

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Edward Kenna (Ted) - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/665>

### Tape 1

00:25 **Okay, Ted, let's just start at the beginning. Can you just tell me a little bit about where you were born, where you grew up and your family life?**

I was born here in Hamilton and I've lived here all my life actually. There were seven in the family. Mum and Dad and seven others. Madge, Kath,

01:00 Jack, myself, Molly, Noel and Bill. We all went to school here. All our life was here actually. Any more?

**What did your father do?**

Dad was a ganger on the railways and things were pretty tough.

**Tell me a bit about that because that was the Depression years wasn't it?**

01:30 They were in the Depression years and of course, meself and brother used to have to go rabbiting after school and all that. Bit of a hard time, but it was all right.

**You had to go and shoot rabbits?**

Shoot rabbits, yeah.

**Were you good at that?**

I was extra good, yes, no worries. I could always get a rabbit.

02:00 **Was your father in World War I at all?**

No. Dad was on the railways - his two brothers went, but not Dad.

**And did they talk about the war at all?**

Well no. Actually they kind of dispersed after the war. In fact I didn't

02:30 know me uncles actually. I only knew me Dad, of course. I knew him. I only met one of his brothers years after, after the Second World War and I didn't know him at all.

**And did you talk to him about war time experiences when you met him?**

03:00 Well no not exactly. Well there was nothing to talk about then - he didn't, Dad never mentioned the war so it was never mentioned actually.

**So as a child did you have any kind of ideas of what war was or what it was about?**

No I was completely ignorant as far as war went. And it wasn't after it

03:30 started and I was called up that I knew anything at all about it, and I didn't know much then either.

**You were in the militia [Citizens' Military Force] before the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] weren't you?**

Yeah, I was called up -

**So did you join the militia when war broke out?**

Actually when me marbles come up, me numbers come up, I went in then.

**Do you remember what you were doing when you first heard that war had broken out?**

04:00 Yes, well I was trying to be a plumber actually. I was apprenticed to a plumber here and I never actually got me ticket, because the war come too soon for me. Oh, I had about eight or nine months to go before

I sat for my ticket.

**How old were you when war broke out?**

04:30 Oh, let me see. About 20.

**And how old was your brother?**

He was 13 months older than I was.

**So you joined up together?**

Yes.

**And what sort of things did you do in the militia? What sort of training did you do?**

05:00 Well, we went to Geelong to do training there on the racecourse. I visit the racecourse now too. And - marching and carrying a rifle about and that's about all.

**With guns too?**

Beg your pardon?

**Practising with guns?**

Oh yes, Bren guns and all the rest of it. Owen guns then of course.

05:30 **Was that easy for you?**

Well yes, as far as the guns were concerned, that was all right. But I wasn't too good at marching or something like that.

**Did you enjoy the training?**

Well I was told later I enjoyed it to a certain extent but I was told later I'd

06:00 never be a soldier, an officer's pet, or anything like that. I wasn't good enough for that, I don't think.

**Tell me about then going to AIF from the militia. What happened then?**

Well, when things were tough up in Darwin they called, we went up there as a militia unit and we were stationed up near Adelaide River, and we were

06:30 there till the 6th Division, the 4th Battalion, the 11th Battalion and the 8th Battalion came back from overseas. And then they called for the whole lot of us to join up and be reinforcements for the 8th, 11th and the 7th Battalions so we did that.

07:02 **And what were you doing up around Darwin?**

Well they tell me - I don't know - they tell me we were protecting Australia. I don't know whether that was a fact or not, but we were up there and I think at the time we were up there for the bombing of Darwin. I think they

07:30 had a bit of an idea that the Japs might have landed there on that peninsula, and came down through what's-a-name and we were up there to make that trek, but that did never come off. And then from there of course we went to Queensland and done amphibious training and oh just training, general training and then -

08:00 **And is that when you joined the 2/4th Battalion?**

That's right. I joined the 2/4th in Darwin, actually, when they called for volunteers - our battalion was split up between the 11th, the 8th and the 4th

08:30 and I happened to get the best. I got the 4th so I and my brother went into the 4th and that was it.

**And were the soldiers there who had been fighting in the Middle East?**

Yeah they went from the start, the 4th, they went over with the 6th Divi [Division] and they went over there and done all that until they were called home.

**Did they talk much about what they had seen?**

09:00 Oh well, there was a little bit of a - oh well, I suppose it's acceptable in a way that they were the better soldier because they had the experience, of course, and we had none, and they had a bit to put up a good argument against that.

