30 went, but consequently he had nothing. No equipment, just the uniform he was standing up in and they picked him up on the other side and put him in prison, in an army prison and charged him with attempting to shoot at the enemy without authorisation, attempting to engage the enemy without authorisation, or something to words to that affect. Anyway as it turned out his commanding officer was a good bloke

08:00 and he got him off that, equipped him and he went in with his mates. But that was the sort of fella he was, you didn't muck around with him.

Who do you take after, your mum or your dad?

Oh my Dad I think.

Did you inherit any of that Scottish rebellionish?

Oh well, I went AWOL [Absent Without Leave] a couple of times without getting

08:30 caught, without endangering anybody, weather was bad, forecast said you won't fly for another three or four days, so I went off for three or four days.

What about when you were growing up, did you get into any strife?

Oh growing up? Oh, at primary school I had more fights than feeds at times, yeah. Not that I can remember provoking fights but

09:00 there was one particular chap there in primary school. He was a class ahead of me, so he thought he was bigger, better, but I proved he wasn't on more than one occasion. And one afternoon I came out from school and his big brother was waiting for me. His big brother was in the workforce.

09:30 I don't know how old he was, in his late teens, I suppose, something like that. And he beat me up, so little brother got beat up pretty badly next time I met him. And I said to him, "If your big brother beats me up again, you'll cop that again." Didn't do it again.

Where did you learn to look after yourself like that?

Only in the school grounds,

10:00 that's all. There was no rules or anything. It was just get in and get in and fight, but we didn't knock anybody down and kick em, if you knocked somebody down you said, "Get up and I'll knock you down again." Not the sort of thing that's going on these days.

Was it a tough place growing up where you grew up?

I don't think so,

10:30 I don't think so. I can remember little groups of half a dozen that might call themselves gangs but they didn't get into trouble. I can't remember anyone going around wrecking things, busting letterboxes and all that sort of thing. Just little groups congregated

11:00 together and called themselves a gang but they didn't get into any trouble, that I can recall.

What was the affect of the Depression on your family, that you can remember?

Well it, see my Dad was out of work for a long time, being a bricklayer and there was no work going around, but as far as I know, and it would be true enough, he never drew a dole and

11:30 what he did was surrender insurance policies that he had on him and Mum's and our lives and from that day onwards he hated insurance companies because of the small amount that he got back out. He didn't even get back out what he had put in.

12:00 Surrender value as they call it now days. But what he did then was buy WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK netting, six foot high rolls of WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK netting, and then him and I went over across into the bush, we lived out of Balgowlah there, and we were more or less on the edge of French's Forest, and we'd go out and we'd cut down all these little poles, saplings, and we'd build WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK yards.

12:30 And we bred WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s and ducks and sold the eggs and then also slaughtered and dressed, plucked and dressed and sold WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s and ducks and we bred WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s and ducks in incubators. And the house we had was up on piers,

13:00 oh three feet, four feet, and here's all these incubators in under this weatherboard house, with hurricane lamps under them and a thermometer hanging inside them and strips of cloth hanging down, and all these little day old chicks and ducks and that in there.

13:30 The house wouldn't have even been insured, I'm sure because Dad surrendered all his insurance policies, but what the insurance company would have thought of it I'm don't know. And every couple of hours, hour or couple of hours, not sure of the exact time, we took it in turns, down under the house through the night and check the thermometers, turn the wick up or down and so on, keep the temperature constant for all these

14:00 little WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s and ducks and so on. And in the morning before I went to school I'd have to sweep out WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK yards, shovel all the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK droppings and things up and they were bagged for manure, clean out the troughs and put fresh food in and fresh water and so on, all before I went to school. And when I came home from school

14:30 I'd be delivering eggs or dressed poultry and wherever I delivered eggs or dressed poultry I'd bring back vegetable scrapings and you know, cabbage leaves, outside cabbage leaves and potato peelings and all that sort of thing and these would go into a big forty four gallon drum sitting on top

15:00 of a fire, with water and pollard and bran and molasses. We had drums of molasses and I'd be stirring those up into a big porridge sort of thing and when that cooled down that was fed to the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s. But I had my playtime but I also learned you had to work for a living.

15:30 **What did you get up to in that playtime?**

Oh, bicycle riding and I loved my bicycle and when I got into the workforce I was able to buy myself, on time payment, a Speedwell Special Sports, that was really something. Three bob a week, my father went guarantor and I bought

16:00 it from Bennett and Wood who used to be down near the railway there, at the bottom of George Street. I remember Dad coming along and signing up, "You'd better not let me down, son." Three bob a week, I was an apprentice then. And that was nearly as much as I got anyway, I didn't get much more.

You went right through to leaving certificate

16:30 **in school, that's a little bit unusual at that time? Can you explain how your family afforded that and why you continued on at school when you could have left earlier?**

Well I've often wondered how they ever did it. I've said to Dad in later years, "How did you ever do it?"

And he said, “I don’t know, but you had to have an education.” And I think my brother got to what was called the QC [Qualifying Certificate], I think,

17:00 not the, what do they call it now? Higher School Certificate, they call it now. He was four years behind me and I think he sort of rebelled, he wasn’t going to do it anymore. But I liked the schooling and I wanted to carry on.

What did you want to carry on to do?

Well at one stage I had a,

17:30 would have liked to have got into the medical profession but I know the strain on finances was great enough just getting me where I got, so I didn’t go any further that way. Well I think I had in mind surgery, because as I said earlier, I wanted to do things with my hands,

18:00 even then and that’s why I finished up going into carpentry and joinery. But I think even then it wasn’t just be a doctor, it was use my hands, and be a surgeon, even then.

Where did you get your interest in flying?

I don’t know. Except that I can remember as far back as I can remember, I was

18:30 mad about aircraft and I can remember at Balgowlah, when I was only small, I don’t know how old, but I can remember racing out because I heard an aircraft passing over, and I can still remember seeing ‘Southern Cross’ [pioneer aviator Charles Kingsford Smith’s plane] on the side of that aircraft. I can remember that as plain as anything, that’s how low he was, ‘Southern Cross’. And World War I fighter pilots were my idols

19:00 and I had World War I aircraft models which you had to carve and make out of balsa in those days. You got a scale plan, but you just bought your blocks of balsa and carved em and shaped them and sanded them and glued them together with acetone type of glue and

19:30 sealed them with a sealer you bought then, some sort of a clear sealer that sealed the balsa so you could paint over it. And I had these hanging from the ceiling in my room, but what happened to them while I was away I don’t know because no sign of them when I came back. I didn’t ask, I just don’t know what happened to them. They were still there when I went away. But what happened to them when they sold the place and

20:00 moved away while I was away, I don’t know.

What books were you reading as you were growing up around the place?

Mainly, well I can remember in my smaller days being a great fan of ‘Biggles’. Boy he was a great pilot, that Biggles, I can remember that. But mainly I suppose, anything I could get on aircraft, air stories.

20:30 Not so much documentary but fictional. Fictional stories on air pilots and they’d mostly be World War I type of things, yeah.

What was the, did you have the opportunity to go up in an aircraft yourself, around this time, as you were growing up?

No, no, I was never given the opportunity and of course there was

21:00 not enough money to pay for a trip in an aircraft. No, right up until the time I enlisted I was still only apprenticed, only on a small wage. I had graduated to a much lighter, made to measure bicycle by that time too.

What were you doing for social entertainment this time, once you got your bicycle and you were apprenticed?

21:30 I, apart from going to the cinema, now and then, it was just riding the bike. A mate of mine called Eddie, who was apprenticed at the same time as I was, and after enlisting I’ve got no idea whatever happened to him,

22:00 and I’ve got photographs somewhere, I don’t think they’re there, but photographs somewhere of Eddie and I on our bike. On a Saturday or a Sunday, well we worked Saturday morning, so there wasn’t much time left Saturday afternoon, but mainly on a Sunday we hopped on our bikes and we’d ride up to Gosford from Turramurra and in those

22:30 days it was the old Pacific Highway. You had to go across Peach Ferry and I had relatives in Gosford, Goldsbrough’s. One of them was another of my father’s brother, Uncle Vic, and he had sons and daughters and they had friends and we’d join up with some of those and we’d go for a ride

23:00 on the bikes around the place. Often go out to Terrigal and we’d take a picnic lunch. Auntie Kate would pack a picnic lunch for us and we’d go out to Terrigal and then we’d ride our bikes back in the evening and we had a little battery lamp we’d put on the front, on a bracket, little reflector on the rear and ride

back at night. Eddie and I did that a lot and a couple of times we rode to

23:30 Katoomba and back and that was quite a ride in the one day, up the old road, out through Parramatta, so it was mainly, that was it. Evenings, if we went out at all of a night, mainly go to the cinema once or twice a month, or something like that, we just didn't have the money to do a lot.

What were you looking at, at the cinema?

24:00 What to go to a cinema?

What pictures did you like?

Oh, what was the name? Good looking singer, what was her name? She married a Yank sergeant, early in the war, I remember that. I can remember a mate was most upset about that. Deanna Durbin,

24:30 that's a name you probably haven't heard, Deanna, D-E-A-N-N-A, I think it was, Deanna Durbin, oh she was quite a looker and a good singer and a good actress. We used to watch her films.

What about girls in your life at this stage?

Oh, couldn't afford them much. I used to do a lot of roller-skating. They had a rolling skate rink down at Manly.

25:00 And I used to do a lot of roller-skating. I liked roller-skating, it was quite good. It was mainly physical, bike riding, roller-skating and swimming. We used to do a lot of surfing there at North Manly and in those days it was body-surfing. We didn't have surf boards.

25:30 The only surf boards there were around were the odd great hunks of timber about eight foot long, Malibu's or whatever they used to call them in America, great lumps of lethal timber. But only the odd person had those, the rest of it was body surfing and I was a good swimmer and you'd go way out, way out beyond the surf

26:00 and tread water out there and wait for a big one to come in and get on the top of it and come in. And they had a, at North Manly there, they had a big timber shark tower, shark watch tower, and on top of it was a bell, hanging up there with a rope on it, and

26:30 there was always a surf lifesaver up there with binoculars on duty and if he saw a shark out in the water, clang, clang, clang on this bell. Oh, great big ship's bell like that and of course everybody headed for the beach. And I can remember being a way out one day and I think I was the farthest one out but I wasn't the last one in, I can tell you.

27:00 I passed some others on the way in. Yeah, that was our shark watching. Yes, I think all our activities were mainly physical.

Get involved with dancing at all?

No, I never danced until I got into the air force and, of course we used to have our dances at the Sergeants' Mess and that sort of thing when WAAF's [Women's Auxiliary Air Force]

27:30 came into the picture and the Sergeants' Mess would put on a dance and invite the WAAF's across. That would be the first dancing I ever did.

Alright Norm, can you tell us a bit about your involvement with the Scout's and what you got up to with them?

Well we had a parade every

28:00 week at Balgowlah at the Scout Hall. Paraded every week in the evening and I did that for about three years, I suppose. Be about three years I think.

What kind of an organization was the Scout's back then? What were the values that the Scout's instilled in you?

28:30 Honesty, truthfulness and yeah, honesty, truthfulness, and not to, what do they call it? Vandalise things and that sort of thing that goes on these days, which you saw very little of anyway in those days. We used to go camping

29:00 in school holidays. Mainly we'd go to Narrabeen Lakes to one of the creeks there. There was Deep Creek and South Creek and I can't think, I think there were three creeks. But in those days you more or less had to trek through bush to get there and we'd be taken by vehicles

29:30 to a point and then lug our gear in and cut saplings and put up a type of army tent, with the crossed poles and a ridge pole, with your tent up over that and pegged down at the sides. And we would do navigational walks

30:00 in groups through the bush and each group would have a patrol leader, which I was at this stage, and he'd have a compass and you'd be given a hand drawn route by the Scoutmaster and each group would

go say in a different direction with a hand drawn

30:30 route of ‘go so far north and so far east’ and so on. And finish up and meet at a certain point and we used to do that and in the creeks we’d have swimming and have swimming races up and down the creeks and so on. And then one year, which I think would have been around about 1933,

31:00 I was about, I would have been twelve years old, we had a big Jamboree and we had scouts from all around the world and we were camped at South Creek, I was at this time, and our troop was hosting a troop from New Guinea, of native scouts. And I can remember the one

31:30 that was assigned to me and I think I’m right in saying his name was Naomi Rahe, I think, spelled R-A-H-E, Naomi Rahe, I think and he was assigned and I had to look after him. And at the end of that Jamboree we had a big march through Sydney and I was

32:00 one of the flag bearers, there was three of us. And there’s a photo of it, me with the flag there, and we led the march to a service at St Paul’s Cathedral and us three flag bearers waited outside while the rest of them all assembled inside, then we had to march down the main aisle to the altar and kneel down and have the flags blessed.

32:30 And then afterwards outside there were newspaper photographers and that’s where that photo came from there, me with the flag.

Apart from the Scouts from New Guinea what other sort of nationalities were in that Jamboree, do you remember?

I don’t remember exactly, no. They were from all over the place, Europe and England and probably South Africa. I don’t know. I couldn’t name any particular group but they were from all over the place.

33:00 **What else did you do together in the group, apart from the march?**

Oh you all heard of the famous Scout knot tying competitions? Well we all had knot tying competitions and I can do a knot now, still, that I haven’t found anybody else ever able to do. And that wasn’t in the Scouts, that was

33:30 taught me by an American Navy man and it’s a sheep shank but not the usual sheep shank we used to do, an American sheep shank. It takes up a little more rope to do what a sheep shank’s supposed to do, shorten the rope without cutting it. And then of course there’s all the other sorts of knots

34:00 that you do like clove hitches and running clove hitches and granny’s knots which is a forbidden knot. If you’re going to do a knot like the granny’s knot you do a reef knot. ‘Cause a reef knot will never slip but a granny’s knot will.

That’s the one thing I learnt in Scouts.

What’s that?

That a reef knot is always better than a granny’s knot.

That’s right, that’s right.

The Scout’s is a very, is based, is routed in the traditions of the British Empire.

34:30 Oh yeah.

What did the British Empire mean to you growing up?

The same as it means to me now.

Can you talk about that?

Just that the British Empire, well the British Empire as it was then is not what’s left of it now, there’s been so much independence and I do not agree with this talk of independence in Australia.

35:00 Becoming a republic, which is a word I hate. Republic to me brings up visions of jungle greens and a red star in your cap and a machine gun on your shoulder, that’s what a republic makes me think of. And why we want to ever become separated from the Commonwealth of Nations I don’t know. I do not see any advantage in

35:30 it and I love the pomp and ceremony of Britain, I really do.

In those days we’re talking about we were a lot closer to Britain, how was that obvious at the time, that we had a lot closer relationship?

Empire Day.

Can you tell us about Empire Day as a kid?

Well Empire Day was a day at school where you celebrated the Empire.

36:00 I suppose you celebrated the conquests that Britain had made over the centuries. I suppose you can say they were a bit ruthless in the old days, the way they took over some places and a lot of them have now become independent. I don't like republics,

36:30 they have become independent. But Empire Day they flew the flag, and you sang 'God Save The King'. In my days, when I was at school, it was 'God Save The King', King George [King George V]. And you, well you spend some time in the playground which meant you weren't in the school.

37:00 **Do you remember any songs or things you used to sing from that kind of celebration?**

No, not particularly. No, not particularly other than 'God Save The King' and I don't even remember whether we sang 'Advance Australia Fair' then, I can't even remember that.

Were you British or Australian?

No, I'm born here and as far as I know, my father was a first born Australian.

37:30 His people came from Yorkshire and as a matter of fact, in Yorkshire there's a village called Goldsbrough, and there is a church of Goldsbrough. Somewhere I've got a pamphlet on it, but I don't know where it is. A friend of mine and he's, an elderly couple, like myself, were over there last year and they happened to come across it

38:00 and they bought this pamphlet back about the church and the history of the church and the, part of the history of Goldsbrough and it said that our name originated as Golde de Burghe, G-O-L-D-E D-E B-U-R-G-H-E,

38:30 Gold de Burghe. And gradually got to Goldsbrough.

What were you taught about the rest of the world in school, as a young man?

I don't know what to say. We were taught a lot of geography, I know that. You had to be able to draw a map of the world

39:00 and put the countries in their right place and name them. I can remember a lot of geography.

What about politics?

No, I don't think we were taught any politics. I don't remember anything like that, no. I don't think we were taught, we might have been told a bit about different countries,

39:30 the way different nationalities lived and that sort of thing, but I don't think so. I don't think much more. My secondary schooling, of course, was mainly tech drawing and woodwork and metalwork and

40:00 that sort of manual business. Naturally we had history, we had chemistry and physics, and I know we used to make rotten egg gas and fill little bottles of it and do silly things with it, spread it around.

In those later years of the 1930's were you able to follow news from Europe about the build up of tensions there?

Not very much. In those days there was

40:30 only radio and I can remember we didn't have a radio until well into my teenage days, we didn't even have a radio. I don't know whether at that time we couldn't still afford one or whether Dad didn't like to have a radio, I don't know.

41:00 We knew, we knew about the war brewing and of course we did see on film newsreels what was going on, when we went to the cinemas.

41:30 I can remember, but perhaps it's in later years, but I think I can remember it, but probably I don't, but I can see Chamberlain waving his piece of paper and saying 'Peace in our time', but maybe that's because I've seen it since.

We'll talk about that in a minute.

Tape 3

00:27 **We'll just take you back before that, can you tell us what you remember of**

00:30 **the war breaking out in 1939?**

Not really much, I can remember an announcement that "We are at war with Germany," but as I say at that time we didn't attach,

01:00 I don't think in my young mind at that time what it would mean to us. I don't think anybody expected it

to, we just didn't expect it to become what it did. "We are at war with Germany." I don't think it meant a lot to us at the time because it was so remote, so remote to us

01:30 out here and nothing happened for a little while, until Hitler and Goering [Herman Goering] started their Battle of Britain as it became to be called. Until that time we heard of Dunkirk and the British Army being defeated at Dunkirk and

02:00 **Did you know blokes around you that were joining up at that time?**

Well not in my group, no. The only two that I can really remember was two of my cousins in Gosford, Les and Gordon. They were cousins of mine, daughters of Uncle Vic and, sons of Uncle Vic and Auntie Kate, but they were both in the

02:30 Reserve at the time and they just transferred across to the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] I suppose they would have transferred across to, the AIF. Mentioning Gordon makes me think, Gordon became a warrant officer, I remember that, a warrant officer in the army, and quite some years ago now, we were at the RSL

03:00 at Gosford and they had a glass, a big glass case there along one wall with a lot of war memorabilia in it and I wandered over to have a look and here is a warrant officer's swagger stick with a brass plate attached to it with Gordon Goldsbrough's name and number and unit engraved on it. Well Gordon was dead by that time,

03:30 him and Stan both passed away. They weren't killed, they died post-war.

Did they go over to Africa or the Middle East?

I couldn't tell you. I don't really know. I didn't follow their fortunes at all.

Closer to home what was your father's view of the war breaking out?

I honestly don't know. I don't think he talked anything much about it

04:00 to me anyway. I don't think so. He didn't discuss it with me at all. Only his objections when I said I wanted to join. I can remember, not getting violent or anything about it but just trying to say 'I don't really think you should. I know what it's like, I've been there' and etcetera.

04:30 Those sort of arguments that you would put forward to your own children if they were thinking of joining up. I can't remember much else about it.

You mentioned the Battle of Britain, how did that inspire you, one way or the other? What were you hearing about that?

Well I suppose that inspired me more than ever to become a fighter pilot.

05:00 It brings the thought, it brings to mind the thought of when I was at Deniliquin on the Wirraways, my legs being a bit short I had difficulty putting full rudder on. I just couldn't stretch just that last little bit. I still passed out above average, I might say. And it was picked up by one of the instructors

05:30 and he said, "I think we might have to transfer you across to multi-engine training," and I objected strongly. I did not want to fly bombers, I wanted to be a fighter pilot. And I got called up to see the chief flying instructor about it and he said,

06:00 "You're flight commander and instructor have both told me you are a natural and above average aerobatic pilot even though you cannot put on full rudder on the Wirraway, but that does not mean to say that you cannot put on full rudder on other aircraft."