09:30 And I think a few of them, not too many, but a few of them, thought that they got the rough end of the barrel somehow but that proved otherwise.

**What because they had the new intake, because they had to be with the new men?**

Yeah, they thought that we wasn't up to standard, I suppose, which we weren't neither, I don't suppose.

**But you proved them wrong.**

10:00 Well, the fact that was mentioned after the war, as a matter of fact as well. At one of our reunions one of the chappies had a bit of a go and said, "Oh they were only reinforcements anyhow," but then this officer in the 2/4th took it up and went through all the decorations in the battalion, what they'd

10:30 got and what they hadn't got, all through from the beginning to the end and the reinforcements that we became, got more than the others, somehow, one thing or another.

**Tell me a bit about the training that you were doing in Queensland.**

11:00 Oh well it was, it was a bit hard actually up there in Queensland in this way, doing the real hard slogging and seemed to be getting nowhere and going nowhere, and I think that was a bit of a - I think the officers and that done a mighty job to keep the chappies informed you know informed - so long

11:30 without any action and they done a mighty job. So it was hard to take just doing all this and getting nowhere but that's how they worked it out and that's -

**12:00 Okay, Ted, so you're doing your training in Queensland. When do you find out that you're going to New Guinea, or do you find out? Do you know where you're going?**

Well, no, you don't. Well let me put it this way. I didn't or we didn't. There's a lot of rumours going around and a lot of them started just for the sake of starting them. They started to start things going and we heard we

12:30 were going on leave a few times and we didn't and all that. Oh you're going here and you're going there in Australia and all the rest of it but we were, it come out that we were going to Port Moresby. I don't know why. Anyhow, as soon as we were on the boat on the ship and it just sailed away

13:00 and it seemed to be going in the wrong direction to me but anyhow we got there but instead of Port Moresby we were on the other side of New Guinea when they dumped us in, I've forgotten now, Aitape - at Aitape,

13:30 well that was it. We took over from the Yanks there.

**Tell me a bit about the Americans there, because they had already set up camp, had they?**

They had already set up camp in a little, a very little small area there and they had everything, outposts and all the rest were there, and of course when we came and the next day or the day after we were told we were going, that

14:00 we were going down the coast and when we went further the Yanks one of them said, "Oh you're silly, guys, you're silly, there's nothing there. We're quite comfortable here, we're doing all right," which they were too. They had ice cream and so forth. Anyhow we went from there right down the coast.

**So you didn't stay in the camp very long at all?**

No. Only a couple of days, as far as I remember.

**14:30 What were you doing along the coast? Tell me a bit about that.**

Well it was - we were at war then and we all knew it, because every part of - from Aitape right down to Wewak was always the same there, unless we hit

15:00 a big force, they were always little forces in between all the time you know and you mightn't strike one of these for two or three days and then you might strike one - therefore the whole thing was war right from the start. You can just - you had to be at war especially the first ones which

15:30 changed from day to day our sections and companies and battalions they just changed over but there was, it was war right down to the coast.

**So how many men would you have been with? Were you doing patrols with a few men?**

More or less patrols, mostly section patrols until

16:00 you hit a force and then of course there was a company and they all came up in the company.

**Do you remember the first time you came across some Japanese?**

Well the first real test we had was the Danmap River, I think the name was, the big river there and we had patrolled - I don't know why - but we had

16:30 patrolled down to the river for a week or more and the river, oh it would be from here right across the road to the other side, it was a wide

- 17:00 river and at the time it was only ankle deep more or less a bit more up to the hips and we were patrolling and that – and I didn't know of course and no-one else knew why we stopped there but we did and then one morning we were told we were going to cross it, and cross it we did, but the
- 17:30 trouble was then the river was a swirling mess of torrents running down, rushing big trees down and all the rest of it from up the coast and we had to cross this and our captain the night before had swum this and had put a
- 18:00 rope across the other side and they attached it across at our side and at 4 o'clock in the morning it was we crossed it with this rope as a guide right through. And the thing was, well, one a chap in my section, Eddie Rowe, he was only about five foot two and as we were crossing the
- 18:30 middle of it, all you could see of Eddie was his hat and that's all you could see of him, and he had the rope of course and he could swim of course. But that was not a quiet little river that we crossed and we all got across, thank the Lord. And on the other side then of course we had to take the
- 19:00 shore on the other side – we'd been going in that week taking it in turns in sections shooting targets across the creek and every time you get one or two and then of course we lost a few in there. It was a decision you had to
- 19:30 more or less take and it was wide open and into the jungle, you know, it was pretty hard but we managed it but lost a few men and that.

**Where were the enemy? Were they in the trees?**

They were up in the trees and the jungle was right down more or less to the trees and only have a little bit, a few yards and then you were in the jungle on both sides.

- 20:00 **And what were the conditions like in the jungle and what was it like walking through it and having to fight in it?**

At times it was hard. Sometimes it was easy. Sometimes it was hard. One of the occasions there we went they had a plantation of coconuts and on

- 20:30 the track itself these Nips [Japanese] cut a tree on that side and felled it over this side and a tree on that side and felled it over the other side miles after miles you were just crossing lifting your feet up that high and dragging them
- 21:00 probably, and we had to do this exercise. And one joker said to me he'd never seen anyone who was going to shoot him, whether he was a Nip or not, he was going to shoot him. So that was a pretty hard session. And then of course you had to cut your way through a
- 21:30 lot of it and the majority of the shooting cases oh within a yards from here to you know, just probably who seen who first and with a bit luck on your side you were all right. I think that's that.

**Tell me what you had with you. What did you carry with you?**

- 22:00 ... five quid a load, I suppose. We had, well myself, I had the Bren for a start, and that was what, 32 pound, I think, and on top of that I had
- 22:30 magazines, about four or five magazines and then some more bullets – and then me gear and that, and all the rest of it. I don't know what we carried, 70 pounds or so.

**And was it hot?**

- 23:00 Well I'll tell you what it wasn't cold. Yes it was very hot. It's a different heat. It was no use changing your shirt or anything like that it was wet again in two seconds so it didn't make any difference. That's how hot it was.

**Did it rain a lot?**

- 23:30 Well in my experience it did but it done it well. We could be prepared for it. It rained in the rainy season you can nearly say it rained at 4 o'clock and so it would be raining at 4 and nine times out of ten you'd be right it would be raining.

**Would it get really muddy?**

- 24:00 Yes muddy and slippery and nice cursing weather.

**I guess you went east along the coast doing patrols. When did that change? When did you start doing other things?**

- 24:30 Well the whole thing was a kind of patrol right down to – crossing the river was a company thing until we got to Wewak and Wewak was a company – company was taken on our right we took Wewak and then

25:00 there was a company behind. So there were four companies I think in that, and of course we all dug in there and everything seemed to go quite right. Wewak was a funny place. It was kept as a storage and the port was there

25:30 of course a deep port and everything and they had Wewak tunnelled right through. Not one tunnel, like tunnelled right through, and they had a kind of store of everything there, stores and ammo the whole lot, everything was there and there was - of course we took that by Wewak out to sea - it

26:00 kind of goes right around and then comes in - on the shore at Wewak is only a short distance across here and then it kind of went out like that.

26:30 Once you took that we blocked all that off. That was two or three days then they sealed it up and - our section again got the job of, news had

27:00 come through I don't know how when or why but there was supposed to be a Japanese general was shot in one of the tunnels and our section got the nice little job of going in and bringing

27:30 him out, which was - well a job I'll never forget, I don't think, ever. You couldn't see and you were feeling your way up till you got a bit of light they had light and that coming in at certain places - and all the rest of it.

28:00 Anyhow we got this chappie after a while and then we had to try and get him out and he had shot himself of course I might add. He shot himself. Anyhow we got him out with all his gear and I heard later, I don't know whether that was right - they got valuable information out of him but it

28:30 was pretty tricky because we had a fair few Japs still in the caves and it wasn't my idea of cricket, actually, I would have protested I think but even at night you couldn't rest or anything like that because you didn't know

29:00 when one of them would take a go to get out or something like that and a couple of times they did too you could hear them. But anyhow we took that and settled down and that was it, and then we went on to where I got me gong [medal]. Where did I get that?

29:30 [talking to someone off camera]

30:02 We formed up at Wewak to go to Wirui Mission where the Japs were going the ones that retreated and that. Luckily we had a tank in the latter part of

30:30 Wewak and it followed us up to Wirui Mission where I got the gong and that was all right up till, quite a good walk it was until - and then of course we

31:00 got the job of our section and the other section all went into action and we took that all right and that was it. Then from there we went for another

31:30 walk two days after I think, a week after and went on to another hill - and it was a peculiar place too actually. As we were going up this path to it

32:00 there were a couple of shots fired and that was it and we all dispersed but they were built up high and you could walk around this mountain thing down here and it was quite safe and so we all called in there. I was a