06:30 So he said, "You're pretty strong about wanting to be a fighter pilot they tell me." So he had one aircraft fitted with a couple of inch thick wooden blocks, screwed to the pedals of the, of one Wirraway and I flew that one from then on. So that was the sort of thing

07:00 when the war was a gentleman's game. Instead of just saying, "You're legs are too short mate, off you go, onto ''Monties'." They did something for me. I never had any trouble again. The British aircrafts had what was called 'stirrups' and the American Wirraways, and I don't know about any other

07:30 American aircraft, but they had pedals which you pushed forward like that, and the top of pedals were the brakes. You used your toe on that one and that one. The British aircrafts had a rudder bar, a bar like that. It was connected with wires to your rudder

08:00 and on the bar was a loop which lent back and halfway up the loop was a bar. If you had long legs you had it on the bottom and if you had short legs you put it up the top. And with the bar up the top like that you could always pull back with your toe on one, while you pressed forward on the other, much the same as toe clips on a bicycle. Something simple but entirely different to the American

08:30 system. I had no trouble whatsoever after that.

You say that you wanted to be a fighter pilot especially, did you hear, or did it concern you the

casualties of fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain?

I don't think it concerned me. I was just dying to get into it. I don't think I consciously worried much about it, but

09:00 as I say, I was a fighter pilot and I flew fighters but I wasn't involved in air activity like the Battle of Britain. Down on the Scilly Isles we flew mainly convoy patrols, where we'd fly way out west, about a hundred miles and cruise for an hour, round and round the convoy,

09:30 spotting for submarines and chasing German spotting planes away, long range Heinkel 177's and long range Ju-88's, who would shadow convoys and radio information on the number of ships and their course

10:00 and speed and etcetera. And that information would then be radioed to the nearest submarine to intercept the convoy and we had to chase them away so they couldn't stay long enough to get any information. And we were involved in air sea rescue, search and co-operation with the navy.

10:30 Because the Sunderland Flying boats were used by Coastal Command on long range anti-submarine patrols and they carried anti-submarine bombs, which were a depth charge, but a lot smaller of course, than what the ships had. And they would patrol for

11:00 fifteen, twenty hours at a time out in the North Atlantic there and that helped to keep submarines submerged, which stopped the submarines receiving radio messages and if they happened to catch a submarine on the surface they could bomb it and so on. Occasionally

11:30 because of that the German also had Ju-88's prowling to attack the Sunderland's, to stop the Sunderland's from attacking the subs [submarines], it was a big cat and mouse game, sort of thing, and occasionally a Sunderland would get shot down and I can remember the first Sunderland crew that I located and they

12:00 were all in their big dinghy floating around, way out in the Atlantic there, and I was lucky enough to locate them on an air-sea rescue search. And the navy used to work with us and based at the Scilly Isles they had two naval

12:30 torpedo boats, high speed boats with all the torpedo gear taken off them and they were fitted out with 120 millimetre Oerlikan and anti-aircraft and three or four 3R3 anti-aircraft machine guns. And they were used to go out and pick up the crews and bring them in,

13:00 if it was within it's range, otherwise other Sunderland's would go out and if the sea was smooth enough, land and pick the ditched crew up themselves. They, the RAF didn't use their crash boats out there, because the RAF crash boats were high speed boats made out of plywood and suitable only for use in

13:30 the English Channel so they used the naval boats out there. So we co-operated a lot with that. During the twelve months I was there we only lost one pilot.

How did that happen?

Well we're not quite sure what happened to him. We assume his remains are still strapped in the

14:00 Hurricane at the bottom of the Atlantic. See when you went out on an air-sea rescue search you were directed by radar by the last known position given by the aircraft that was going down and you went out to that position and if you weren't lucky enough to drop on them right away,

14:30 we always travelled in pairs and the two of you then would start a square search and you're gradually moving further away and covering a greater area. And hoping to find, which we did occasionally, and Dick Adams was flying and I think he was with

15:00 Eric Poole, but I'm not quite sure, anyway no communication with Dick Adams, and his mate Eric was calling him up and calling him up, he just disappeared. And when Eric radioed in, myself and another Hurricane we raced out

15:30 there and starting searching the area ourselves, both for traces of Dick and also the ones we were to look for in the first instance. We never found anything. We never found any oil traces on the water where the Hurricane is assumed to have gone down and that must have been what happened, we don't know.

16:00 But while we were doing our square search I suddenly got a call from my mate, who was over there somewhere, and I'm over here, just a big yell, "Break port 'Goldie'!" And I broke port like mad and as I did, a Mosquito

16:30 shot past, and it had apparently been coming down onto me. Now a Mosquito as you probably know, was an RAF English plane built by the Avonlea and the Mosquito was a twin engine, single fin rudder, and he shot past me and just disappeared.

17:00 And it was a black one, which was a night fighter, and he just went and when we got back I said, "What

was that Mosquito doing out there?" He was a night fighter for a start and he obviously wasn't

17:30 involved in the search because he just apparently dove on me, and when I got out of the way quick smart, he just kept on going. So our CO [Commanding Officer] got in touch with Area Command and there was no Mosquitoes out there. So we wondered ever since he might have been a captured Mosquito and the Germans were using it out there, patrolling,

18:00 knowing when a Sunderland went down we would be out there looking for them, and whether he perhaps, got Dick and was still there when we went out there, and he had a go at me. We only assume that, but we don't know. We don't know exactly what happened to Dick but we can only assume because he wouldn't have gone anywhere else.

18:30 Seeing there's no trace of him, he's still in the aircraft at the bottom of the ocean.

How good a look did you get at this Mosquito when it was coming down at you? What did you see?

Oh when it flew past me? Several long seconds.

What did you see as it flew past you?

That it was a black Mosquito, a night fighter Mosquito. It had RAF rondels on it, but

19:00 that's it.

How did Dick's disappearance affect you and your company?

Oh it was just something you knew might happen at any time and we were sad and upset, I suppose.

Was it worse not knowing what had happened for sure?

Well I suppose so, it was a puzzle. We don't know where,

19:30 you could say ninety-nine percent sure of what happened, that he's in the drink because there's nowhere else for him to go and no trace of him ever found, but what happened we don't know. If he'd have had an engine problem

20:00 well he'd have radioed to his mate and said, "I've got an engine problem and I've got to ditch," because when we were doing those searches we were too low to bail out. Because your parachute needed at least two hundred feet to activate, after you pulled the ripcord, so there was no radio call, there was just no nothing, he just disappeared.

20:30 And all I've got in my log book is 'we lost Dick today', so.

What other times in your career did you come into close contact with another fighter aircraft?

What friendly or foe?

Well foe, this Mosquito was a bit of both but.

Yeah, we're not sure about that Mosquito because

21:00 control said they did not have a Mosquito out there and it was a night fighter in the middle of the day, where did he come from?

What about German aircraft, did you come into contact with those?

Only once where we were attacked by two German ME262's [Messerschmitt], the twin jets. We were on armed reccie and I think there was about eight of us.

21:30 **Can you take us through where you were and what you were flying at the time? Was this still in the Scilly Isles?**

Oh no, no, this was when I was flying Typhoon's over Germany.

And what was your operation that day and can you take us from the very beginning what happened?

Well we went out on what we called armed reconnaissance, no set target, and we always flew what was called battle formation. You flew in a big,

22:00 long line, all in a big long line, about fifty yards apart and the reason for that was that each aircraft could move a little bit while he's looking around, and doesn't bump into the one beside him.

How many aircraft would be out on armed reconnaissance like this?

Anything from two to a dozen.

22:30 I think there was about eight this day. And somebody, I don't remember who it was, but somebody said,

“ME262’s four o’clock above.” Everybody goes looks around and there’s these two jets up there, fairly high up, and what they used to do, the jets, because they never mixed in

23:00 what you called a dogfight with us, because they were going so fast. While they were busy turning around we could turn around two or three times inside. But the pair of them would separate as they came down and try, and hopefully pick off two outside aircraft, hoping that they weren’t seen.

23:30 And you might have heard the old expression ‘Beware of the Hun in the sun’? Well they would try and position themselves, they might see us coming for five minutes or more, and they’d perhaps climb up and try and position themselves so that they were between where we were going to be in five minutes and where the sun was, so they could come down on us and you’re looking around and you’re looking straight up into the sun. You mightn’t see them.

24:00 They would separate as they come down, try and pick off two unsuspecting outside ones, and zoom up off. But they were seen and the leader, who ever he was at the time, he said, “Ok, break port and starboard when I say.” Well that’s understood, break port and starboard, that half go to starboard and the other half go to port. You break

24:30 up to face the ones coming down. And as you break around, you’re upside down of course, but then you’re rolling right way up as you’re turning. And we’re all equipped with four twenty millimetre cannon, so at the crucial time when the leader thought they’re getting to about their range,

25:00 and they had thirty millimetre cannon, which had a greater range than ours, “Break port and starboard.” So four go that way and four go that way and this bloke here and this bloke here suddenly had sixteen twenty millimetre guns pointing straight up at them. And the order was “Fire at will,” which meant that everybody fired when he thought they were getting too close.

25:30 And you all fired at once, straight up, which meant that they had to fly straight into a, you know, quite a shower of twenty millimetre shells, coming from sixteen cannon, so they both broke away before they got within range, just broke away. And that’s the only time, because in the last six months that I was over in Europe with the Typhoon’s

26:00 we hardly ever saw a German aircraft.

You had control of the skies more or less at that stage?

More or less, yeah, more or less. Jets were the only ones of any number and they were used mainly in the daytime against the American Fortress formations, that used to go in by day. Occasional couple patrolling like

26:30 the two I was just talking about, but we just didn’t see any German aircraft. They had them apparently but they just didn’t have the fuel and they didn’t have the experienced pilots to fly them. I knew a German out at Crookwell who was a pilot and he said, “I was only a boy of sixteen when they had me up in a

27:00 Focke-Wulf 190 at the end of the war,” and he said, “I could barely control it.” He said, “I’m certainly glad I never met up with people like yourself.” He said, “I wouldn’t have lasted five seconds.”

Can we just stay with that incident for a moment and tell us about a few more details about it? How were you communicating with everybody else in the formation? You mentioned there was a leader, can you explain a bit more about how the structure of

27:30 **organization worked on those patrols?**

Well we were all in contact by radio, which was VHF [Very High Frequency], very high frequency radios, great range and very clear and there always had to be a leader and depending on what the target might be. If we decided to attack an aerodrome, say

28:00 there was eight or twelve of you, and you decided to attack an aerodrome, which was a very nasty business, they were very, very highly defended by flak. Most aerodromes of any consequence to the Germans had what they called flak towers around and they had

28:30 timed detonators in the fuse, which exploded the shell milliseconds after it left the gun. And they just fired opposite one another, over the aerodrome, and all these shells exploded and it was what they called boxed flack. And you had to fly through it.

29:00 And then on the ground, as well, they would have the other multi-barrelled pom-pom things, you know, with the barrels going up and down, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. They’d have those around the perimeter and they’d all be following you through and trying to knock an individual aircraft down, provided they

29:30 fired enough ahead of you and allowed for it. So they were very hard. The leader might say, “We’ll attack from two directions at once. We can only confuse the ground gunners, not the box flack, can’t do anything about that, and we’ll attack from two directions at once.” One might come in this way and just as they’re passing across the centre, the other

30:00 mob will come in behind them, so as not collide. So while these ground gunners are following the mob going through first, the other one's go in behind and strafe from behind while all the gunners are busy chasing the first lot.

How do you control your formation in that kind of exercise so no-one's running into each other? What are you watching in your aeroplane to keep on track?

Well you're watching the others for a start. You're watching the first mob go in

30:30 for a start.

And they're flying in what sort of formation?

Oh, normally one behind the other.

In a straight line?

Yeah, more or less. Perhaps two at a time, might be spread out, like over an airfield there's a fair cover. You could have two, see we always flew in pairs, number one and number two, and you stayed, your number two stayed with his number one as much as possible. So he'd be coming in, he might be just slightly behind the other one.

31:00 A pair together and another pair coming in behind that and you just, if you were in the rear pair you just made sure you didn't hit your own mates in front of you.

When you say you flew number one and number two what sort of relationship did you have with your number one or number two aircraft? Were you always next to the same aircraft, or what?

Most of the time, most of the time the couple stuck together.

31:30 But there were occasions when one might be on leave when the other one wasn't for some reason or rather. But mainly you'd go on leave together too, if you got any leave. We only ever got one leave in six months from over there and got seven days, I think it was, seven days leave.

Who would be the leader in these situations?

Number one is the number one.

32:00 Number two is what the Yanks [Americans] would call the wing man, number one and number two. Johnny, whilst Johnny had the experience and the talent after his twelve months down the Scilly Isles, the same as me, he said he didn't want to be a number one, he wanted to stay with me, fly with me all the time, cause when they decided to make me a

32:30 Number one after a bit of experience, they said to Johnny about the same thing and he said, "No, I want to fly with Goldie all the time."

Is that what you did?

We were more or less together most of the time, yeah, the two of us. We went on leave together one time to Brussels, that's the second leave we had. We had one leave where we were able to go home, we flew across to England. And then

33:00 we had a three day pass to Brussels. This was after we crossed the Rhine and because we'd been flying very heavily, when we crossed the Rhine my log book there shows three operations a day for several days. We'd just come back and whilst the machine was being re-fuelled and re-armed

33:30 we'd have a cup of tea and a biscuit or something or rather and go to the toilet or whatever you needed and then you were off again. This was when we were giving close support to the army, as it was advancing across the Rhine, and then sections, two at a time, we were called sections, number one and number two were called a section, Red Section, Blue Section and so on, were given

34:00 leave, what they called a seventy two hour pass. And Johnny and I conned a lift on a supply Dakota [DC3 Douglas Dakota bomber] which was going back to Brussels empty, after bringing supplies up, so we went back to Brussels and we got off at the airport there and we got an air force vehicle to take us down to the city, the centre of the city and he dropped us off.

34:30 And I said to Johnny, "We've got to find some digs somewhere. We've got two nights to put in." So we went over and I said to Johnny, Johnny who was actually an inch or so shorter than me, both littlies. So I said to Johnny, "You reckoned you learned a bit of French at school, go on and ask that gendarme over there where we can get some digs." And there was this tall,

35:00 gendarme there, I reckon he must have been about six foot six. And Johnny's talking to him and he's standing there looking down his nose at us, and Johnny's stammering away and suddenly he said, "Tell me young man, what is it you wish to know?" So we told him. "Oh," he said, "You can do better than just get accommodation that I might tell you,

35:30 see that air force vehicle over there? Go and ask him." So we went over and asked this bloke, an MP [Military Police], not an MP, that was army. SP, Service Police, RAF, sitting in his vehicle. "Righto," he says, "hop in," so he took us back to the airport that we'd not long left. And he said, "Go in down that corridor there and you'll see a sign," forget what, billets

36:00 or something it had on it. "Go in there, sergeant and that will look after you." So we went in there and here was the sergeant pilot that I hadn't seen for two years and we'd been flying Tiger Moth's together at Shellingford when we first lobbed in England. So we had a yarn for a minute or two and then he said, "What are you doing, what are you flying, where are you?" So we told him. "Oh, you're on one of those Typhoons, oh right, I'll look after you."

36:30 So he wrote out two chits and gave them to us. "Take these out and find a driver outside." Took them out and the driver looked at them and screwed his eyes up, never said anything. Down we go, pulled up outside this big, flash hotel. I think it was called Metropole, not quite sure now, but I think it was called that, the Metropole, down in the main square near the railway.

37:00 And in we go, and there was a maitre-de or whatever you call him, standing there. He looks down his nose. I'm a warrant officer and Johnny's a sergeant. Johnny had committed a misdemeanour some couple of years before and he was court-martialled and he was demoted to sergeant and to stay as a sergeant, otherwise he'd have been a warrant officer, the same as me. He looked at these chits and he looked at both of us.

37:30 You could see he considered we were bad smells. Anyway he clicked his fingers and over came a bell-hop, or whatever they call them in America, and give him the chits, so off we go in the lift and up a couple of floors, and we go to a suite with an en-suite and everything in the en-suite's in marble, and the taps in gold plated gilt,

38:00 or whatever you like to call them. I said to Johnny, "Be God, this is flash." So they had meal times and that sort of thing on the table, so down we go to dinner that evening, and we walked in the dining room and the place was full of commissioned officers and high rankers too, 'red tabs' [staff officers]. And I was looking around, all services were there, navy, army

38:30 and air force and I said to Johnny, "What the devil are we doing in here?" Anyway the head waiter or whatever he was, he had a look at our two chits [signed vouchers] and took us to a table for two and we ate our meal, being very careful not to stare at anybody. And when we ate our meal and sat back,

39:00 a red tab got up from the table nearest us, there was four officers there, he came over and said to Johnny, "On your feet, mate, we're in trouble." So we both stood up, "Sir." "Gentlemen, sit down," and he said, "See you're both pilots." "Yes sir." "What are you flying?" "Rockertiffies, sir." "Rockertiffies? Those Typhoons?"

39:30 "Yes sir." "Where have you been?" "Oh, we're based at Volkel." "Volkel?" He said, "Were you engaged in the Rhine operation?" I said, "Yes, Operation Plunder, sir, at Wesel." "You were in that?" "Yes, we gave you Canadians close support there." "Gentlemen would you join us? We'd like to hear all about it."

40:00 And it turned out it was a bloody Officers' Club, for officers on leave and we had two nights there and they talked with us and were very nice. The next evening we were having dinner and we finished again and he come over and he said, "Unless you have other plans, we would love to have your company again." And joined us again. And they wined us all evening so didn't cost us anything.

40:30 **We'll just stop there, as we have to change the tape again.**

Tape 4

00:31 **You trained to, you were trying or aspiring to be a fighter pilot and you'd trained to be a fighter pilot, can you tell us about the, your first setting eyes on the Hurricane and a little bit about your training on the Hurricane in England?**

Well I did the think the Hurricane was a lot bigger than I thought fighter planes were when I got to the Hurricane.

01:00 But then when I got into one and started up that Rolls Royce motor, I thought 'what a beautiful thing.' Because I'd been used to the Wirraway with its clattering radial and I did not like radial engines, I still do not like radial engines. And I thought 'what a sweet motor that is'. It just

01:30 purred and I did think it was a bigger aircraft than what I expected it to be.

Can you describe that sound for us in a little bit more detail? When you first started it up what it sounded like to you?

Oh I don't know. It's a bit hard to describe it. It made a bit of a noise I suppose, because they don't have any mufflers or silencers or anything on them.

02:00 I suppose when they're first fired up, see when you fire an aircraft engine up, or the one's that I've got any experience with anyway, you set the throttle to a certain setting. It's not like people fire up a motor car, they just hit the starter and press the accelerator down, raahhh, and it races up to about five thousand revs before you get your foot off.

02:30 You set the throttle and it starts at start, round about a thousand revs [revolutions], twelve hundred revs. And great clouds of smoke come out of the exhaust stacks and it settles down then. Well the Merlin just purred away. It was so smooth. Different sound altogether from a radial engine, it's hard to describe it.

03:00 A radial engine to me was always a clattery, noisy type of thing. I suppose because radials have got no water jacketing for a start, so the noise comes straight out through the cooling fins and gets blown back by the prop [propeller]. I suppose that made them a lot more noisy than the inlined water cooled engine.

03:30 **Did it make a difference for the aeroplane when you got the tail off the ground, the different torque of the engine, how much rudder you had to put on?**

Yes, the engines and the prop, or air-screw, as the correct term is, produced a certain amount of torque, depending upon which way they rotated, and

04:00 the Hurricane and the Typhoon both rotated to starboard. And that gave you a lot of swing to starboard. With the Hurricane we would put on, our take-off from the Scilly Isles, for instance, because of our short strip, was to

04:30 hold the brakes on, which as you understand are only on the two main wheels, in the front. And the brakes were in the D ring, which was a lever standing up in the middle of the D ring, you know, pull it across and you actuated the brakes to each wheel by the use of your rudder pedal, one way or the other. It diverted the air, they were air brakes.

05:00 The Hurricane and the Typhoon both had air brakes. And when you diverted your rudder pedal one way or the other it diverted the stream of air that way, compressed air, and put the brake on. So you would pull the stick right back, hard into your guts, put the brake on, put on full left rudder trim.

05:30 There's a trimming tab on the rudder, which was adjustable and one way or other caused the airflow over it to push the rudder one way or the other. So you put on full port rubber trim and then you opened up, opened up, opened up, until you feel the aircraft,

06:00 well on grass, for instance, with our slick tyres the Hurricane would actually try to skid on it. If you were on hard tack, like concrete runway, you'd even attempt to go over, lift the tail up and go over. But you've got your elevators right up, with the stick right up. And when you got it to the stage where the Hurricane was just attempting to move off, you then opened right up and applied

06:30 full port rudder even though you had full port rudder trim on, you flied full port rudder and that was enough to hold the Hurricane straight. And off you went. And the instance you felt lift, you'd feel lift, it was something you do, you feel it through the seat of your pants. You feel

07:00 lift, you feel the stall, you feel an aircraft skidding out, you feel an aircraft slipping in on turns and things. That's what they call flying by the seat of your pants. You feel it and as soon as you felt that lift, in a Hurricane for instance, and I often wondered why and never ever found out why, for some reason or other, even though your control column was in your right hand, and your throttle and pitch and your radio and everything was controlled by this hand,

07:30 they had the flaps and undercut down there. So you had to change over and grab hold of this control column and then reach down and raise your undercut. And it had a box with a slot in it, one lever, it was like a gear box, you slipped it across, down for undercut down, back for undercut up,

08:00 across the other side, flaps up, flaps down.

Just one thing Norm, if you want to describe things put your hands up a little bit higher perhaps.

You can't see them there?

Just in front of your face, just there is fine.

And invariably, well not invariably but ninety odd percent of the time, our winds at Scilly Isles came from the north-east and our runway faced north and south

08:30 and our work was almost invariably down that way to where the, or out that way to where the U-boats and the Sunderland's used to prowl. So as soon as you left the deck you had to change over your control column with your left hand, reach down and raise your under-cut and for that brief

09:00 few seconds you flew the aircraft round that way with your left hand, to which most right handed people was a little bit different to what you would do the other way. Why they had ever put it down there I would never know. The Typhoon which was made by Hawker and also designed by Sir Sydney Camm

had your undercut and flaps on the left hand side.

Perhaps that's because the Hurricane was English?

09:30 Yeah, yeah, so was the Typhoon, made by the same company, designed by the same man. But why he put it down there on the right hand side, I don't know. Anyway on the Typhoon it was over on this side, made it a little bit better. And then you, by this time you could lift your flaps up too, by this time, lift your flaps up and climb away and set course to wherever you

10:00 had to go.

Can you take us through a cross wind landing in the Hurricane?

Yeah. Well as I say normally our winds were in the north-east, our runway was north, but if they were blowing to any great extent, strongly, you've got a fair drift to port and to counteract that drift to port

10:30 you'd have your aircraft flying that way, but it's going straight. Whilst it's following a straight line, the line of the runway that you can see coming up, it's pointing sideways, because you've got plenty of rudder on to keep it going that way. If you straighten your rudder up the wind will blow you over here, so you're going more or less

11:00 like that. You can't land like that because your wheels would be like that, as soon as they touched the ground they'd just write them straight off, fold your undercarriage up. So as you get down close and mind you, because of our short runway we had to do what is called a precautionary approach. Which means that you have got to land

11:30 exactly where you want to at the very beginning of your runway space to give you a long as run off as you can get to stop. You have to fly as slow as you can, which means you fly just above your stalling speed, with full flap and wheels, undercut down.

12:00 And the stalling speed in the Hurricane was, I think from memory, was sixty eight knots and you'd make your approach at seventy knots and that means that you are just virtually hanging on your prop as you're coming in and you're going sideways at the same time and you're just hanging on your prop and occasionally you'll get a wind gust

12:30 and your speed will go up because the wind speed over the aircraft increases and you throttle back a little bit and then that gust drops and suddenly you drop because you've got below your stall speed and it's all a matter of being on the job. And as you get closer down and you're going this way, you're going that way like that, as you get closer down

13:00 you suddenly put on full port rudder and starboard stick and you're aircraft violently goes that way and that way, slides into a slide slip, into the wind, and you've got to judge it so it does it exactly at the second you want it, so that when it's a couple of feet off the ground you suddenly reverse your

13:30 controls, pull the throttle right off and she'll stall down because you're only a fraction above stalling speed. If you're going any great amount above stalling speed, when you straighten up and she floats well the wind will get you and you'll go out again. So it's all a matter of judgement and that's why we had the odd prank there, the odd person didn't judge it correctly.

14:00 **Can you tell us about one of those incidents?**

No, only that they happened because they didn't judge it correctly. But I can tell you, no names mentioned, his photograph's in there and his prangs there too, he was a flight lieutenant, flight commander. See we only had flight lieutenants in charge of us down there because we were a flight, we were not a squadron and

14:30 we had our own flight number, Number 1449 Flight, one double four nine flight. Well he pranged one and one day we had this crosswind blowing and incidentally it was blowing from the other way, it was coming from the south-west, exactly opposite, and our approach from the north to the south

15:00 was very bad because at that end of the runway it dropped suddenly away into a gully and you got, what they called wind shear, which we used to just call a down draught in those days. Now they call it wind shear. And when you're coming in from that end and you're coming in like this, crosswise, crosswise, suddenly you get a wind shear and the runways up there.

15:30 You have to open everything up and get up real quick and then do all your crosswind landing business and get down. And he didn't do it probably one day anyway. So not long after that I, as parachute officer, because parachutes had to be

16:00 unpacked and hung in a big tower, aired, dried, and re-packed once a month. And that was down over at Portreath on the mainland, in Cornwall, at an air force station there. I was the parachute officer and we had about four spare chutes and I would take four that had to be

16:30 serviced over in the Tiger Moth and the other four would be used, and then I'd go over in the Tiger Moth again, perhaps a week later and pick the other four back, and this was in rotation. And this day I took the parachutes over in the Tiger Moth and later on I got a message, 'A signal from your

commanding officer on St Mary's, don't leave until he arrives,

17:00 he wants to see you.' So I couldn't, so he arrived in a Hurricane, the only other transport we had, and he said to me, "You take the Hurricane back Goldie, I'll take the Moth." And I know what it was for, because of this difficult landing and when I got back and I circled the airstrip and looked at the windsock

17:30 and judged what I had to do and I had to come in from that end, and thought 'right-o, here goes', and suddenly out comes the fire engine, our own fire engine and our own ambulance, and parked themselves off to one side, which would be the beginning of the runway this way. And I thought 'what the devil is all that about?'

18:00 Anyway, I came in and the inevitable happened, a big wind shear and down I go and anyway I came up, landed, and taxied in and they followed me in the two vehicles and as I got out of the aircraft and took my helmet off, the Sergeant said, "Oh, we've been wasting our time, it's Goldie." And some other bloke said, "Oh we had a bit of practice anyway." And that's a true story. They were expecting this CO to come back in the Hurricane

18:30 because when I left to come back the only signal they got back there was, 'Your Hurricane has just left for St Mary's, ETA [Estimated Time of Arrival] such and such a time.' But not who was flying it and they thought it was him coming back.

They thought he was going to prang it?

They expected him too, apparently.

Can you tell us a bit about the short takeoff and landing training you received on the Hurricane?

19:00 Oh well you trained yourself. I arrived at Portreath from Harribia where I was with the Typhoon Squadron and didn't fly one and they told me that I was to do what they called a short landing course. And they taped out four hundred yards

19:30 on the grass, away from the main runway and said, "Now you've got to practice landing and taking off in that space without running over it." Which I did. There's no dual control or two cockpit Hurricanes or fighter planes or anything. You just get in and go and

20:00 so I just did it, for about a week and then they said, "There's your Hurricane, you're off to the Scilly Isles." That's when I thought I was going to Sicily.

Can you tell us about your first gunnery training in the Hurricane?

Well we had drogue [target],

20:30 air to air drogue practice and the drogue was usually towed, well in my instance up there at Longtown by a Miles Master 2 or 3 with a damn Yankie Wasp in them. Didn't like them. The Miles Master One had a Rolls Royce Kestrel in it, a V12. I flew it, it was beautiful. Miles

21:00 Master Two and Three, for reasons that I can only conclude that Rolls Royce was busy making Merlins and they started sticking these American Wasp radials onto them, as they manufactured the Miles Master. 'Cause the Miles Master was the RAF service flying training aircraft, so they would have had to keep making them I suppose.

21:30 Would have had a certain amount of write-offs in training. And it was usually, the drogue was usually towed, in my instance, by one of those. And we were given, there might be two or three or four of you up at once in the Hurricanes and your tips of your bullets were dipped in a dye and each

22:00 one, each pilot had a separate dye, different colour, and as they penetrated the drogue, if you were lucky enough to hit one, it left a little ring where the bullet passed through with a tinge of colour round it and they could tell who had hit it and how many hits and who hadn't and so on. And in air to air you have to

22:30 allow for the speed of your target and the angle of attack. And if your target is flying along there and you're coming in from here, well your best angle of attack is almost behind. So that you've got almost the length of the drogue to hit

23:00 but not to far around so that you might spray your towing aircraft. And you might only have to allow a little for the speed of the drogue. But if, for instance, you were coming in at right angles you certainly not going to hit the towing aircraft, but also you've got to allow a lot more distance in front of your target for the speed it's travelling at. So that you, your bullets and the target arrive there at the same time

23:30 and that's what you have to do in air to air fighting, depending on your angle of attack, as to how far ahead of the target you fire, so that the target runs into your fire. Unless you're lucky enough to sneak up unobserved behind the target, it hasn't seen you coming and you come up right under,

24:00 in most cases, underneath. And get up as close as you can underneath and spray right up through that way, through the fuselage, through the cockpit, into the motor and pull away.

Can you tell us about the first time you fired your guns in anger?

Never did in the Hurricane, because we never had any actual contact.

24:30 We chased, as I said, on convoy patrol we chased German spotting aircraft away and they invariably, when they saw us coming turned around and disappeared into the wild blue yonder for a while and try and sneak back later. And on air-sea rescue the only time that I think I might have been going to be attacked was when that Mosquito came from nowhere,

25:00 looked as though he was going to attack me, but we never had an air to air go.

Can you tell us how you felt the handling characteristics of the Hurricane were?

As far as I'm concerned, not having flown a Spitfire, but having had air to air practice combat I think the Hurricane was the sweetest aircraft ever.

25:30 I could out-manoeuvre a 'Spit' [Spitfire], because the one thing being a bit slower, you didn't get the same centrifugal force in a tight turn and also the Hurricane had what is known as a high camber main plane, which gave it a higher lift, (UNCLEAR).

26:00 The Spitfire had, for instance, what you might call a laminar flow wing, which was fairly thin. Had a fairly thin leading edge, and fairly thin all over, just opened up a little bit and then away again. Where as the Hurricane was like that and you get your lift in a main plane by the vacuum created by the air going over it.

26:30 With a 'Spittie' the air just sort of glanced over without much rise at all, so the lift wasn't terribly great, but it could go faster. With a Hurricane like that, the air would hit and then tend to go up like a wave in the surf which made it not so air efficient but it lifted up higher that way and created

27:00 a greater partial vacuum there which gave it greater lift. So in air to air combat when you're turning you get that lift inside and your aircraft lifts quicker inside that way than the other one does that's going out there. So you could turn inside and if he continued on his turn you would catch up with him and get to where you could get your nose a little bit ahead of him

27:30 and then start firing and he'd run into it. And conversely if he turned that way you're already there and as soon as he makes a mistake of turning the other way, you're right there and you can fire almost instantly. That's what that Yank found out, he wasn't in the hunt, when I had the Typhoon, because the Typhoon had a similar wing.

28:00 **Did you do any parachute training?**

We used to do parachute landing practice in a hangar, not on the Scilly Isles, we didn't have a hangar big enough. We had like a swing with a parachute harness on it, hung from the top of the hangar

28:30 and they'd lower it down so you could put the parachute harness on and the loop goes up between your legs here and round like this and your two side ones come up under it and then come up into the buckle, and the idea of that is that the loop then is round there and with a sudden jerk it's not going to strangle you because your jewels are free and then your other straps come down into it.

29:00 And you got what was termed a quick release buckle there which was oh, that round and serrated on the edge and when you turned it, it released all four pins and harness fell away, and they'd pull you up by this thing and then another rope would pull it back and let it go and it would swing.

29:30 And they'd pull you up to, oh you'd only be about four or five feet above the ground, and as you reached the bottom of your swing, clonk, and everything fell away and we were taught in our day to land, go over. Later on, which they do now days, it's to land and slide,

30:00 and release your chute. You land and slide, a different technique now but we did that a little bit. We didn't have to do it very often because you hoped you never had to jump and if you did you'd be sure to do it right anyway.

Can you tell us a bit about your early experiences as an RAAF officer integrating into a RAF squadron?

30:30 As an RAAF sergeant then it didn't make any difference. On the Scilly Isles, whilst I had been seconded into the RAF, we had three or four other Australians there and the rest were RAF. Didn't make any difference, we were just all

31:00 one big crowd. Later on when I went onto the Typhoon's I was the only Australian on the Squadron. It didn't make any difference to me and I didn't, I don't think there was any resentment or animosity amongst the RAF commissioned fellows, I was only a Warrant Officer.

31:30 Over on the Continent it wasn't like an RAF station. We were only living in, and on and using what the

Germans left behind and they established a type of scorched earth policy as they retreated and demolished a lot of things.

32:00 A bit hard for us. There was no such thing as a spick and span air force procedure. There was no parades, nothing like that. We were there to fly and fight and that's all. And the ground crew didn't have any parades either, there job was to keep our aircraft flying. And with whatever they could, and with whatever accommodation they had.

32:30 Our NCO [Non Commissioned Officer] accommodation on Volkel , and there's photographs of it there in my books, was a little wooden hut made of square edged boards, pine I'd say, which had all shrunk and there was gaps between them and

33:00 we spent the winter in that, down to minus forty or more, and when there was heavy snowing and high squally winds the inside of our hut got filled with snow. We were sweeping it out. It would all blow through the cracks and so on and if you got snow squalls through the night, when we were all sleeping,

33:30 they'd be snow over everybody the next morning and you'd have to shake it all off you. We had two grey blankets, two rough grey blankets and we slept on little wooden framed, fold up stretchers, with a hessian stretcher thing. We had those to sleep on.

34:00 You'd have to shake all the snow off yourself when you got up in the morning then whoever was not flying would get busy with the brooms and sweep it out. That's all we had there and when we got over to our airstrip in Germany, in Gogh, we were living in tents, in tents on the grass, alongside the airstrip. So we

34:30 were all there doing a job, whether you were Australian. As a matter of fact on the Typhoon, we had three South African pilots who were lieutenants, because the South African had an army air force, and they were lieutenants. We had a New Zealander, a Maori, a full blood Maori. Jimmy Wittira his name was. And we had

35:00 a chap from Ceylon [Sri Lanka], a brown skinned Ceylonese pilot, myself from Australia. I think that's all apart from English and Scotch and whatever else there were in the RAF there. But we all just mucked in together. We had the same mess, all ate together.

35:30 **How were you hearing of news back in Australia and the war with Japan at that time? When you got there it was around 1942 and war with Japan had started?**

Well we got the news on radio and in the English newspapers and so on. When the Japanese got to New Guinea

36:00 myself and, well we were on the Scilly Isles then, myself and a couple of other Aussies that were there with me, we all made haste to request permission to return to Australia. One came back, Ralph Palesi, his name was.

36:30 He was an Australian born but he was either Italian his parents, or one of those races. He had very dark hair and rather swarthy appearance, Ralph Palesi. He was allowed back and we heard later through the grapevine that he was shot down and killed in the Pacific. The other one,

37:00 I don't know whether he was coming back or what, he just suddenly got posted away. I don't know where he went, 'Brick'. His name was Stone, so he was known as Brick. And I wasn't allowed to come back and I asked the CO why and he said, "Obviously the RAF feel you're more important to them." And I wasn't allowed to come home. I had to stay

37:30 there and then, that was while we were on the 'Hurries' [Hurricanes].

How did you feel about that? The war was going on and Australia obviously needed all the people they could get and you were stuck over there?

I was a bit upset about it but there was nothing you could do about it. I mean there was no way you could possibly get out here, you couldn't desert. How were you going to get out here anyway if you did? It was a very long swim.

38:00 **Did you feel you were letting your country down by being so far away at that time?**

I don't know. I don't think I felt I was letting them down, that I was letting them down, no, I don't think so.

Did you feel guilty that you couldn't get back and help out?

No, I don't think I felt guilty. I mean being in the service and

38:30 knowing that you couldn't do it because of orders and because of the absolute inability of being able to get back on your own. I think you just felt a bit frustrated about it I think. I don't think I felt guilty about it. I have heard since coming home, through the RAAF channels, that we were known as 'Jap dodgers',

39:00 because we didn't come home. Regardless of the fact that we weren't allowed too, there was quite a lot of us. There was a lot of RAAF seconded to the RAF, thousands of us. And according to what I've read there was more RAAF

39:30 aircrew killed in the European theatre of war, than Australians killed in the army, navy, and air force in the Middle East and Far East. That's just RAAF aircrew alone, in the European theatre. That's what I've read.

40:00 **Did you feel you were part of the RAAF or the RAF when you were over there?**

Oh I considered I was RAAF, I think, seconded, lent. I think so, but as I said, before you started the recording I think, I think

40:30 those years were, over there were my most formative years. See I was only twenty when I got over there and the majority of friends that I made, both in the service and out of it, were English or Scotch or Irish,

41:00 belonged to the UK anyway, and they were probably my most formative years, I suppose. And that's why I loved the Islands. I really loved the Islands. Quiet, laid back life, no hustle and bustle, no buses, no trains. There was no income tax over there,

41:30 car registrations. Wasn't any cars anyway, only about half a dozen. The Atlantic Hotel, for instance, where I worked as a barman, part-time, for years, when it had passengers coming in on the mail steamer, he took his donkey cart down for their baggage. He had a donkey cart. Well that was an innovation on it's own, and he went down on the quay with his donkey cart

42:00 and loaded all the…

Tape 5

00:33 There is a recorded film of when the, this is?

Oh yeah, we're recording now. You can tell us about this on film, yeah.

Of when I became the first Australian into Germany with the Allied Forces, you see. Being the only Australian on the Squadron and our Squadron being the first into Germany to land and

01:00 operate from an Allied airstrip on German soil and the CO, for reasons best known to himself, gave me the honour I thought of leading the Squadron across and landing first. Whether because I was the only Australian or not, I don't know. But anyway he did. And we went on an op and I don't

01:30 think it was that first day, but I think it was the next day, I came back from an op and here's these Australian reporters there was a camera, a movie camera. 16mm I think it was, and they interviewed me and that's that photograph up there

02:00 of me standing outside our tent. That was taken by them but they also took a movie of me walking to my aircraft with a parachute and helmet and what not slung over my shoulder, climbing in and getting all set up, 'contact', as though I was going away on a trip. Now that has been seen

02:30 and I think it's in the RAAF film library, I think. I went down to the War Memorial at Canberra with one of our committee persons and we went through as many as we could possibly find of Typhoons in Europe, in videos, in their racks down there and whilst

03:00 we saw quite a few we didn't come across that particular one. And we asked one of the attendants there, young lady, and she said, "Well I can't help you really. All you can do is go through every one that you can find featuring Typhoons in Europe and you might come across yourself." So we didn't find it, not in that time. We'd have had to have been down there for a week and we'd have had to have listed everything we'd seen

03:30 so we didn't see it again.

Who was it that took that piece of film? Do you remember who they were and where they were from?

Oh they were Australian war correspondents and they were there waiting for me when I came back.

What sort of questions did they ask you?

They asked me, oh mainly was there any particular,

04:00 was there any particular operation I could think of at the moment.

What's this book?

This the official history of the RAAF over Europe.

Are you mentioned in there?

Yes, it's mentioned here and in one of these clippings sent to me, there's a bit, a bit

04:30 about the interview. That's the bit.

We talked a bit about the Hurricane, I want to talk about the Typhoon. Do you remember the first time, when was the first time you heard about Typhoons, because they were a new aircraft?

Oh that would have been, there again I've got to refer to my log book, and I haven't got my glasses.

It was during training though, in

05:00 **England. Roughly, we don't need the exact date. We can put that in later. Don't worry about your log book now.**

When I went to Typhoon's. I can't read that without my glasses.

Yeah, we can't really have you referring to it anyway.