32:30 private then of course. We had, I had three men or we had a section of four actually. I was the Bren gunner and Eddie Rowe was a rifleman, he was me 2IC [Second in Command] and [UNCLEAR] Hobbs, he was an Owen gunner and someone else, I forget his

33:00 name now. He was a rifleman. So I thought well we were called up to the captains - section leaders and I went up as a section leader. I was only a private and the other boys wasn't too keen about this operation and I said

33:30 "Oh we'll be right we haven't got the numbers anyhow. We'll just sit back here and watch their rear and see that nothing happens and it will be all right." So he goes up and 'Blah' Smith, our captain, 'Walkie-Talkie',

34:00 They were there with the other section leaders and they said, "Righto, you do this and you do that, and Corporal Brown you take your section over there." And he was a corporal, lance corporal and he had five others under him. The other one

34:30 was a corporal, lance corporal and he had five or six under him I think and I said, "I'll be right." I had - and they said Bernie you go there and I forget the other one, you take the right. You take the left. I said - this is going

35:00 to be - and he said, "Private Kenna, your job is to attack and capture this position." I thought, "It's a bit hard." I said, "I can't do that sir," and he said, "Why?" I said, "I haven't got any authority. You took that lance corporal job off me," and he said, "That's all right," he said, "we'll make you a corporal in

- 35:30 the field." I said, "That will be good." So I went back and told the boys had a good jaw and I don't think they were too keen on it. Anyhow I explained the position to them and as I said that you could walk around here safe as anything but as soon as you were out in the open and there was one tree -
- 36:00 and this is where I made the blue [mistake] of me life, one tree and a big one. It had fallen down across in between me and them. The thing went around along further than that and I thought if I get me gun set up there I might be able to do something. So I took off. I got there. Plonked down on the -
- 36:30 gun in front of me and I suddenly seen something out of the corner of me eye - and swung me gun around but I was too late. Of course it hit me
- 37:00 here and the next thing Brownie - no Brownie had moved up to the battalion at Terragoa, or some darned thing -
- 37:16 Lieutenant Whitehead lobbed down beside me and he said, "Are you hit?" and I mumbled something - but he couldn't understand me and he said, "We'll get out."
- 37:30 So I got out of the gun and it's sort of still on my shoulder and got out of that and started to run back and I heard another shot. Anyhow I kept going and I got there and they pulled me down and put a full -
- 38:00 dressing on me, couple of them as a matter of fact and then after that I had to walk back to the doctor, where the doctor was operating there. There was a fair few there too and he come to me and he was satisfied with the
- 38:30 field aid dressing on me but he found out that the bullet had also penetrated me breast here and come out again there and blown everything out of there and scratched me arm a bit and he had a bit to say about that. He said, "This is going to hurt," and he sewed it up without anything, both of them. The
- 39:00 Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels took over and they took me back to the hospital on the beach, and I was there for a couple of days. I always remember one thing about that hospital. The doctor and the padre came around the next
- 39:30 morning, that's two mornings after I got shot, yeah two mornings. I got shot about 4. The doctor seen me and sewed these up about 5, and the Fuzzy Wuzzies, they got over at 5, and carried me all night and all the next
- 40:00 day to the next morning and he said - I could hear him quite plainly, everything, I could hear it wasn't too good - the padre said, "How's this fellow, Doc?" and he said, "Oh he's 40/60 against," and I said, "Like hell! That's no
- 40:30 good to me," As it turned out I was right and he was wrong. Anyhow after that it took about a week, I suppose, to get back to Heidelberg [Hospital], and stopped just inside Queensland in the airport there and then Brisbane and
- 41:00 then Melbourne and that's where I met my good wife, she was there nursing and the head sister started on me and I had a bit of a smell after about a
- 41:30 week, and Marj was cleaning me up so she had a fair idea of what it was about so that was that and that's then the end of the war. I ended up, the war ended before, it ended in September and I never got out till November/December, and that was it.