It would have been 1943 anyway, when they first went into service, early 1943.

What sort of reputation did they have?

A very bad one.

Can you explain a bit about the reputation of the Typhoon?

Well they had

05:30 three big problems when they first went into service. They didn't quite cure them all. One was that the whole ombanage, which is the tail section complete, forward of the fin, the whole thing would break off and pilots were killed,

06:00 due to metal fatigue, but they couldn't work out for a long while why that metal fatigue would have occurred just there, but it appears that the whole aircraft used to vibrate badly in flight, and eventually it appears that they sorted out the rudder,

06:30 horn balance was incorrect and was causing rudder flutter and that caused metal fatigue into the airframe, but before they found that out, they riveted a great band of metal around the fuselage, in front of the fin, right completely around the fuselage, which didn't help much,

07:00 might have helped a bit, but didn't help much because it still broke off. But when they eventually found this rudder flutter business apparently that almost completely cured it, almost. But even as last 1945, July, in July 1945 there was a flying officer somebody or other killed with the same thing, the tail broke off. The other problem they had

07:30 was carbon monoxide from the exhaust were entering the cockpit, through the ventilation system, and pilots were just passing out and crashing and the other big problem was the Sabre engine. Most unreliable and the biggest problem with it, which they did eventually fix,

08:00 that was the biggest problem, apparently was in the case hardening of the sleeve valve actuating gear and apparently it used to chew up very quickly. And they came to an arrangement with Bristol who were making, who had been making sleeve valve air cooled radials for years and years and under war-time

08:30 rules they allowed them to use their process and that apparently cured that more or less, anyway. The Sabre still gave problems. When they were originally introduced their life before a major overhaul, which meant stripping right down and re-building was twenty five

09:00 hours, which was ridiculous but that's what it was then, even if they lasted twenty five hours, 'cause they got over that.

What were they used for? Why was the air force keen to get these planes serviceable? What were their unique uses and characteristics?

Well in the first instance, they were introduced into the service prematurely to chase the V1 [German surface-to-surface pilotless flying bomb],

09:30 the 'Buzz Bomb', as it was called, because they used to scoot along at four hundred mile an hour and even the Spitties of the day, the fastest aircraft the RAF had at the time, couldn't catch them, but the Typhoon was capable of, I think, around about four hundred and twenty odd or something and it could keep up with the Buzz Bomb, and while

10:00 the Typhoon held together it destroyed quite a few. But that was the reason for its introduction into the service so quickly, but because of those problems, and although it had been originally designed as an interceptor fighter and even though it had a two stage supercharger, it was discovered above twelve

thousand feet, it was very

10:30 slow, climb rate was very slow, performance wasn't really good. And apparently, it was very nearly scrubbed from service altogether. But due to the persistence of a Wing Commander Beaumont, who reckoned it would be a good aircraft if used correctly, he played around with it and found that in the ground attack role

11:00 as a tactical fighter bomber it was really good. It was fast, four hundred plus miles an hour and terribly strong and could take terrific punishment from ground fire. And could lift a huge load. At times we carried two one thousand pound bombs

11:30 and that's a lot of bomb for a single engine fighter plane.

Where did it's strength come from?

Just inbuilt in its framework.

What was the framework like? Can you describe that to us?

Well I don't know what you call it. I think it's what they call girder construction and the strength of the aircraft did not depend on stressed skin, which the Spitfire did and Mustang.

12:00 And if they got a lot of flak holes in the stressed skin well the strength of the aircraft went and it could break up in mid-air. I bought a Typhoon back with a direct hit by a cannon shell in the port wing, which blew a hole in it, but would have disintegrated a Spittie wing or a Mustang wing, but I got it back to base. And

12:30 another time I, several of us attacked a marshalling yard and the Germans didn't like that because their rail network was very important to them and I picked on this huge truck in the siding, sitting on rails on there,

13:00 with a big canvassed covered load on it of some description, oh it was piled up really high, and I hit it with a pair of rockets, from below treetop height, ground level and I arrived there almost the same as the rockets from close range and the whole thing exploded. Must have been loaded with ammunition and

13:30 explosives of some sort. The whole thing exploded and filled me full of holes, big holes too, and because I was just in the act of commencing to break away, fired the rockets and just in the act of breaking away and I was by then just over this truck and, and it blew me into the trees lining the railway line.

14:00 That did a lot more damage and it also caused terrific vibration which turned out later to be the four bladed metal prop badly bent when it hit the trees, but it come back home too.

How did you get out of it once it hit the trees? What happened next?

Just hit the trees and bounced up and I regained control.

14:30 **What went through your mind when that happened?**

Blowed if I know, happened so quickly, I don't remember thinking. But that first time when the cannon shell hit me was the same circumstances. I was just breaking away and it hit the port wing and flipped me, so the ones following said, three flip rolls horizontally across the trees,

15:00 and then they said I stood up on my tail and went up. Well I can remember a second or two of, you know, whirly gigging. Whatever reflex action I took must have been automatic to straighten out of it. But, you know, that was two aircraft.

After one of those operations you come back, you flew back into the drome and you look at your plane, what goes through your mind then?

15:30 Boy was I lucky. As a matter of fact after the big one when I got blown up and then hit the trees, the ground crew and I were standing there looking at the damage and one of the ground crew said, "How do you do this sir?" and being a bit stupid I said, "Do what?" He said, "How do you fly out day after day

16:00 knowing that this or even worse can happen to you every time?" I honestly don't know what I said, I really don't. Don't know, something stupid like, "That's my job," or what, I honestly don't know what I said.

If I was to ask you the same question now what would you say? With all the hindsight you have to look back on it, how did you do that?

I don't even now what I'd say now.

16:30 Only just what I said I suppose 'it was our job'. We volunteered for it and I suppose there would be a certain amount of self pride, not in yourself, but in not letting others know that you were scared stiff

17:00 and didn't want to go the next day, whether you did or you didn't, you just didn't do those things. You

just went.

How scared were you?

I don't know that, I don't know, I don't know that I had to actually psych myself up as they call it,

17:30 before I went, I don't think so. I don't know, I think we all sort of lived on a, if it's fate, it's going to happen, I think. Nobody spoke about it, we never talked, never talked

18:00 about how anybody felt. I've never heard it mentioned.

When you've come back from one of those operations you've mentioned, the planes damaged, does it shake your own nerves? How did you physically react to that coming so close to ending it all?

I really don't know what to say.

18:30 Expect perhaps 'geez I was lucky with that one, lucky to get that back.' I know when I was coming back from the ammunition truck blow up and then hitting the trees, and my number two flew back with me,

19:00 for two reasons. For one reason, he had to be with me, that was his job. And the other reason was if German aircraft were about he had to look after me because I was in a pretty bad way for manoeuvring and when we got to the point where I could see base, I notified base, "I can see base," and I

19:30 said to Johnny, I said to Johnny, "Johnny, I'm going to lower my undercut, hopefully, will you have a look at my tyres." Because you didn't want to land with one tyre ripped up to shreds or you'd be straight over on your back in no time. So Johnny just slid up underneath me and looked up, "Your tyres look alright, Goldie," "Righto, Johnny, thanks."

20:00 Leave the undercut down, otherwise I'd have pulled it up and bellylanded on the grass and I didn't dare drop any flap because I didn't whether they were damaged, I didn't know to what extent they were damaged if they were, what they would do to the handling of the aircraft if they were damaged and I suddenly dropped them. It could be too late then to get them up and I might go into a spin or something.

20:30 So I decided to go in flapless, so that meant that I landed at about a hundred and fifty bloody mile an hour and I called up control and said I'm coming in on runway whatever, can't tell you the heading now, I've forgotten, the longest one. I said, "I'm wheeling in flapless on runway so and so." "Roger, Goldie, good luck."

21:00 Anyway I wheeled in and the tyres were ok and I was able to stop. The CO said to me later, "You were at three thousand feet Goldie, why didn't you bail out and let the aircraft go?" I said, "Because I was too scared my parachute mightn't open." While I had some control of the aircraft I

21:30 preferred to take my chance with it. Because there had been stories circulating about parachutes that didn't open and parachutes that didn't open, but didn't function because they'd been sabotaged by people wanting the silk. Stories we heard.

What would

22:00 **you do next after you'd come in from a hard operation like that? What sort of routine did you have to?**

Well we couldn't go to the mess and have a drink straight away because at Volkel our mess was a requisitioned house, oh some two or three kilometres away or something and you all went on the back of a truck to your meals and so on. Just had a cup of tea and a biscuit in control I think,

22:30 and a smoke. I smoked pipes then. I've still got two pipes here that I had then, still there.

What effect did the smoking, did it have a calming influence on you?

Oh yeah, yeah. Oh I can understand why people smoke. I gave up, oh I don't know, ten, fifteen, years ago and I was getting a lot of bronchitis,

23:00 year after year and the doctor x-rayed my chest and he said, "You've got a touch of emphysema." I said, "Right, better stop smoking." "Be a good idea." "Right-o." So I did. And I haven't take another puff since, and I carried a pipe and tobacco and matches in the glove box for two or three years, until the tobacco become stale, and never touched it.

23:30 Never touched it since, and mention that, down at the Railway Bowling Club, waiting to go into the bistro to lunch with my wife here, only a week or so ago, and I'm blowed if an old fellow, coming from me as an old fellow, lit up a pipe at the table next to us. And do you know I said to my wife, "If I had tobacco at home, I've still got my Meshorn pipe, I could go

24:00 home and light up a pipe now." It really did get to me. Cigarettes, people smoke cigarettes round me, but he lit this pipe up, you beauty.

What sort of situations would you find yourself needing a pipe during the war?

Quite often,

24:30 especially after flying but then having a drink. I loved my pipe, I really did. Yeah working behind the bar there in the Scilly Isles I was allowed to smoke behind the bar and when things were quiet I'd be standing behind the bar there, smoking my pipe and I do remember one fellow saying to me one day, one evening, "I've been watching you Goldie, I've never

25:00 seen anybody with such a contented look on their face smoking as you've get when you've got that pipe going." I did too.

What other routines did you have when you were flying operations? Before a flight what would you do?

I don't know. I don't know much what we did. On the Scilly Isles for instance,

25:30 where we had our pilots dispersal as it was called, we'd be sitting around in what available chairs or anything that was there, having a smoke. I've got photographs of us there playing cards. We used to play cards by the hour, waiting for perhaps the scramble bell to ring or which usually turned out to be a false alarm. In as much as most times it would be a

26:00 coastal command aircraft setting out on patrol, from Southampton. Naturally enough they went past south of the Scilly's to go out to the Atlantic and the stupid captain hadn't put his IFF [Identification Friend Or Foe] on, so our radar station on the island would get a EA [Enemy Aircraft] blip, which enemy aircraft blip,

26:30 EA blip, and we'd get a scramble. Bell would ring and whoever was on standby, race out and hop into your aircraft and up you go and the radar would lead you on. As you got closer, stupid bloody coastal command bloke again. No IFF on.

Can you explain the IFF to someone's who's never?

Oh IFF stood for

27:00 Identification Friend or Foe and it was an electronic box in the aircraft which you switched on, not knowing anything about its workings or electronics or anything, all I know is it radioed a signal out, which caused it's blip on the radar to be a different blip altogether

27:30 to an enemy one. Say where an enemy blip would be a dot, moving along, this might be an elongated one. And they could identify whether it was an EA or a friendly.

Did you have any superstitions or things that people always did in any of the flights or squadrons you flew with?

I've got one there.

28:00 Still there.

Can you explain that for us?

The scarf I wore all the time.

Tell us about your scarf? Where did that…

See it up there in that photo.

Ok.

And I've still got it, it's there.

Can you tell us about how that started and where you picked it up?

I don't know. Prior to that, prior to that I've got what I was wearing then which was a complete panel out of a parachute, which starts from near to nothing, like

28:30 that, oh got to be six foot long I suppose, and I used to wrap that round and tuck it in. And I don't know where that scarf come from, I really don't. But I had it most of my flying time. It's a silk one and you wore silk because it was soft to your neck, because you were looking round, swivelling your head around all the time. Apart from that it

29:00 was warm. Yeah I've still got that, it's there. But that's about all. I didn't have any other talisman, except I never flew without my pipe and tobacco and matches. 'Cause I reckoned if I went down somewhere and I was still in one piece, the first thing I'd want is a smoke and those two pipes I've got there, both had stems broken and both been

29:30 repaired. Because you carried them in your battledress pocket here and when you lent over the cockpit to drop your parachute in, it used to just come across there and if you weren't actually thinking about it, you might put a bit of weight on the pipe stem, crack. And when I got back I'd go down the workshop

and repair it. One's

30:00 got a brass farer on it and the other one I wound copper wire around it where the join come together, wound copper wire all over it and then soldered it all over it.

What other preparation did you make for perhaps needing to go down? What other things did you carry or what were you told?

Oh we were issued, we flew with a Mae West [life jacket]

30:30 all the time. Even over in Europe we flew with a Mae West because quite a bit of our flying we'd have to cross the Lowlands which were flooded, the Lowlands in Holland, which had been flooded by the British by bombing, early in the piece, after they got forced out, after Dunkirk and that, so that the Germans couldn't use that area

31:00 of Holland and quite deep in places. On the Scilly Isles, of course, all our flying was over water, all the time, so we had Mae Wests there all the time and if you had to fly, when we were over the Continent, I once had to come back and pick up a new Tiffie and fly it back, and I come back over in the Dakota and I flew the Tiffie back. So had to have it then, for crossing the Ditch, as it was called.

31:30 And in the Mae West you had a map in a waterproof container, which is there, still there. A map of Europe, printed on silk, on both sides. Well that was when we were in Europe, in case we went down in Europe. You also had a tin of Horlick's [powdered malt drink] tablets. You also had a little

32:00 container, I think it had about four, from memory, Benadryl [Benzedrine – amphetamine] tablets for, you know, revive you if feeling sleepy or tired and a little tubular box with waterproof wax matches and we had Two

32:30 Star Red distress flares. If you were floating around in your dinghy and you saw one of your aircraft searching for you, you'd fire those, fire one of those. A tubular thing about that big and about that round and had a pull ring on the top with a striker in it, Two Star Red. I'll tell you a story about using one of those too. And

33:00 what else did we have?

A dinghy?

Oh a dinghy, we sat on our dinghy and our dinghy had supplies in it and the dinghy also had a paddle or a paddle thing you fitted on your hand, not a big wooden paddle or anything. We sat on our dinghy, that was our seat and that was attached to your parachute harness. That went with you if you bailed out.

33:30 It had fishing lines in it. Trying to think now, never had to use one. Oh there was a mast, a fold up mast and a sail and guy ropes and a compass. Compass is there too, that's the compass there.

34:00 If I could open it. Hasn't been opened in a million years, mightn't open. No, I can't open it.

We might take a picture of it later.

Yeah.

Did you ever have to use any of that gear at all?

No. I don't know why that won't open. Got a catch there, maybe I'm not working. Can't see without my glasses.

That's alright, I'll have a look at it.

34:30 **Can you tell us the story about the time you used your Two Star flare?**

One Guy Fawkes' night [5th of November] down on St Mary's, well after the war, when I was living there.

Did you still have all your gear?

That counts. I had a lot of my gear and the council and locals and everything

35:00 were all down on Town Beach with the fireworks and there were rockets going up and all sorts of things, so I thought to myself 'I've still got those two Two Star Reds at home' so I dashed up. I thought nobody will see these in amongst all these skyrockets, boom, boom. Next thing, ka-bang, the lifeboat maroon went off. They

35:30 call it a maroon. It's a big thing like a mortar and they drop the charge in and fire it and it goes up and boom, big flare goes out and a terrific explosion and all the volunteer lifeboat men all over the island all raced to the lifeboat, hop in the lifeboat and launch it and out they go. And they're out there looking for the Two Star Red. The next day the copper [policeman] come up to me, we only had one copper there,

36:00 Sergeant Arwell. He come up to me and he said, "Goldie, that was you that fired that Two Star Red last night, wasn't it?" I said, "What Two Star Red?" He said, "Cut it out, you're the only one on the island

that would have one." And he said, "You launched the lifeboat." And I said, "Yeah," and I (demonstrates). He said, "Forget about it anyway, all the lifeboat crew are still laughing." Launched the bloody lifeboat. I don't know what

36:30 happened to the second one, I never fired it. I don't know what I did with it.

You mentioned your lucky scarf?

Yeah.

Did anyone else you flew with ever have a particular lucky charm or a talisman?

Not that I particularly know of. I don't know that my mate Johnny had any particular one, any particular thing that he took with him, don't know. I don't think that I ever told anyone that I always liked to wear that scarf

37:00 either. They probably didn't know. As I say, I don't even know where I got it from, but I've had it for so long, so I really can't say. I just don't know.

When you did get to the mess for a drink after an operation, what would you talk about?

Oh, I suppose we'd discuss what had happened

37:30 and, see, something I'd like to explain. The results of an op that you see in the log book, well for instance, 'Attacked a train west of Geisslegog, one loco destroyed and ten wagons

38:00 and several damaged'. You don't just come back and write that in. You're de-briefed when you get back and the de-briefing officer writes everything down that everybody tells him, all the claims that are made and then he forms an average and that's put up on the blackboard, and that's what you enter into your book.

38:30 You don't make wild claims about things that you did, well I don't anyway, and I never ever saw another pilot's log book. But he'd only have to have the same as I had, as regards to claims to ops.

Can you explain the differences between those claims and what the average work, give us an example of that?

Oh I can't really. I think we were all reasonably accurate with them.

39:00 **But what kind of claims are we talking about here?**

Well like I just said, attacking a freight train or a goods train as we call them out here. First up you knock the loco with rockets, render it useless, inoperable or even you might be lucky enough to blow it over and then you can get stuck into the

39:30 freight cars themselves, unless you're unlucky enough to strike a flak train. Of course the Germans got a bit tired of us knocking their trains off and they put flak wagons on them and they'd have these multiple barrel, up to eighty eight millimetres, boom, boom, boom, boom and they were pretty deadly. So they weren't all a piece of cake, as we called it. But you could make a pretty accurate

40:00 assessment of what you'd damaged and so on. It's not like air to air fighting where, whilst I was not involved in it, you can understand reading about it, where a fighter pilot might have a quick squirt at an enemy aircraft and see smoke coming out of it,

40:30 but then because suddenly another aircraft appears, he has a squirt at that, and then suddenly somebody, one of the enemy might have a sudden squirt at him and he's so busy that he doesn't know exactly what happened, unless he's had a chance to be isolated enough to follow it up or down, or whatever's going on. Or he's got a mate who was able to

41:00 see exactly what happened and confirm, so that's why you see in reports from fighter pilots that, you know, they claim one damaged or one possible destroyed or that sort of thing.

So in your case all the damage inflicted by different pilots was attributed equally to everybody, is that what you mean?

Yeah, in the one off, yeah, yeah.

We might have to stop there because the tapes off.

Tape 6

00:31 **Norm, just back to the Typhoon, it's not an aircraft that you meet a lot of pilots who have flown this plane. I'd just like you to take us through the plane a little bit, you know. As you get into the cockpit, what do you see and how do you prepare a Typhoon for flight?**

Well the old Sabre, as I was talking about earlier, a bit of a temperamental engine and you had to study your

01:00 cylinder head temperatures closely before you primed the carburettor and the cylinder. See you had two priming pumps in the cockpit, which primed pure petrol. Now one gave you a certain amount of squirts depending on how many you thought was needed into the carburettor and the other one primed a squirt directly into one cylinder.

01:30 Now when you switched off a Sabre, when you came back and taxied in and switched off, you did not turn the switch off, you pulled what they called a slow running cut-out. You set the throttle idle, pulled a slow running cut-out which cut the petrol off and the engine slowly ran down and stopped and therefore your carburettor's dry. And when you

02:00 come to prime it to start, a certain number of primes to the carburettor and a certain one and a half, perhaps two primes into the cylinder head, depending on the cylinder head temperature. If you under-primed it, it wouldn't go, if you over-primed it, it wouldn't go, because the Sabre engine was turned over by a cartridge. Did not have an electric starter and there was a

02:30 five cylinder doover-lackey down below there in the cockpit, which held five large, shotgun type cartridges and you pulled the cartridges round into line with the cylinder and when you fired it, it drove a piston down which threw a series of gearing, whirled the engine round.

03:00 So it wasn't a case of like in a motor car, press the starter button, pump the accelerator until it fired. No way, if you didn't have it right it didn't go. And the instructions were 'no more than three cartridge attempts'. If it didn't fire then, you got out, forgot it. And because of that we always took spare aircraft with us. Now if

03:30 four aircraft were going off on a scheduled operation, scheduled target or perhaps on a long range armed reccie, a fifth aircraft went with them, hopefully. Because if one didn't start on the tarmac, perhaps the fifth one would and apart from that if they all started the five went. But after ten minutes in the air if nothing went wrong with the four that were scheduled

04:00 for the op, the fifth one, which was a spare turned around and came back. That's what it was like. They were a temperamental engine, I can tell you.

Can you describe letting that shot-gun cartridge off to start it? Was it very noisy? Does it go off like a bang?

I don't know, yeah, went off with a terrific bang.

04:30 Perhaps you've heard something similar with some of these compressed air starters on these big rigs? You've heard them start up with the compressed air starters? Something like that. They just went off with a huge bang. Like a very much bigger twelve gauge shot-gun cartridge and hopefully your motor fired. If you read up on Typhoons, like in my book there, you'll see one place there it says

05:00 'many a time two or three Typhoons were left sitting on the tarmac banging away, trying to start.' So they were a temperamental engine.

What was the cylinder head temperature, why did that, how did you know how much petrol to put in the cylinder head temperature?

Well, see in your motor car you've got a water temperature, like my motor car,

05:30 not being a modern one it has a temperature gauge, where the modern one doesn't have one. Just has a red light that comes on if you get too hot. Well mine's got a temperature gauge, well we had what they called a cylinder head temperature, which is what you've got in a motor car with a temperature gauge, is the cylinder head temperature. And that gauge is in the head of the engine and registers the temperature of the coolant and that gives you a general overall temperature of the motor.

06:00 Being closest to the combustive chambers that is where the most sensitive part of the temperature is and if you didn't put the correct mixture in, I likened it to a two-stroke engine. Two-stroke engines are very temperamental and you can have fuel, and you can have air,

06:30 and you'll think it's just right but the damn thing won't go, just won't go, refuses to go. Perhaps because the cylinder head temperatures not right. You've got a hot and a cold start on it, and if it's a cold morning like this morning, and you want to mow your lawn you set your throttle to cold start, hopefully it will go, but sometimes it won't. Doesn't matter what you do with them, they're so temperamental. The Sabre was like that. It wanted just that right mixture

07:00 of 'petroil', as you might like to call it, petrol and oil, petrol and air, for the temperature to fire. If it was the slightest, if you had the slightest little bit too much fuel, it destroyed that fuel oil mixture and it effectively flooded that cylinder. See it fired first on that one cylinder, then the rest took up as soon as it started going round.

Why were you only allowed

07:30 **three attempts?**

I don't know. I never asked and never found out. But that's what we were told 'only use three cartridges. If it won't fire then, give it up.' I don't know.

What else about the Typhoon? What about the gun sight?

Well it had the normal reflector sight that all fighter aircraft had and you know, it reflected your radicule and your ring up onto the

08:00 windscreen and you had your circle and your two bars, top and bottom, and you, in air to air fighting, for instance, you could adjust those bars so that if you were going to attack a fighter, say a

08:30 ME109, with a wing span of about of forty feet, you could adjust these four bars to come in, so that when that wing span, not matter what angle you were on, just about filled those bars, that was your correct distance. At say, with machine gun fire, two hundred yards, a hundred and fifty to two hundred yards,

09:00 with cannon fire we could go up to about seven fifty yards. And that would give you just the correct range to open fire on him, provided you allowed just a little bit for deflection and that sort of thing. Just the usual reflector sight.

Did you have to adjust it for the height of the pilot?

Oh no, we had seat adjustment.

09:30 We could lift our seat up and down. I suppose if he was a great tall bloke you could drop it down, so he didn't have to get right down like that. Me, being a short bloke, I had my seat up all the time.

How did you go with reaching the pedals on the?

No trouble. I had no trouble with Hurricanes or the Typhoon, neither with the Miles Master advance trainer, no trouble.

10:00 **Can you describe getting in and out of the machine?**

Well in the Hurricane you got in on the port side, a la horse riding. The Typhoon you got in the right hand side. I never asked but I think there was a reason for that. When the Typhoon first came out, it had a fixed

10:30 hood and a car type door on the side and it was on the right hand side. The reason for that being that on the left hand side you've got your throttle and mixture and radio and all the rest of it. So that was fixed down that side, so you got in on the right hand side. Later models, the one I flew, the Mark 1B, it had a sliding canopy and the cockpit was filled in and you climbed over it and got in.

11:00 Which was much better than the old type, the original type and also much easier to get out of in the event of having to bail out. In the earlier type there was a few pilots lost, just trying to get out of the damn thing when they bailed out. Even apart from the fact that they might jettison the door, which could be done, they still had to get out sideways with the hood still over the top of them and those parachutes are

11:30 large and bulky you know, and they catch, whereas with the sliding hood type, the procedure for getting out. Two procedures we were told. I never had to bail out thankfully, was to pull up to the stall and then kick this thing forward and you'd undone everything by then and you'd shoot out the top.

12:00 Well the other one was to roll over and kick the stick and the nose would go up and you'd come down. You'd just drop straight down. That was the two procedures told us and thankfully I didn't have to use it.

Can you describe the armament that you were carrying?

What on the Typhoon?

Yes.

We had four long barrelled oerlikan twenty millimetre cannon

12:30 in the main planes, two on each side and very effective. I think it gave us about twenty two seconds of continuous fire, I think. But you only fired short bursts, two or three seconds at a time and we had two bomb racks, two under each main plane

13:00 on which we could carry two five hundred pounder, two one thousand pounder bombs in which case we then became what they called a 'bombphoon', but when we were not using bombs but we were using rackets, rockets, because we had rocket rails as well, under each main plane and there were four rails under each main plane. When we were not using bombs

13:30 and we were going on a long range armed reccie, we had two forty gallon long range fuel tanks on the

bomb racks, jettisonable and we carried eight rockets on the rocket rails. We would carry eight rockets of a high explosive, with up to a ninety pound warhead with

14:00 armour piercing for tanks, or any of that sort of thing, army personnel carriers or anything. You could carry eight seventy pound head armour piercing rockets. In the event of attacking, say a factory where you come down absolutely vertical and fire your rockets straight down through the roof of a big factory, we would carry sixteen ninety

14:30 pound warhead high explosive rockets and they double banked, one under the other, and then they had something like an adaptor plug where the two electric leads were plugged into the back and you could either fire two at a time or you could fire salvo, and your selected pair or salvo, on your selector

15:00 and your firing button was on top of your throttle and your throttle was a fairly thick one and your firing button was on top with the wires down through it obviously. And you could fire, select pairs, just two went at a time, from outside inwards and we could fire them in what we called ripple effect if we were say, taking an aerodrome and there

15:30 was a line of aircraft, you could set pairs and as you swept over the line you fired ripple effect, just two at a time as you went over and hopefully destroy a fairly large number of aircraft.

Can you tell us about, I mean rockets were, rocketry is fairly new in this sort of warfare?

Yeah, it was, it was.

How did you learn

16:00 **about that?**

I don't know. They were very effective and depending on how conscientious you was as to how close you got to your target, depending on the amount of firepower coming back at you, they were deadly. You could put them spot on.

16:30 **Before we go on to talk about some of those raids specifically I just want to stay on the aeroplane, is there any other characteristics that of the Typhoon that made it a particularly unique aeroplane to fly.**

Oh I don't know. Due to the very powerful motor, two thousand eight hundred horse power at full throttle,

17:00 and being placed in the nose of the aircraft with a fourteen foot prop, it had a tremendous amount of torque, absolutely tremendous amount of torque and it swung to starboard, which any right hand propeller revolution will do. And it swung to starboard. And if you opened up the

17:30 throttle too quickly it was very hard to control and I did exactly, on my second take-off, as a top notch squadron leader fighter pilot, highly decorated did on his take off on a Typhoon,

18:00 and I've got it written there, I've got his account there, written in a book I've got, and he did the same as I did. Opened up too fast and couldn't control the swing to starboard. As a matter of fact, at Ashton Down, where the conversion course was, they pulled down F Hangar, which was all lined up down this side of the aerodrome if you were

18:30 taking off that way, of course, A, B, C, D, E, F Hangar. F Hangar was taken down because there was so many Typhoons ploughing into it and when I went there for my conversion and after reading up on the pilot's handling notes in the book, the instructor fellow as we called them, the tour

19:00 expired fellow, he said, "Well, you're happy?" and I said, "Yeah, I reckon," and he said, "Well I'll just tell you one thing, don't you try a Scilly Isles take off on this." So I just thought to myself 'what's he know about the Scilly Isles takeoff? Wonder if he was down there at one time?' He said, "You just open the throttle progressively, otherwise you will not control that swing to starboard, put full port rudder

19:30 on and full port rudder trim and open up gently. You've got plenty of runway, go away for half an hour, get the feel of the aircraft. If you're happy, come back and land and if you feel like it, if you're happy with the aircraft, go away for an hour and do some aerobatics and things and make yourself familiar." I said, "Righto." So I took off

20:00 quite nicely and when I come back and landed I thought 'lot of BS [bullshit] I think, this is not fierce, it's a kitty-cat', so Norman does the right thing, or the stupid thing, he put down thirty degrees of flap, put on full port rudder trim, wound her up against the brakes, planted his foot on the port rudder, opened her up and she went (demonstrates)

20:30 and I'm heading, I don't know, forty degrees from take off, heading straight for a hangar, full throttle, and no hope of stopping because there wasn't enough grass left. And there's these aircraft in front of the hangar, with various bods working on them and of course, they heard it coming and they're all jumping off and running left, right and centre, and I just held it wide open and hoped for the best.

21:00 And I adjust it off and cleared the hangar, and I don't think I would have cleared the hangar if I hadn't

have lifted the under cart the second I felt lift, gee it was close. And anyway since the war and so on, getting these books and that and reading them up, I thought 'oh well, I wasn't the only stupid fella, there was far more experienced men than me, did the same thing.' And when I got back this instructor blokes standing in the dispersal door way, grinning at me as I walked in. He said, "You did, didn't you,

21:30 you tried it?" He said, "Anyway, good luck to you, you got away with it."

How was it you had enough runway to get off?

Beg your pardon?

How was it you had enough runway to, even though you'd gone off the runway, you could still take off?

I was just running across the grass. I was just lucky, just lucky there was enough room. See, a lot of fellows,

22:00 I assume, might have throttled back and hoped to stop and you'd be very lucky to stop at that speed because there wasn't enough grass left and if you brake too hard, you're going to spin over or slide into whatever's in front of you, probably wreck two or three other aircraft as well.

What would you be doing at that time?

22:30 What speed wise?

No, control wise?

I had full port rubber on and flat out.

Were you trying to get the tail up, so you could get rudder control?

I had the tail up, I had the tail up to take off, yeah. I just felt the, you know, that tail coming up and then I just felt that slightest little bit of lift. Soon as I felt that little bit of lift, back with the stick and up with the under cart.

23:00 And it was either that, or if she didn't lift well she'd have stalled straight in and that would have been the end of me and probably several others. But it did, thankfully.

And did you try that type of take-off again?

No, not in a Tiffie, no way. We were able as we got more hours up on them to progressively open up a bit quicker,

23:30 because you were aware of what was going to happen, and you got to the point where you could judge just how quickly to open it up. And depending on what sort of a load you had on, in the way of long range tanks, rockets, bombs or whatever, just how far you would go before you should get lift, what speed you should have on your ASI [Air Speed Indicator] before you get lift. You know and things that come with

24:00 experience and hours of flying on them.

These aircraft had quite a bad reputation though, didn't they?

Well they got a bad reputation throughout the service because of their initial problems, but as I say, they were mainly cured. The carbon monoxide problem was

24:30 cured very simply. Just go on oxygen from start up to shut down.

What was the carbon monoxide problem?

Coming into the cockpit from the exhausts and when the engine was running and you were flying, carbon monoxide instead of passing straight down the fuselage on either side, used to come into the cockpit through the ventilating affair, you see. You flew with your hood shut all the time. We

25:00 had these bubble hoods and it wasn't realised for a while why pilots, or why aircrafts were just, for no apparent reason, just peeling off or rolling over and diving in. And pilots were becoming unconscious with carbon monoxide, so they fixed that very simply, they put in an extra oxygen bottle

25:30 and we flew on oxygen right from engine start up to shut down, even why you were taxing. So that was soon fixed. The ombenage problem they virtually fixed with their discovery of rudder shudder giving metal fatigue, and the Sabre main problem with the

26:00 gearing and the sleeve valve actuating gear was solved with the co-operation of Bristol. But the Sabre had a problem of leading up the plugs because we had to use one hundred and thirty octane fuel, which was very heavily leaded and the Sabre did not like low revs. Even taxing round, if you had to taxi the full

26:30 half circle of the big airfield before you got to your take-off point, depending on the wind direction, you could lead the plugs up just taxing round at low revs and you engine would start to misfire and so on

and alternatively if you tried to taxi with higher revs to avoid that

27:00 your brakes overheated holding the aircraft back and you'd blow a tyre. And that did happen too. So to overcome that we developed a system of taxiing with our armourer sitting on the starboard wing with his legs around the outboard cannon fairing and

27:30 he signalled and we just watched him all the time. Because with a tail down aircraft and your nose up there like that, and such a big nose, you've got no idea what's in front of you. You can't see a thing. And prior to that you had to taxi like that and the taxi tracks weren't very wide, so you were using your brake a lot, and because you had to keep your

28:00 revs up, away would go your tyre. So the armourer, who had to come out with us anyway to plug in the rockets, which were never plugged in until you turned onto the runway, we had him sitting out on the outboard cannon and he would signal 'a little bit of right, a little bit of right', so you put a bit of port brake on and swing that, 'a little bit of left, a little bit of left, straighten up'.

28:30 And 'come back, come back, you're getting too close to the one in front' or 'stop' and we developed those signals and that way we could taxi with a fair number of revs on and not burn our brakes out and not overheat the tyre and blow them. Previous to that the armourer's used to come out on the back of a truck

29:00 and meet us out at the takeoff point, and as each aircraft turned onto the runway, two armourer's ran over, one to one side and one to the other side, and they plugged the rockets in from the outside, no, from the inside out, so that they're not standing in front of a rocket that's plugged in, in case of a misfire. And they plug in, then plug in then plug in and plug in then move out and say 'go'. We lost one armourer at Volkel.

29:30 Familiarity breeds contempt. He stood behind them and plugged two at a time, a short circuit in the wiring and they went off and burnt him badly, right through the middle, with a rocket blast and he died.

Did you know him?

No, not personally, no.

Can you describe what would happen when you were using the cannon,

30:00 **what the plane felt like when you were shooting the cannon in the Typhoon?**

Just shuddered a bit. I never had the time to look because I would be busy doing everything else but I never had the time to look at how much airspeed they knocked back. But the recoil did knock some airspeed off, only a few miles an hour, but it did.

30:30 But the cannon just made the aircraft shudder a bit, but you could hear them, you could hear them go off, hear them flying.

Where was the firing

Uh?

Where was the trigger on the?

Oh on the, on your spade grip. On the top of your control column it's got a circle on it which was called a spade grip and on the right hand corner there was the firing button, and flying like that all the time,

31:00 and your hand's on the button. The button's got a ring on it, safe, fire, safe, fire, so you turn it round to fire and ready to go at any time and remember to put it onto safe when you come back to land. Because we had a pilot once who came back to land, hadn't used all his ammo, still had his firing button on 'fire' and he pulled up in front of the

31:30 control area, pulled the stick back in his guts to open up the throttle a bit to pull the slow running cut out, and the button pressed against his parachute harness and cannons went off, in the dispersal area, boom, boom, boom, boom. So he wasn't very popular with anybody.

Had to buy a round of drinks at the mess then? How did you go with your

32:00 **thumb that you'd cut off as a young carpenter?**

No trouble, no trouble. I've got two pairs of gloves in there with the fingertips worn through. Both of them. I had that thumb shortened so I did not have that flap of loose leather at the top. Gave me no trouble. I've got them inside there still.

Was it cold inside the canopy, inside the cockpit?

No, not in the Typhoon, we had cockpit heaters,

32:30 the Typhoon had cockpit heaters and during the winter over there when it was very, very cold it was quite comfortable inside the cockpit of a Typhoon. The Hurricane was a different thing. When we were

doing convoy patrols in the Hurrie, in the winter it could be minus forty out over the ships, out over the Atlantic there

33:00 and in the Hurricane you had to have the cockpit hood back for visual, because as you probably realised the Hurricane cockpit had these metal bars across with little Perspex squares in them, so visibility was hampered a bit. Plus the fact that being so cold outside would tend to fog up a bit, if you had it shut, inside.

33:30 And so you had to have it open for visibility and cruising at two hundred mile an hour, economical cruising around the convoy, you were making your own wind and a certain amount of that flying past would come into the cockpit and buff it around a bit. Used to be very cold.

On patrol what happens if you wanted to go to the bathroom?

You just made sure you went before you went, that's all about it.

34:00 But our longest patrol would only be two and a half hours, so it was no problem.

Couldn't take a bottle with you?

Hardly, you'd have a job to find it anyway with all the gear you've got on. You've got your Mae West on, with straps that go underneath there, and come up and fasten onto your Mae West, so it doesn't ride up if you have to jump into the water.

34:30 Then you put your parachute on and it's got a loop that comes up like that, and then your side straps come up through the loop and they fasten onto your, into the quick release buckle. These here come down and fasten in. Then you got your aircraft sutton harness, two straps that come down like that. You've got another one that comes across here, these two buckle into there. You've got two that

35:00 come up here and buckle into there, so you're padded out like that with a lot of gear. You've got your Mae West on as well and that's out there like that. You've got a lot of gear on. You'd have to be a pretty well built bloke to find it, I think.

When you were flying ground attack did the Typhoon have any armour to protect the pilot?

Yeah. We had a, I think it was about eight plate armour steel under the cockpit

35:30 and under the motor to help against ground fire. And I can tell you a story on that too. I lost my radio on this attack, ground attack, and of course when you get back, the ground crew come around, "Any problems with the aircraft?" and so on.

36:00 "No problems, except my radio packed up." "Right-o." So when I came out of de-briefing, 'Sparks' was waiting and he said, "Would you like to come and have a look at your radio?" I said, "I suppose so, I don't know, all radios look the same." Well the radio was behind the cockpit, and behind the armour plate, which was behind the pilot. The pilot had armour plate behind him as well as the other under

36:30 the cockpit. And there was a door at the side of the fuselage and the radio was on a roller rack and if the radio packed up, they just disconnected, rolled it out, rolled another one in and reconnected, see? And here he had it, he had it part way out and it's smashed, and I said, "How did that happen? Got hit with something." He said, "Yeah, have a look underneath." So we had a look underneath the aircraft

37:00 and right underneath the radio, not elongated but perfectly round, was a twenty millimetre hole. I said, "Looks like a twenty mill. Got it?" And he said, "Yeah, I've been thinking about that." He said, "Where did you lose your radio, do you reckon?" "'I think just as I, I don't know 'cause I was in the middle of a ground attack." And he said, "You would have been down tree top height wouldn't you?" And I said,

37:30 "Yeah." "And you would have been doing about five hundred mile an hour?" And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "That hole is dead round." "Yeah?" He said, "You're doing five hundred mile an hour at tree top height, and that shells coming up at so many thousands of feet a second," and he said, "it only hit that far behind you," he said, "could you measure the time between there

38:00 and going straight up your bum? Wouldn't have been much would it?" Although with the armour there it might have helped to stop it. Wouldn't have been much in it.

Did you think about your own mortality? Did this worry you at all?

No, as I said earlier I don't think so. I don't think I worried about it at all. You probably think

38:30 after an attack 'that was a hairy one, but I'm ok, so what.' I don't think there was any bravado about it and, but I can't remember losing any sleep or actually worrying. You took one day at a time, I suppose. Knew it could happen, hoped it didn't,

39:00 I suppose.

What was your favourite aeroplane?

Oh the Hurrie. The Hurrie was the nicest to fly, but the Typhoon was the deadlier of the two as far as

knocking the enemy about was concerned. The Hurricane just wasn't as powerful, couldn't

39:30 carry as much. The Hurricane used to carry eight rockets. They used them in the Western Desert with rockets on. They used them also in the Western Desert with two forty millimetre cannon, one under each main plate. A Vickers I think they were, a Vickers cannon, forty mill [millimetre]. They used them against the tanks.

Did the Hurricane have some parts that were wooden construction?

No, no wooden construction that I know of. We had canvas covering on the fuselage from the cockpit

40:00 back but we had all metal wings and metal over the fuselage round the cockpit.

Must have been Mosquito I'm thinking of, yeah.

Beg your pardon?

The Mosquito I'm thinking of.

Oh, the Mosquito, yeah that was mainly all wood.

Tape 7

00:32 **Just before we finished talking about the Typhoon, you mentioned there was a particular aeroplane that you liked flying, can you tell us about that one? A particular Typhoon?**

The Typhoon? Ah, BRN, or BR was the Squadron letters anyway and what happened there was one of my aircraft that I brought back, that I explained

01:00 earlier, was pretty much knocked about so I flew over to England, in a supply Dakota to pick up a replacement. I had the night there and the next morning I go down to the servicing place and I see this rather dilapidated, scratched,

01:30 and a bit dinted Typhoon sitting over there. I thought it must be a Squadron hacker or runabout or something, and the flight sergeant said, "Oh yeah, that's your Typhoon over there." I said, "It looks a bit of a wreck doesn't it?" He said, "The ferry pilot that flew it down said it's the nicest Typhoon he's ever flown,

02:00 handles beautifully and he said it has got a brand new Sabre in it." And I thought 'that doesn't mean much as far as Sabre's go.' I said, "Oh all right, but I'm taking it up for an air test before I head over the other side with it." So I phoned control 'yes ok, up you go' and it was a beauty. It was so smooth,

02:30 and the controls were so smoothly run in and it just felt that I was part it, it was absolutely beautiful. And it went well and when I got it back over there some of the others made a remark about 'where did you get that old lump of irons from?' or something like that. There's a photograph in the book there, which you can see later of what happened to it.

03:00 Two days after I left it a, two days after I broke my wrist I was flown over to England and it was on the runway apparently preparing to take off and another Typhoon come in and landed on top of it. There's a photograph of it there in the book, but they repaired it. They put a new fuselage on it and away it went, five days.

03:30 **How did you identify the different aircraft?**

How do you mean identify?

This was called BRN?

BR was the Squadron letters. Every aircraft belonging to 184 Squadron started with BR and then they had an identification letter of their own. And in which case this one happened to be Norman, N. I just picked N for Norman, that's all. N for Nuts or whatever you like to say. And also a Hurricane I had, I had N on it. That's the

04:00 one that's lying at the bottom of the Atlantic as far as I know.

Did you choose that N for Norman or was it assigned to you?

Yeah, just said that will do me, N for Norman, N for Nuts, in the first instance, yes.

Did you ever paint anything on the outside of these planes to identify them or?

One, on N for Nuts they reckoned I had Betty on it, but that's the one that Dick was in and that's down on the bottom of the Atlantic,

04:30 so but he didn't last long.

Was it common for pilots to write the names of their girlfriends on the?

We didn't do a lot of it in the RAAF apparently. The Yanks used to do a lot of it, I believe. There wasn't a lot done of it in the RAF. I did it on this one and said 'well that's my aeroplane'. When that happened I said 'that's the end of that, won't do it anymore.'

Was it bad luck or something

05:00 **to have a name on?**

I don't know. I just thought it must have been then. After Dick said, it wasn't long after I put the name on that Dick went off in it that morning and it happened and it was serviceable and ready to go and they assigned him to that one and he never returned, so I wouldn't do it anymore.

Betty was a Hurricane?

Yeah, yeah.

BRN was your favourite Typhoon?

05:30 Yeah.

Did anybody else paint anything of note that you recall on the outside of their aircraft?

No, only on my Tiffie. There was another Warrant Officer, an RAF type, I think his name was Costello, Costello or Costello,

06:00 he shot down a (UNCLEAR) 1590 in it, and apparently there was no air to air dogfight or anything. It was flying along minding it's own business, probably with a cadet pilot in it or something and he broke formation against orders. We were not to attack anything, only defend ourselves if necessary.

06:30 And dove down straight behind it, it never moved, he just pranged it from the back with his cannon and it went straight in. And he got the ground crew to paint a little swastika on the side of it, BRN. It wasn't mine and I didn't approve of it but he did it and he happened to be in that aircraft so he decided to paint it on.

07:00 **How were the Typhoon's painted?**

Oh, camouflage painting, but not very prominent. Not very vivid green and grey, it was sort of diffused and, of course, as time wore on and they got more and more walked on, the main planes got walked over with the armourers reloading the cannons and the fuellers walking over it putting fuel in the main tanks

07:30 and so on. But sometimes there wasn't a lot of camouflage paint left on them.

Was there any cockpit lighting in a Typhoon?

There was but we didn't need it in the daytime.

Did you ever fly one at night?

No. They, this Squadron Leader Roland Beaumont, I spoke about earlier, he experimented by flying across the Channel at night and attacking

08:00 trains, but he found the cockpit lighting was too bright and that it reflected up onto the windscreen and hood and he spoke about it and said it made it very difficult and dangerous at low level attacking trains at night. But apparently they didn't do anything about it. They just didn't bother to fly them anymore at night. That's in the book I've

08:30 got inside, on the Tiffie.

Did you ever fly any aircraft at night during your career?

Oh the Hurricane. Not from the Scilly Isles. It was hard enough landing there in the day time, let alone night and of course there was no night lighting landing facilities or anything. But up at Scotland when I finished my operational training course

09:00 up there, they said, "We'd like to give you a bit of experience night fighting, as a night fighter, because you're good on instrument flying." And whenever I had spare time and nothing else to do, I'd go down to the Link trainer and fly the Link, which most pilots used to steer away from. They couldn't be bothered. And I did two or three

09:30 night patrols. I got vectored once onto a possible by radar, never saw it and got to the point where they said 'go visual', which meant that our two blips had come together, and the big worry then was 'am I going to fly into him.' I didn't see him, didn't see a thing. And what apparently we were doing, or I was doing

10:00 with others, was trying to catch low flying Dornier's coming in laying mines, at the entrance to the

harbours and locks and things up there in Scotland at night time. And of course they'd come over on dark, overcast, moonless nights and the aircraft were painted black and they had their exhaust stubs

10:30 shrouded. I never ever saw one, even though I was vectored onto him. I said to them, "I like night flying but I didn't like that." And first up before you went off you were in the mess for a couple of hours, in the dispersal for a couple of hours with real dark red glasses on and then when you went outside you couldn't see a thing. They'd have to lead you to your aircraft.

11:00 And when you fired up ready to taxi there'd be a vehicle in front of you and a bloke on the back with a torch and you followed that torch. And he'd take you right out to the runway and you line up on your DG, Directional Gyro with your compass on the runway. By that time you've got your glasses off, of course, out in the open

11:30 your control would give you a green and then bingo, the runway lights would come on. Woosh, the second you lifted the deck, runway lights went out and up you went. Because the Germans used to send aircraft over to prowl around looking for such a thing as that and try and catch aircraft taking off and landing. And then you'd take off and obey whatever they told you on the radio.

12:00 You kept strict radio silence. 'Vector so and so climb to three and a half thousand' and you'd do that. 'Level out, vector so and so' and you'd fly on that heading and after a while 'reciprocal' and you'd do a U turn and come back again. And no cockpit lighting, you didn't put any cockpit lighting on and you just relied on whatever fluorescents was in the instruments

12:30 from what they'd picked up during the day time. And you couldn't see anything on these dark, moonless, overcast nights and flying under cloud and the whole countryside's blacked out, no moonlight to reflect off the water. You couldn't even pick up the coastline most of the time and you were just sitting there

13:00 in the dark and all you could hear would be a faint hiss of atmospherics in the headphones until control called you and with no lighting, no lights on the ground, no nothing, no relative speed because there was nothing to see. And your air speed indicators saying two hundred knots and you feel like you could get out and go for a walk. And then

13:30 when that's over and they bring you back then they start landing you on their radar, which was a little bit primitive in those days and they had a, they used to have a mobile radar van, out at the end of the runway and it had two scanners, one (demonstrates) horizontal, one vertical. The operator would be sitting in there with perhaps a officer with him,

14:00 both watching the screen, and they're bringing you down on radio, 'half a degree to port, increase your rate of descent by one hundred, you're too high, straighten up, you're in line with the runway now.' And you're watching your altimeter come down and you're getting down to a hundred feet and you still can't see anything and you hope they know what they're

14:30 doing and then suddenly 'go visual' and you bring your head up and have a look out the windscreen and the runway lights come on. With a bit of luck they're in front of you. If not they might be over there and you've got to go (demonstrates) and down on, and as soon as you pull up, you stop and the lights go out and you wait for this torch and follow him in.

You mentioned you didn't like that so much, was it?

I liked that, I

15:00 just didn't like the danger of running into the other aircraft when I couldn't see a damn thing.

How do you feel at that moment when you're out there, they've vectored you onto an aircraft and it's not there, and they say 'go visual', how did you feel at that moment?

Where is it? Where is it? And then you can't see a damn thing and you say 'damn it all, where is it? I might be flying into it, I can't see it.' You know, I think for those few, perhaps long seconds you might be afraid.

15:30 Afraid you're going to run into one more than anything, couldn't see a jolly thing.

It seems that whole experience is very different to the normal ethos of flying a fighter plane where you're in control most of the time, that time you're relying on other people?

Yeah, yeah, you're relying on the radar people.

How difficult was that?

I don't think I was ever worried, except as I say when they bring you in and your altimeter's getting awful low and you think to yourself 'I hope

16:00 they know what they're doing because we're getting awful low.' It would only be those last few seconds that you might think 'gee this is getting dangerous.' But apart from that I liked instrument flying and it never ever worried me. Other pilots that I knew just didn't like it. They didn't like instrument flying. It was a strange feeling. You can get the feeling that you're turning,

16:30 you can get the feeling that you're aircraft's going like that, but your instruments tell you that you're flying dead, straight level and you've got to obey those instruments and disregard your feeling. It depends a lot on the health of the person, on the canals in the ears where the fluid circulates backwards and forward in the canals in your ears as you turn your head.

17:00 And the person can be perfectly healthy and fit for flying and all the rest of it, but he might just have some little thing wrong with the balance in the ear and he thinks all the time he's flying straight and level, he feels sure he's going over, yet his instruments show he's going dead straight. And you've got to obey those instruments and that's possibly why some fellows didn't like

17:30 it.

Have you ever, either on those dark night flying or under hood flying ever experienced that spatial disorientation where you're not sure which way is up and which way is down?

I think momentarily I might have, at times, particularly when you're first starting, oh yes. Flying under the hood on the Tiger Moth, with very, very sparse instrumentation,

18:00 practically nothing, you still got used to it. But then they'd put you into various attitudes under the hood, like spinning under the hood and the only way you could tell which way you were spinning was by your skid and slip needle. And if you're spinning to starboard the bloody needle goes round to port,

18:30 because of the action of the aircraft and you've got apply the port rudder and ease the stick forward, because when you go into a spin you have the stick right back in your belly and full bloody starboard rudder on, and then he'll say, "Righto, straighten her up." So you shove the stick forward and then you watch that bloody skid and slip needle and put port rudder on and as soon as that needle starts to move to the centre, you sit back and centralise things otherwise it goes that way and the aircraft will start spinning the other way.

19:00 I reckon some of those instructors were brave, sitting up the front there with some bloke in the back and the instructor feeling like going 'aah, do it myself.'

Did you ever have cause to particularly frighten an instructor at any time during your training?

I don't think so. I didn't frighten him. When I was doing my final test with the chief flying instructor on the Wirraways and

19:30 "Now we'll do some aerobatics." "Right-o," and, of course, in the Wirraway the pilots in the front and the instructors in the back. He said, "I want you to do me a loop." Well that's the easiest aerobatic in the world, no trouble. So down goes Norman, picks up speed, and he got up about that far and suddenly realised he'd stalled. So he whacked the bloody stick back to

20:00 pull it over and she flicked and went like that (demonstrates). Did a perfect roll off the top and I'm flying along going that way, instead of that way, you see. Next minute a voice comes from the back, "Do you always do an Immelman when you are asked to do a loop?" "No sir." "What happened?" "I lost too much speed going

20:30 up, tried to pull her over the top, she stalled upside down and flicked." "Well you know what you did wrong, you know the consequences, you corrected magnificently, as a matter of fact it's the best roll of the top I've ever been in. I must practice that some time." And that's exactly what he said.

That manoeuvre is actually called an Immelman?

Immelman, it was invented by a German fellow in World War I, by a flyer called Immelman,

21:00 and where up to that time in air to air fighting everybody got used to them doing loops, he went up this way and went like that and the allied pilot followed him and didn't realise he was going to do that and just kept on going round and lost him. He was up there flying along and it's called Immelman training.

Seeing as we're talking about training I'll stay with some of the periods early in your career, can you tell me a bit about some of the people you

21:30 **flew with? Maybe we could start with Johnny Payne? Where did you first meet him?**

I met Johnny Payne first up in Scotland when we were doing our training on the Hurricanes and Johnny played a recorder, rather badly, and he used to drive me mad because

22:00 he was just, his room was right next to mine, damn recorder. And I got to know him there, but didn't become firm friends or anything and then when we finished the course there and I got the opportunity as I requested, to go onto these new Typhoons, and then I go to Horrabridge, New Plymouth and then I wasn't there long before I go to Portreath, back on Hurricanes and then I lobbed down to the Scilly Isles.

22:30 And down at the Scilly Isles there us NCO pilots were billeted in a guest house there called Springfields. So I turn up there and I'm shown down to my room and it was like an extended wing. I think it had been

an addition, added onto the building, long wing with rooms off one side. We're getting down there towards the end,

23:00 'it can't be, it can't be', it was, there's this bloody recorder going. It was Johnny Payne and we became good friends and flew together quite a lot.

Where did he hail from?

He came from Scarborough, up at Yorkshire and after the war he and his wife used to come down visit us at the Scilly Isles, stay down there.

23:30 He's dead now, heart attack. He managed a pub, he bought a pub, bought the licence of a pub at Kirby Moorside, just outside of Scarborough, some little way, Kirby Moorside. He took over the licence of a pub there and he used to send me

24:00 photos and I'd send him photos and he got bigger and bigger and bigger. I think he was drinking his profits away. The last photo he sent me he wrote on the back 'the fatness is purely an optical illusion' and I think it's in the little album I've got there and then not long after that I got a letter to say he'd passed away with a heart attack. I think he just drank too much profits,

24:30 put on too much weight.

What kind of a young man was he? What was it that made you two friends? Obviously wasn't his recorder playing?

No, it wasn't his recording playing, that's for sure. I don't know, I don't know. We just clicked and it must have been mutual because as soon as I rang him up after we finished there, and so on and said, "Johnny I don't feel like doing instructing or flying a desk, I'm going to volunteer, what do you think about it?

25:00 Would you like to come with me?" He said, "Yes." No hesitation.

You mentioned he'd been up on a charge at some point that meant he couldn't go above sergeant, was he a bit of a larrikin in some ways?

No, it was an unfortunate thing and I don't know how it happened. He doesn't know how it happened, but he took the Tiger Moth from the Scilly's across to Portreath one time on some errand or another, and how he ever

25:30 lost control of the Tiger Moth on take off, I do not know. But he ploughed into a row of Spitfires and destroyed many thousand of pounds worth of bloody Spitfires, wrecked the Moth as well. So he was court martialled. I don't know what the charge was, careless flying or some bloody thing or other. He was a flight sergeant then and they took his flight off him and reduced

26:00 him to sergeant, never to be promoted above sergeant. It wasn't a bad misdemeanour, something went wrong, I don't know. I don't know how he ever did it and he doesn't know himself. He said, "I don't know. I opened the throttle and I was taking off and the next minute these Spitfire's were coming at me." He said, "I couldn't miss them." No brakes on a Moth or anything, couldn't stop.

What about you? What kind of a young man had you become

26:30 **by the time you were over in England during the war?**

I don't know.

Phrase the question differently, what did you do when you were away from flying? How did you spend your time and what did you get up to?

Well on the Scilly Isles we spent a fair bit of time, us pilots, down on the two naval boats, because we got a free run and we

27:00 could turn up there anytime when we were off duty and not flying. And the coxswains would splice the main brace, as they called it and we'd go down into the cabin and get stuck into the rum. We did a lot of that. We also did a lot of drinking in the pubs. When we came off duty up on the airstrip, quite often there mightn't be a driver or a car available

27:30 perhaps for two hours or so, well we just sat down and talked or played cards or whatever. It was a quiet existence, pleasurable, good company.

How much did you miss home?

Not a lot, really. I didn't.

28:00 Prior to enlisting I mainly had two main friends. We used to go biking riding and that together and perhaps go to the pictures occasionally, go skating, roller skating. Things we could afford, little things we could afford. We never belonged to any gangs.

28:30 I don't think I missed anything much. I suppose I missed my parents a bit, I don't know. I had plenty of

friends over there, in the RAF.

Can you tell us about some of the other figures, important people, that you served with, at anytime during your career?

Important people

29:00 I served with?

Not important in the sense that they're high ranking or something, but people that were important in your life, people that you remember? Friends, officers?

No, mainly Johnny Payne I suppose. We were together so long. Before Dick got killed, disappeared, whatever, him and I were good friends.

29:30 He came from Melbourne and whilst I was friendly with Johnny then, more so with Dick I suppose. I hadn't known him before. Only met him on the Islands. Poor old Dick, but then he was killed. But we were all, on there on the Islands we were all good friends. It was a happy sort

30:00 of big family affair. Only being a flight, not a full squadron, only a limited number of pilots and we were friendly with all the ground crew and so on. And there was no such thing as parades, neither was there over in Europe either on the Typhoons. No such thing as parades, no pomp and ceremony, no saluting and all that sort of thing.

30:30 And we lived in this guest house. We lived as guests there. The proprietor and his wife would send up meals when we were up at the flight. If we were up at the flight all day, they'd send lunch up with one of the air force vans, one of our vans would go and collect lunch and send it up, a nice hot lunch up there.

31:00 And we were treated the same as their guests. We had it in the dining room with them when we were there for main meal. In the mornings if we were on first shift in the mornings we'd start flying at three o'clock in the morning in the summertime, because it was light at three o'clock in the morning. It wasn't dark until eleven o'clock at night.

31:30 That's Jean just come home. And we'd know what time the van, the driver was going to call for us and if you wanted you got up half an hour early and we cooked our own bacon and eggs and toast in the kitchen. And that would be our breakfast. But then later on, at the right time, up would come some more. She'd send some more up

32:00 with van at eight o'clock or something like that. It was a great life.

Probably because they're a quite small local community, what was your relationship with them like?

Good, good. They got on well, we got on well with them, possibly because we were there keeping the enemy away. See there was a very important radar station, on the highest point of the Island, known

32:30 as Telegraph Hill and it had a good, clean sweep out over the North Atlantic and could pick up submarines on the surface recharging their batteries, even at night. And the Sunderland's and Liberator's of Coastal Command, they had what they called Leigh lights on them,

33:00 big flood lights fixed underneath the main planes and this radar station could pick up a sub at night recharging his batteries on the surface and direct some of these aircraft there and they'd switch on their Leigh light and bomb the subs. So initially before the Hurricanes went there, the Germans bombed the place two or three times. Never hit the radar station, they killed a few civilians.

33:30 And the RAF put this strip in and sent a handful of Hurricanes down quickly. I wasn't with the first lot and the Germans didn't come over anymore. The Hurricanes were there to come up and meet them on the way because the radar would pick them coming and send the Hurricanes up to meet them. So possibly because there was never another raid after that,

34:00 the pilots were well accepted.

You were doing a lot of search and rescue work and reconnaissance work from the Scilly Isles, but you didn't see a lot of active action, did you feel the lack of it? Did you want to get onto do other things in the war at that time?

No, not there. Well that was one reason for volunteering for another tour and one reason

34:30 for picking on the Tiffies when the group captain, or whoever he was, said he couldn't fit me into a Spittie, I picked on the Tiffies, because what they were doing sounded exciting.

Can you just explain that for us, what the Tiffies were doing when you joined them, what you knew of them when you joined up?

That they were doing ground attack work, attacking trains

35:00 and German infantry and aerodromes and all that sort of thing. I knew that, I didn't know about train flak until I found them, but I knew there was a lot of flak come up from these other installations,

because aerodromes and rocket launching sights and V2 sights and V1 sights, they were all heavily defended with flak.

35:30 I knew there would be that attached to it, but I hadn't experienced it and till you've experienced it, you only know about it or know of it. But when you've experienced it, you know about it. So that's how I came to that. I thought 'that sounds like a lot of fun' and it was fun to, I suppose, up to a point.

Can you tell us about how you first experienced active

36:00 **combat in that Squadron? What was your moment when you first realised what was going on?**

The first time I had flak I just thought 'hell, they're shooting at me'.

What were you doing? Can you take us through that moment?

I was attacking a bloody marshalling yard and they were always heavily defended round those marshalling yards because their railways were very important.

36:30 And down I go and I'm coming in, a fairly steep dive at this time I remember, getting everything lined up as you do on the range, allowing for a bit of wind drift, allowing for a bit of rocket drop, projectory drop as it's called, 'yes, just about the right height, yeah, down to twelve hundred feet, one thousand feet, eight hundred feet', whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, all these bloody streams of light coming

37:00 up past me, 'aah, they're shooting at me'. I can remember that, this didn't happen on the rocket range. Fired my rockets and got to hell out of it. I got my target too. I remember that.

Is the first time you experienced something like that always going to be one of the most memorable do you think?

Possibly, possibly. But I think the most memorable

37:30 attack I ever made resulted in nothing and it still scares me at times to think of it. We were, I don't know how many of us now, four, six, eight of us.

We're just about to run out of tape and I'd love to hear this story in some detail so maybe we'll just stop and change it and then you can tell it.

Tape 8

00:32 **Oh you were about to tell us about one of the most memorable events in your period, can you take us through it from the beginning?**

Well there were several of us, I don't remember, there could have been four, six, eight of us, on armed reconnaissance and Johnny was flying with me, Number Two, and we fly at twelve thousand feet on armed reconnaissance and

01:00 it was our most economical fuel height. Three hundred miles an hour was our most economical fuel speed and I see a truck at ten o'clock or around there, getting along a road and heading more or less in our direction. So I wasn't leading the flight. I called the leader up

01:30 and he said, "Right-o Goldie, you go down, we'll orbit." 'Cause we attacked anything that moved in the daylight if it was military, and down we go. And diving down from twelve thousand feet, vertically, because when you're flying along and see the truck, it's just down there, which is not far away from vertical. You pull up and roll over

02:00 and go down and roll around, so that you're facing your target and coming down on it and you're almost vertical and then in the last couple of thousand feet you ease off to come in fairly level on it and by this time you're doing five hundred miles an hour, and Johnny's following me and I'm just getting to the stage where I'm levelling out

02:30 and the thing's only, I don't know, a quarter of a mile away and I realised it's an open truck and there's colour on the back of it and I thought 'my God, that's not military'. All this happens in a split second cause I'm travelling awful fast and suddenly I think 'women' and I just hit the transmit button, "Hold your fire Johnny."

03:00 Johnny just comes back with, "Roger, Goldie." And in a split second later, "Abort Johnny, women and children." "Roger, Goldie." I roared over the top of it at nought feet, Johnny right behind me, and we just pulled straight up and joined the others. And that's how close I came to wiping out a truck load of women and kids going somewhere, it was in Germany. So that was a close one.

03:30 If they hadn't had been in an open truck, they might have got cleaned up. So I still shiver when I think of that one, how close that was.

How often do you have memories like that, that still make you shiver?

Not much, only when people start talking about it, like here. We don't talk anything much about it down at the club at all.

04:00 Our president who is a private pilot and got a commercial licence and does a lot of ferry trips around and so on, and he's a much younger man than me. He wasn't in the World War II, he's just turned sixty and he likes to talk to me occasionally about the flying part of it and of course, these sort of things come up.

04:30 But that's about all.

What is the image that comes back to you when you think about that event?

I don't know, a fright, a fright, a big fright. Just thinking about how close I come, because to the best of my knowledge, apart from dropping a couple of one thousand pound bombs on a factory in Maroa, I've never attacked anything but military,

05:00 to the best of my knowledge. Never attacked a passenger train, although it was pretty safe to assume that any passenger train that was moving during the daytime was carrying troops, because I think they, all Germany knew it was practically suicide to move in daylight with the Typhoons around the place.

05:30 When I was doing the building here in Goulburn, back in the fifties, there was a German come here with his wife and a couple of children, immigrated out, and he was building and Paul Weiker his name was. And we became friends through the trade, nice people, and speaking,

06:00 he was in the war, same age as me, and speaking about it, it came up about the crossing of the Rhine and Wesel, and he said, "Were you there?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Were you flying those Typhoon's there?" And I said, "Yeah." "Firing those rockets at us?" I said, "Yeah." "My God," he said, "they were terrible machines. We hated them.

06:30 If anyone said, "Achtung [attention] Typhoon" we all prayed, we're dead, we're dead." He was captured there at Wesel, captured by the Canadian troops.

07:00 **How much do you think about your enemy as people when you're doing that kind of work?**

At the time I don't think we thought about them as people at all. It was just they were the enemy. That's why I've been very glad since, that as far as I know, I never hurt any civilians, as far as I know. That's why I was glad I was in the job I was

07:30 in, 'cause if I had of been in air to air fighting, it would have been airmen and the job I was doing on the Typhoon it was military targets.

Although you weren't making those decisions, you would have followed your orders whatever they were, was there any discussions about civilians?

No, but there

08:00 was one, not an order, but there was one commission we were given that I refused to do. It was getting towards the end of the war, the last couple of months I suppose, and we were going out on armed reccie and at the briefing the intelligence officer said, "You have now been given permission to fire on ambulances, because we have it on good authority that the Germans

08:30 are using ambulances to transport supplies and things to their troops." And I stood up in the middle of the briefing and said, "I will not shoot at the Red Cross." He said, "That's ok Goldie, that is not an order, you've been given permission, no recriminations." "Thank you." That was it. So I wouldn't have shot anyway if I'd been given an order.

09:00 **Looking back now it's quite common for you to have feelings of, I mean obviously you've met some Germans in your post-war life and you can understand the humanity behind the other side, but at the time was it different, was there hatred for the Germans?**

Partly when we heard stories of mistreatment of prisoners and

09:30 their extermination camps, killing Jews by the hundreds of thousands and that sort of thing. Also that brings to mind that the order that was given to the Germans not to take any Typhoon pilots prisoners, shoot them.

10:00 Because of our activities, the damage we did and there's an actual, factual account there of these Typhoons, I think there was eight of them, and two of them went down to attack a train in a siding and

10:30 they reckoned the train was a trap. All hell broke loose. There was flak guns all round it, planted in the bushes, in the ditches and they said it just exploded with flak and they both got shot down, but crash landed alright and got out of their aircrafts and, no, one of them, one of them. And the other one flew

11:00 around it to see if he was alright and he copped it and went down too. And these others were still flying

around at a safer height, watching, and the Germans stood the two of them up and shot them on the spot, while the others were up there watching. So it was true, they didn't take us prisoners.

How did this story get back to you?

Oh, through the underground and intelligence and so on, yeah.

You mentioned extermination

11:30 **camps, that did not come out until quite near the end of the war?**

No, but we knew through underground reports and that, through the grapevine, that sort of thing was going on, the extermination of the Jews and what not. We knew that was going on.

Do you remember hearing about that for the first time?

No. I can't say when the first memory was, hearing about it, but we knew.

12:00 We knew it was going on.

Just one last question about that. You mentioned the German you met later on said the Typhoons were a great source of fear, they were scared of you? How does that make you feel? Are you proud or guilty or?

Oh it doesn't make me feel guilty. I don't know about being proud, just efficient I suppose. I don't know really, just efficient.

12:30 The Germans used to call us 'Terra Flykers' cause they reckoned if the Typhoon came down on you, you'd had it.

What made the Typhoon a particularly fearsome thing to be facing

13:00 **up against do you think?**

What made them what?

What was it that was really frightening about a Typhoon attacking you?

Well because of our firepower with the cannons and the rockets I suppose. Our rockets were deadly accurate. If you pressed home your attack they were deadly accurate. There's, in a book I've got there, there's a photograph taken from

13:30 the gun camera from my Divvie, attacking a cottage in a Dutch village called Turborg, not far from Antwerp, and the Germans had a telephone exchange in it, in the Dutch village, and

14:00 before the crossing of the Rhine and it was a big military exchange and it was in this cottage in amongst a row of cottages in a village of cottages and they, our intelligence had apparently got to find out about it. And of course, it was defended by flak, or anything like that, because that would have given the game away that it was an important,

14:30 and this was just before the crossing of the Rhine in March and our people wanted it taken out, because of the big push that was just coming on in that area, right in that area. And myself, in our Squadron, being acknowledged apparently as a good rocket shot

15:00 and another chap, I think from 175 Squadron, which was another squadron in the wing, I don't remember his name. I'd only met him with that operation. For a couple of days we had to study aerial photographs and identify this cottage, amongst all the other similar cottages and just that one had to be taken out with rockets because it was in Dutch, and we didn't want to kill Dutch

15:30 people. And it was only him and me, and I was to lead and he was to follow and with the collaboration with the Dutch underground it was all arranged that we would get there at a certain time on this day and the underground were to quietly clear as many

16:00 Dutch people as possible away from that cottage without being too conspicuous about it. And in we went and identified the cottage, and I went down, gave them my rockets, he followed and gave them his. We destroyed the cottage, never hurt anyone else. God knows what Germans were in it, I don't know. There'd have been military personnel I suppose, and didn't damage anything else.

16:30 Well hardly damaged the cottages on either side and there's a photograph in the book there, taken from my cinegun coming down on the cottage and the article about the telephone exchange is there.

Did you see those photographs after every time you went out?

No.

Did you take them often?

Yeah, every time you went into action

17:00 you used your cinegun, when you fired. See your cinegun you could fire separately on its own or it was linked to your cannon and you'd switch it onto gun and as soon as you fired your cannon, this camera operated and took whatever you were shooting at.

So on a normal occasion how much would you see of the results of your rockets?

17:30 **Obviously that time you were able to see pictures but what did you see?**

What do you mean? At the very time you were doing it?

Yeah, would you see what would happen on the ground?

Mainly, mostly and depending on the amount of flak, you'd circle around it and assess the damage, without being too silly flying through mountains of flak. And assess the damage

18:00 so you could give a good report when you got back.

So you had a very good idea of the fire power of the Typhoon from these first hand assessments?

Oh yeah, yeah.

How would you describe it looking down on one of these places you'd just shot up?

Well there's an account in my log book there of a convoy

18:30 of motorised vehicles, I think there was four of us attacked it, and they must have seen us overhead at some time and they pulled up all in this road underneath trees, trees lining the road down both side, they pulled up under there, apparently hoping that they

19:00 wouldn't be seen, but we did. And they had absolutely no flak at all, except the odd hand held machine gun and we just kept going back and back and back. Two rockets at a time until you got rid of your eight and then strafing with your cannon and it's in the book there, I think it says forty plus

19:30 destroyed, we cleaned up the lot of them. There wouldn't have been that many men there, probably only a driver and a sidekick to each vehicle, going somewhere or other with military supplies. They were all military vehicles. But it must have been pretty rugged for those that were there.

To move on,

20:00 **actually move backwards a little bit, to the D Day landings, you were involved in giving close support in those?**

Well we were there but we didn't do anything. We were at the Cherbourg end of the beach.

Just to move back before that, what were the first rumours that you heard that this was going to happen, do you recall?

I couldn't tell you, couldn't tell you, it was just rumoured around because of the build up of military,

20:30 particularly Americans, that something was coming on, and because the general acceptance was invasion of Europe, but nobody knew it for sure, it was only grapevine rumours. Had been going on for weeks and then on the morning of the 6th of June, as I say we were up there. We got up at two o'clock in the morning and before it was even light,

21:00 we flew over the whole flight, every one of us, and our job was, oh we went to Peddanic [?] first, which was in Cornwall and we got orders there and we flew in pairs and relieved one another to Cherbourg Peninsula which was on the western end of

21:30 Normandy beach and our job was to stop any German aircraft coming around the landing to attack ships and troops landing on the beach from the seaward side. And up the other end they had Spitties patrolling. Well that's all we did for several days. We saw the landings, we could see what was going on,

22:00 but we had orders not to do any ground attacks, we had Typhoons doing all that with rockets and not a German aircraft showed up and the Spitfire's at the other end, gave similar reports. So what the German Air Force was doing, we don't know. We do know that there was a feint landing up at, F-E-I-T, not F-A-I-N-T,

22:30 up at, further east, up the coast a bit and the Germans did divert a lot of their land forces to there, thinking that's where the invasion was taking place. But whether they had any air force up there, I don't know, but we were there and didn't do anything.

It must have been an amazing sight?

I'll say.

Can you describe it to someone who's never seen anything

23:00 **like it before?**

It was just one mass of ships and landing craft and blokes going across the beach and from where we were you could see them fall. You could see a wave of blokes going up and then falling down and a lot of ground fire coming back from the Germans and

23:30 see ground attack Tiffies whipping in and so on.

What kind of ships made up this mass?

Mainly landing craft, naval ships, landing craft and naval ships mainly. Landing craft

24:00 appeared to come off bigger ships at times, as though they were carrier ships with big doors in the front of them that opened up. It mightn't have been landing craft I'm thinking of. It might have been these amphibious jeep things that come straight out and sail ashore. We were not allowed to fly over it or into it. You've

24:30 got a job to do, and do it. We definitely did our job but we didn't see anything to do.

What did it sound like from where you were?

Oh, like a war going on I suppose. A lot of crashing and banging and hell of a lot of small arms stuffs, like up to, what might I say, eighty millimetre quick firing

25:00 mobile guns that the Germans had. A hell of a lot of small stuff, small rounds, like heavy machine guns and things like that. 'Cause I suppose the Germans had concrete bunkers and things right along the beach there that fire was coming out of I suppose.

How much did it shock you to see something this big? Was it a

25:30 **good feeling that this was happening or was it a bit of a…?**

Oh it was a good feeling really. Just thinking 'that will show you' and just glad they didn't come over after D Day, because they could have walked into England. After, not D Day, after Dunkirk, they could have walked into England after Dunkirk.

26:00 I wasn't there then, but I knew that they could have.

I'm just going to stop there and let Rob [interviewer] take over. I want to go back to a couple of things in your many and varied story, Peter Clark was a friend from your training days, I think?

Yeah. He was another Australian

26:30 with my group and we were doing our training on Hurricanes for operational work up in Scotland, and just about the whole course, I don't know how many of us, about twenty, something like that, we were all up one day doing what was called a tail chase, follow the leader and one of the instructor types of course would have been leading and

27:00 you have to follow and do exactly what the one in front does. And in a case like that the only person who knows when you come down what aerobatics they went through and what sequence, was the one that was leading. You just forget, you just clamp on your eyes on the one in front and follow and you've got to keep station as close as possible, not drift away and all that sort of thing, and at one stage there I suddenly found

27:30 myself going vertically upwards, and I'm going up vertically like that and over the top of me was a Hurricane, upside down, and I'm boring straight at it and I can see the pilot with his head thrown back and I can see his eyes rolled up as he looks at me coming up, and what I did, I don't know, but reflex action I missed him. And what we discovered, the chase was called off then

28:00 by radio, the leader called it all off and what I discovered when we got down was that two aircraft up ahead had collided, one was Peter Clark, I don't know who the other one was. Neither of them got out and they went down meshed together and crashed and there was very little of either of them left apparently. Anyway at Peter's funeral, I knew him as another one on the course,

28:30 and was friendly with him, but not a particular mate or anything, but because he was another Australian, he had a full military funeral, and I went to the funeral with my then pretty advanced Fothdarby camera and took a full reel of film of his funeral. And afterwards a messenger come to me and said the

29:00 Adjutant wants to see you, so off I go to see the Adjutant. He said, "You were taking photographs at Peter Clark's funeral today?" I thought 'here goes my camera.' Not supposed to have it. He said, "I don't want your camera, I don't even know you've got it, but our official photographer never got a picture. Something went wrong." And he said, "We've got to keep a record of all these things and also we send to the next of kin photographs

29:30 of the funeral." So he said, "I want your film. We will process it and give you a set of prints, and keep

the film." So that's the photographs that I've got there. And if I hadn't have been there, apparently there wouldn't have been any.

How did that make you feel at the time?

Oh, just one of those things. I felt happy for his family that I was just lucky enough to be there, that's all. And defied,

30:00 the camera and took these photographs.

But the loss of him must have effected you in some way, how was that?

Oh it made us, I suppose it made us all realise how something could happen at any moment and we weren't even into action yet, we were still training. So I suppose it made us realise that these things could happen and

30:30 could happen to one of us. That was about it I suppose.

There was also another incident that I'd just like to talk about, another loss of a friend of yours, Dick Adams?

Oh Dick was the one I talked about earlier that disappeared down searching on an air sea rescue search and we don't exactly know what happened. He was down with another Hurricane doing a square search

31:00 for the crew of a Sunderland, I think from memory, that had ditched and, yes, they were too, because we did find them, I think. And Dick disappeared. He couldn't have gone anywhere and he never came back to base, so we can only assume that he went into the sea.

31:30 And whether through malfunction of his aircraft or whether there was a German aircraft about that wasn't seen, I don't know. Because there was only another Hurricane there and they were spread out doing the search and he doesn't know what happened, only that Dick disappeared.

What aircraft was he in?

A Hurricane.

Which aircraft though?

I don't know, oh he was in mine, well in the one I liked to call mine. VDN.

You had a name painted on the side?

32:00 It did have a name on the side. It had 'Betty' on the side of it. That's where she lies now, at the bottom of the Atlantic as far as we know.

And did you say anything, or did he say anything to you before he left? Did he have any idea?

No, none of us had any premonitions or, we knew that the German JU88's in particular, prowled around down there a lot and in particular, when

32:30 our Sunderland's, in those days Sunderland's, I don't think the Coastal Command were using Liberator's in those days, when they radioed in for help and give a position, and said that they were going down, well the German's would pick it up as well and probably send a Ju-88 out, knowing that some of us would go out

33:00 looking for the survivors. So that's what we think must have happened. The only other thing we can think of is that as soon as we knew that he was missing, myself and another pilot, I think it was Eric Poole, we had climbed into two Hurries and flew down to that spot, hoping

33:30 against hope that we might find Dick floating around in his dinghy or Mae West or something. That's right, I did find the crew because I was circling the crew that had ditched when suddenly Eric, I think it was, bellowed out, "Break port Goldie!" And I was as it happens, circling round the port, round this dinghy almost at sea level and they were waving at me and I broke port and as I did

34:00 break port this black Mosquito flew past on my starboard side.

I think I remember this. You told us about that. What's it like for you to find a friend of yours suddenly it's like, it must have been like no news, they've just evaporated, they've become, they've just disappeared, how do you?

Well, you know, I mean,

34:30 assuming that he'd been shot down we, I suppose, we, us, me, just thought to ourselves 'it can happen to any of us', but absolutely finding no trace and the other accompanying Hurricane not seeing what had happened, for a while there was frantic searching going on, hoping that he might have had a malfunction and was floating around somewhere.

35:00 But we searched as long as we could, to the extent of our endurance and never saw anything, not even an oil slick or what might have been. We just don't know.

Did you have a service for him back at base?

Oh yes, just a small service in the church there.

You were a very close knit flight?

Yeah, we were, we were, because of only the small number of us there.

35:30 And Eric Poole, as a matter of fact, had his wife and small toddler son down there and they were living in the guest house down there. Eric went home of a night just like office, nine to five.

Why was Dick flying your aircraft 'Betty'.

I don't know. We didn't, we weren't assigned a special aircraft.

36:00 I mean, when I finished my short landings course at Portreath, on this Hurricane 2B, they said to me, "Right-o, you're across to the Scilly Isles tomorrow, that's your Hurricane, you'll fly it and you'll fly that across tomorrow, and get your bag packed and down to transport and they'll take it down and they'll put it on the mail streamer and you'll pick it up the other end."

36:30 So that just became my aircraft I suppose.

Did you write to Dick's family at all?

I did. I corresponded with them from then on, right through the war and I returned a lot of his personal things to them in a parcel and then when we came out in 1952, we let them know we were coming and the ship pulled in at Melbourne,

37:00 stayed overnight and the family met us and took us home to their place for the evening and brought us back to ship. It sailed the next morning for Sydney.

How was that seeing Dick's parents?

Uh?

How was that meeting with Dick's parents?

Well they were well over it by that time. He had three sisters, I think.

37:30 I can remember the name of one only, Judith and there's photographs of them somewhere, floating around in my albums. They were well over it by that time and Dick's mother said to me, "When you're home, when you're back home anything at any time that you can think of that you and Dick perhaps participated in or anything like that, write and let me know because I'll be glad to hear it."

38:00 She said, "It won't upset me anymore." So we corresponded for quite a while, but his parents are both gone, ages ago.

Was that the hardest loss for you during the war?

I suppose so. I suppose really my main mate after that was Johnny Payne and he's still going, he was still going. He lasted throughout the war.

38:30 Yes I suppose, 'cause Dick and I were good friends at the time.

Might just stop there.

Tape 9

00:31 **Norm is you could perhaps take us through 'Operation Plunder'?**

Oh that was the crossing of the Rhine at Wesel, W-E-S-E-L, Wesel, a German city actually on the banks of the Rhine, and Monty's,

01:00 Montgomery, Viscount Montgomery, he finished there, the 21st Canadian Army did the job and the majority was by paratroops and gliders and the air was absolutely

01:30 thick with mainly Dakota's, some Halifax's, towing gliders which they released behind the city into the open fields and they advanced into the city from the west, from the east, stupid, from the east and

02:00 gliders coming down and crashing into the fields, paratroopers coming down literally you'd think by the thousands and we're diving down in the Typhoons, through them and under them and strafing the German gun positions with rockets and cannon and one of our sub-branch members here,

02:30 actually on the committee, an English chap, Eric Butler, he was at Wesel in the landing, he was a paratrooper. And talking about it of course, we discovered we were both there and he said, "I know you

now, I know you, I saw you. You went past me pretty fast, about five hundred mile an hour," he said, "but I saw you, now I remember it."

03:00 And he said, "I waved to you and all you did was go like that (demonstrates)." A bit of a joke.

Did you do that to the troops?

No, you didn't see them long enough, we were going too fast. He was only making a joke out of it. But he was wounded in the leg there.

Can you describe in a little bit more detail precisely what you could see you were firing at, at that time?

Well German troops

03:30 advancing into our troops, who were paratroopers landing and advancing towards the city. The Germans must have realised they were being attacked on two fronts and we were, our people were also going in from the Rhine side and attacking with cannon fire, from across the Rhine and the paratroopers were coming into the fields behind them

04:00 coming in from the back. So it was pretty pandemonium.

How long did you spend over the battlefield?

Well actually in the battlefield as long as we expended our ammunition and rockets would be only a few minutes and then we would be back to base, which was almost on the banks of the Rhine on the Dutch side, our

04:30 base in Volkel wasn't very far away at all, and we'd land there and re-fuel and re-arm and go back again. And my log book shows three operations a day during that Operation Plunder and how we never ever came back wearing a paratrooper I don't know. We were literally going in between them and under them, at fairly

05:00 high speed too, and then they at the same time as all that was all going on, the Canadians were putting pontoon bridges across the Rhine, which they succeeded in doing after a few days. And when they'd secured part of Wesel

05:30 and myself and Johnny and a couple of others were given a day's rest and we commandeered a fifteen hundred weight four wheel drive with a driver, from the motor pool and we headed out to the main road and joined up with the army convoys going in with supplies, across these pontoon bridges

06:00 and we parked there in Wesel in a big square where the army vehicles were parking, and we split up into our pairs and wandering around, having a look at this and a look at that and a look at something else, and Johnny and I are wandering around in this very heavily bombed and shelled area and there wasn't any frantic activity going on but we could hear firing

06:30 and the occasional boom and so on, nothing near us but nothing hurtling past us, so after a while there was nothing else to see except bombed houses and things.

Was this result of your bombing?

Oh yeah, shelling and that, not ours, shelling, yeah, RAF bombing and shelling, yeah, but not our rockets. We were doing ground

07:00 work and we decided might as well get back and it was a real wide boulevard type of street, wasn't a narrow street in a village or anything, it was a big city and we're wandering down this street, back to where we came from. And we came to a corner where we had to turn right, and as we swung round the corner, we got all these Sten guns [machine guns] pointed at us.

07:30 And there was a line of Canadian troops lined up against the wall there, and the sergeant, the head of them, he said, "Halt, who goes there?" I said, "Cut it out Tommy, we're one of your mob." He said, "Where's your ID?" So we showed him our ID's. "Oh RAF pilots," he said, "who are you with?" We said, "The rocket Typhoon's."

08:00 "Were you the boy's that supported us for this crossing?" We said, "Yeah, we've just come in to have a look what it's like on the ground." So they all insisted on shaking hands with us and then the sergeant said, "I was watching round the corner at you two coming down there, waiting to get your heads blown off." "Well so what, why?" He said, "Because we're a forward patrol, you've been right through our mob, you've been up amongst the Germans." We'd wandered through

08:30 the front line, as you might call it and we'd been wandering around up amongst these ruins and that. We found one dead German soldier, we did discover that. But we never saw anyone else, but apparently we were a little bit lucky. Because if we had of been captured, they'd have shot us on the spot anyway.

09:00 **You said you captured a German soldier, how did that come about?**

That was after we moved over to B100 as it was called, the airstrip near Gogh and it was alongside what

was known as Dwarf Pine Wood, the airstrip, and for a couple of days there, there was sniping going on, a shot go through one of the tents, we were all under canvas there.

09:30 And the second day, third day, I forget, some of us pilots with our trusty six guns and a couple of the RAF regiment security blokes with their Stens, we decided we'd go into this wood and find out who was doing this. And we had to cross the white tape that encircled the airfield, into a non-deloused

10:00 area and we were supposed to stay inside the white tape because that had all been de-loused, so we didn't know if there was any mines there or not, but in we went. And when we got into the wood, there was big heaps, mounds of earth, oh, four, five feet high, dotted here, there and everywhere and a door opening in them, apparently leading down to underground dug-outs. And we didn't go down into any of them

10:30 because for two reasons. There might have been a German still in there and they might have been booby trapped. And as I approached one of these mounds suddenly a man hopped up from the one I was approaching and started to run away from me. And I called out, "Halten, halten, han, hoc!" In my best German and

11:00 he didn't take a bit of notice, he kept on running and I'm pounding on along after him, between these pine trees, and I had my six gun in my hand, so I just boom in the general direction as I ran, boom. And whether the shot went near him or just the sound frightened him, I don't know but he pulled up and put his hands up. And I stopped about here to the wall away so he couldn't jump me and said, "Who are you, who are you? What are you doing?"

11:30 And he yabbered away in what I thought was French. And the others came running over and I said to one of them, "I think he's talking French, you reckon you can speak French, see what he's saying?" It turned out he was trying to say he was a Belgian, but he was wearing a khaki battle dress with no insignias of any sort on it, he had no hat, so we wheeled him back to our intelligence

12:00 officer, who took him back behind the lines to somewhere or other, and the sniping stopped and a few days later the intelligence officer told us that he'd been interrogated and he tried to give them the story that he was a Belgian and he'd been forced into forced labour by the Germans, but they said he broke down after a while and turned out he was a German soldier.

12:30 Apparently the sniping stopped, so we reckoned it must have been him. So that was the one and only shot my trusty six gun fired in anger. Didn't hit anything then.

Can you tell us, this is getting towards the end of the war, is this correct? Getting towards the end of your time there?

13:00 **How close to your leaving the area was this?**

Oh I left there April the 5th or the 6th, whatever it's in my log book there and the war ended on May the 8th, so it was just a month before. That was when I fell out of my aeroplane and broke my wrist.

Can you tell us that story?

I had a parachute on too. It didn't open.

13:30 No, I just caught my foot somehow getting over the top of the cockpit, fell backwards. After I came back and was getting out of the aircraft I caught my foot somehow on the edge of the cockpit or something and I fell backwards and still wearing my parachute, which is a fairly bulky thing, I fell pretty heavily and must have put my hand out to protect my head as I fell and

14:00 smashed this wrist pretty badly.

You must have got out of the aeroplane many, many times? What had you just come back from a particular difficult mission or was there, where had you been on that particular?

I don't know.

That's alright, we can check it later.

Haven't got my glasses, it's in my log book there. I think it was an armed reccie and that was it. I was taken by road,

14:30 on a not very long trip, back across the Rhine into Holland again, to a medical, a Canadian medical unit, which had a hospital under canvas and they had nursing Sisters there, ladies, girls, women. I just liken it now to what

15:00 we see on the TV called 'Mash', something like that I suppose. But whether they did any surgical work there I don't know but they had this one big tent was like a ward, beds down both sides. And this Sister said to me, "Right-o, you'll be here tonight and you'll fly back to England tomorrow, to hospital there and here's some

15:30 pyjamas, get yourself into those." So I sort of turned my back on her, 'cause this hand's all tied up in plaster and stuff they put on it, and I'm trying to undo my battle dress and she said, "Oh let me do that,

and don't turn your back on me, I've seen bigger and better than you've got I bet."

Where were you when the war in Europe ended?

I was in

16:00 RAF Hospital at Raughton in England.

How did you feel about the end of the war?

Oh great, great. I got into me uniform and another walking patient there, he had this arm in plaster, strangely enough and I had this one in, and I said, "Come on, war's over, we're going out." He said, "We haven't got a leave pass." I said, "Don't want a leave pass, war's over, no more war."

16:30 "Oh alright." I was the only Australian bloke in the ward and I suppose he was a Pommie bloke, from memory and they didn't do anything without orders and things, and we got to the gate and the guard said, "Where are you off too?" I said, "Out." "Where's your passes?" "Haven't got any." "Well you can't go out." "Who's going to stop us?" I said, "The war's over mate, we don't need a pass." "'Oh, oh, well

17:00 you're not supposed to go." I said, "How're you going to stop us? Shoot us?" I don't suppose he even had any ammunition. He had a Sten gun or something, he wouldn't have had any ammunition, I don't suppose anyway. So off we went and we went into Redding, a fairly big town Redding, and we did a bit of a pub crawl and then we finished up going into this club

17:30 and we got adopted by some business men I think they looked like, wearing suits and collar and tie and so on and we got adopted by them, and they looked after us for the rest of the evening. Finally put us on a bus, which took us back out to the Raughton Hospital then. We got back in the early hours of the morning.

18:00 So that was our VE Day.

When did you return to Australia after that moment?

1952, was when we finally came back.

Why did you stay so long?

Well I like the place, I liked the Scilly Isles, I loved it and I liked the people and all my friends were over there, my formative years, as I said

18:30 earlier. I had have been prepared to stay there, lovely place, oh it was. Probably still is a lovely place, but Jean's sister-in-law who's been out tells us that it's just over commercialised with guest houses and that sort of thing because it's become a real

19:00 tourist place now in the summer time.

The Australia you returned too, was it the same Australia you left, so many years ago?

Oh much the same I suppose. I came to Goulburn which wasn't my….

You left and Australia was very much part of the Commonwealth and now it had fought a war with Japan and very much aligned with America, how do you feel the country had changed

19:30 **terms of that?**

As far as republicanism goes, I've already stated my thoughts on that, I don't like it. I'm a real Royalist.

But you still think the country was the same country you left?

Then, wasn't much change, that's going what, fifty two, that's fifty years ago.

No, you left in 1940

20:00 **and you didn't return to twelve years later.**

No, but in that twelve years I don't think anything had changed much. No, I don't think in that time anything had changed much, but sure has now days, these strange people we get coming into the country.

How did you feel about the people, maybe it wasn't directed at you but there was, you mentioned that there was talk of Jap dodgers, the RAAF pilots

20:30 **who stayed over?**

Well I've heard that since. See when I come, when I got back here I was still in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and I thought 'now if I transfer to the Australian Reserve, I might get some flying', but then I found out there was no flying. The University Squadron's had been shut down and the University Squadron as they called it, had been shut down and there was no free flying which I thought I might

21:00 get. So I went in with the Air Training Corps.

What did you do after the war ended in England? What job did you do?

I did carpentry and bar keeping in the pubs.

How did you find settling back into Australia when you came back here?

Alright, I suppose.

21:30 Yeah, I found it alright here, because my mother and father were here and my brother. They were here in Goulburn and whilst we were not native to Goulburn they had been here for a little while and they had a place ready for my wife and I and we just fitted in and made new friends. I joined the RSL and from there we started a circle of friends.

22:00 **What did you miss about your English, England, both your military and civilian experience there?**

Well I certainly missed the people on the Islands. They were a great crowd of people and very close knit people and having accepted me into it, I was one of them. I liked them for that,

22:30 but we had no trouble here and thankfully we don't have much trouble here now either. Not compared with what you get out in Sydney, Campbelltown, places like that.

Can you tell us about the reunion with your mum and dad?

I don't know, just a happy reunion.

How had they fared during

23:00 **the war here?**

Well Dad was like bricklaying, like a contract bricklayer at the time and then after the war him and Mum packed the caravan and shot off. Went right up as far as Cape York and Dad worked here, there and everywhere as they went. He reckoned they had a marvellous

23:30 time. And when we docked in Sydney they met us down there and by that time they'd got as far as Goulburn, but they were on their way back to Turramurra, where we'd come from and they got as far as Goulburn, and they liked it here. They camped in the caravan park out at Rocky Hill there and they liked it here. And when we wrote and said

24:00 we're coming back, they said 'right, come to Goulburn, we'll get a place ready for you, have a place for you.'

You went on to raise a family here in Goulburn, did you talk about your wartime experiences with your children?

Not a lot, they don't ask a lot. With Michael now that he's joined the Jehovah Witness they don't believe in violence of

24:30 any sort, so he doesn't ask any questions about it now. I think it's long past now, long past. The grandchildren are not, well they might, they might be a little more interested in things now, in Anzac Day and that sort of thing because it's been promoted quite a bit.

25:00 But they don't talk about it or ask questions of me much.

Are there any things that you find difficult to talk about or don't like to talk about? Or choose to forget?

I don't think so. I don't think so, no. No, I just after watching

25:30 Germany's war (UNCLEAR) series, I'm just glad I wasn't in bombing after seeing the results. I wasn't over in London when all that bombing went on, so I didn't actually experience it. I have been in London many a time since and I've got photos

26:00 there taken of the devastation taken from the top of St Paul's Cathedral, and so on, but having seen the television series with the bombing that went on in London and Coventry and Plymouth and then later on with our bombing of Germany and

26:30 so on, I'm certainly glad I wasn't involved in that part of it. I'm just so glad it was all military to the best of my knowledge.

You weren't heavily involved with the civilian population, with all the bombing?

I suppose

27:00 people say tit for tat, Germany started it by bombing civilian cities in Britain, the way they did, so Britain retaliated by bombing German cities the way they did and I suppose the old saying goes 'two wrongs, don't make a right' but I suppose at the time

27:30 those in charge of it thought ‘what else can we do?’ But I’m certainly, as I said, glad I wasn’t involved in it.

The, how do you feel about the war you fought in now? Looking back on it after sixty years?

I suppose at my age you just say how stupid it all was. I’ve often said,

28:00 “How did one man have the power to do it?” One man, a little Austrian called Adolf Hitler, how the devil did he do it? I don’t know.

People believed in him?

I don’t know, it’s amazing, it’s amazing.

Does it still confuse you,

28:30 **the reasons for the Second World War?**

That part of it does. I wonder how a person can have that sort of thinking and outlook.

Have you come to any conclusion when you ask yourself that question?

29:00 No, it just amazes me. Apart from what I had to do, and as I say, I’m glad it was only military because I had to do it and the military had to do it to us, I won’t even tread on an ant on the path. I’ll step over it, a little ant walking across the path if I’m going up there, I’ll walk over it.

29:30 And it’s just amazing to me how a person, any person, can do the things they have done and apparently glorify in it.

There’s been many wars since the Second World War that you fought in.

30:00 **How do you feel about whether the Second World War, did it resolve anything?**

Well I suppose you’ve got to say it did, from our point of view, because where would we have been if Hitler had just been allowed to carry on the way he was going. And he had Mussolini in with him, and then the Japs [Japanese] thought ‘this is a good thing, we’ll come in on this as well.’

30:30 If we just sat back and did nothing well we’d be speaking Japanese or Italian or.

You fought for, at the time did you fight for Australia’s freedom?

Yeah, not only Australia’s freedom. We were fighting for to stop what was going on and to stop it going any further, to

31:00 stop it at all, I suppose.

Are these things you still continue to think about?

Yeah, yeah, I have said that I don’t think that if I had of been in the army in the jungles, that I could have looked an enemy in

31:30 the face and shot him dead, but my war was sort of impersonal. I probably killed a lot of Germans, probably, hopefully all military, as I’ve said so often, but at such speed and so quickly, it’s come and gone in a few seconds, but it’s impersonal. I didn’t see any of them, they must have been there,

32:00 but I didn’t see them. That was one thing that upset me, or still makes me think about that truck load of women and kids, how close I came to that. How easy it would have been had they been in a covered truck to have blown it to pieces and not known.

32:30 **How does that memory come back to you now?**

What that particular one?

Yes, how does that affect you now, these days?

33:00 I can only say it still makes me think who, who did it? Did somebody up there make me realise what it was in a split second? ‘Cause that’s all I had, doing five hundred mile an hour. And why

33:30 was it me when another man might have ploughed straight in and realised, if he did realise at all, might have realised too late and how would it have upset that particular man? Or would it have upset him at all? And why was it me and that I recognised in time? Anyway.

34:00 **I wonder if that group of people knows really, probably you saved their lives, it was a great thing you did, really.**

Yeah, yeah well, those children would be up around sixty I suppose now. They were little children, they’d be up around sixty I suppose. Twenty years younger than me. I’d have been twenty

34:30 three then, yeah I'd have been twenty three then. They'd have been twenty years younger than me, they'd be about sixty odd. I wonder if any of them are still alive and whether they still remember it, and they might wonder themselves 'I wonder who that Englander pilot was?'

35:00 Food for thought I suppose.

Do you ever dream about it?

No, after the war I missed flying badly and I used to dream badly and throw myself around the place. That's why I joined the RAF RE [Reserve]. I used to throw myself around the bed at night, in my sleep, dreaming. And

35:30 one night I got killed. I didn't pull out of a dive and I hit the ground and everything went black and I woke up. That was a shiver. I was in a vertical dive, fired my rockets and then the aircraft kept on going straight down. The ground was coming

36:00 up like that and then black and then I woke up and thought 'gee, I just killed myself, I just crashed.' And I suppose that's what it would have been like because it would have been instantaneous. Thankfully it wasn't premonition and I'm still alive sixty years later.

We're getting really towards the end

36:30 **I think and we'd like to give you the opportunity perhaps if there's any message regarding your experience of war or generally, you can speak more generally if you like, if you'd wish to give a message to somebody who might be looking at this in fifty or a hundred years time?**

Only that it all seemed so futile,

37:00 now. It still seems futile because it's still going on and we, and people following, generations following can only try to do their best to avoid it. I really cannot understand the thinking

37:30 of these people over in the Middle East. I cannot understand their minds, with their bombing of civilians, running around in circles wanting the country restored,

38:00 and yet a proportion of them are blowing it up, still blowing up pipelines, still setting bombs, killing their own people. I can't understand who or what they are. Do you want to go around bombing up Australians, killing Australians and so on? Why do you want to do it for? Why do they want to

38:30 do it? What are they aiming at? They're killing their own people, not just killing the American invaders as they like to say, they're killing their own people. They're destroying the economy of their own country. How do they expect it to get back on its feet? If that's what they call

39:00 the teachings of their religion, well she's a strange religion. That's about it. I don't know how we can stop it.

Ok, Norm . How do you see Australia's future?

Pardon?

How do you see the future in this country?

Precarious, that's about

39:30 all I can say. I think it's precarious. I think we've got to be very, very careful of these very people I've just been talking about. They infiltrate everywhere and as they heard one radio commentator say, no names mentioned, "Not all Muslims are like that, but the one's all like that

40:00 are Muslims." There you go.

INTERVIEW ENDS