## Tape 2

- 00:25 **Okay Ted, so you're in the hospital. When did you hear about your Victoria Cross?**
- I don't know what time it was - September. I was in the hospital.
- 01:00 Anyhow when I was there I happened to take a certain lady, just to see her way home. She couldn't see in one eye or something so I was driving her home and I heard a voice - "Ted, Ted where are you?" and I recognised the
- 01:30 voice. It was one of me mates in hospital in the ward and I said to Marj, "I've got to go." No - he found me. He said, "You're wanted back in hospital straightaway. They're looking everywhere for you," and I said, "Well this is strange you know," and it appears that the adjutant that rang up and
- 02:00 wanted to see me, talk to me and of course there was no Ted Kenna in the ward. Anyhow Sister Scullion said, "Oh he's in the shower, we'll get him," and everyone's out looking for me and Bernie knew where I was and he
- 02:30 came and got me. He said, "You're wanted on the phone." He rang up and he said, "Congratulations,

Private Kenna, you've been awarded the Victoria Cross," and I said, "Oh that's a strange thing, you know, at this time of the day." He said, "Yeah we'll be out straightaway more or less," and I said

03:00 "That's fair enough, I suppose." Anyhow he came out and told me all about it and everything, that I had won the Victoria Cross but I couldn't work out why or when. And then he told me and I said, "Oh that's it." I don't know. So

03:30 I was very happy of course, but didn't know what to say. Anyhow he reckoned it was true so that was it.

**When did you actually get it?**

September. I got it in Melbourne actually

04:00 [talking to someone off camera]

Government House by the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Gloucester.

**Did your parents go to that?**

No. Mum was still here and Mum was an old timer, you know, and she said

04:30 she wasn't coming down to see it and I was engaged to Marj then. So Mum's cousin married Jack Culler. He was down there and Mrs Culler come, and Marj come, and we

05:00 went out to Government House and they presented it out there. That was a big day, and a big day for Marj too.

**And then you got married after that?**

Yeah, we got married on 2nd June '47. They kept me in touch with

05:30 everything. Next door to the prison out there, they let me go that far until I got married in the Catholic church inside of the prison - actually, very good. Had four children and a lot of grandchildren and great grandchildren and so on. Very happy.

**What was it like coming back to Hamilton?**

06:00 Well I thought it might be a bit entertaining - and I thought I'd arrive a bit early which I did. I arrived which I shouldn't have done, but I did the

06:30 day before and I was at home when they were welcoming me at the station.

**They had gone to the station to meet you and you were already here?**

Yes. So I was naughty. But that was it.

[talking to someone off camera]

**They built you a house is that right? The town built you a house?**

07:00 Yes, this house, yes. I worked on it too - it was very good of them and lovely.

**Tell me a bit more about some things that happened later on. You went to England for the Coronation?**

Yes. I met the Queen plenty of times and the Queen Mother of course was

07:30 lovely and they were all pretty good, and as far as I'm concerned, they were all champions. Yeah but I had to join up again to go to the Coronation.

08:00 Some said, "That's impossible. He wouldn't join up again," but he did and we enjoyed it and we had to do our training all over again. So we got that down to a fine art. We were all right.

**I read that you had a black eye when you met Prince Philip.**

08:30 Yes, I did happen to fluke one of those, which actually Jeremy at - quite strange it had happened before so it was quite all right. Yes I did

09:00 have a black eye. Prince Charles said to me he said, "Where did you get it?" and all the others in line were saying First World War, I was with all those - I got it in so and so somewhere in France and all the rest of it so I

09:30 thought well come my turn he said, "Where did you get it?" I said, "In Wewak, New Guinea, sir," and he said, "No I wasn't talking about that. I was talking about that." He said, "Where did you get the black eye?" and I said, "Oh, I forgot to duck." He said, "Don't forget the next time." So that was it.

10:03 **Did you go back to New Guinea? When was the first time you went back to New Guinea? Do you remember that? Or just tell me about going back, what was that like?**

Oh it was pretty hard actually. I had a lot of really good mates in war.

10:30 Dickie Anderson and really good mates you know - we went to visit where we served and of course went all over the territory where me mates were

11:00 killed and that and it was pretty hard to take actually. But we made it all right. Of course they've all been moved now to the big funeral, big cemetery but they're still over there and that was very hard.

**Have you still got friends now from the 2/4th?**

11:30 Oh yes. As I said I've got Blah Smith, he's our captain.

**Tell me why you call him Blah?**

I don't know whether I should tell you or not. No he's known as Blah. He

12:00 had a voice. I mean you could always hear him. We christened him Blah because he 'blah blah blah - ', but even now today, I'll show you his photo after, even now I still call him Blah - and what that's 50 or 60 years after

12:30 and I still call him Blah or Walkie-Talkie, well he got that because he was always opening his mouth you could hear him everywhere. In life - same

13:00 thing, you could always hear him so he was called Walkie-Talkie. Even before - in the unit hundreds of mates - I done a lot of things in the army I

13:30 shouldn't have done. I know that but I was fighting, playing football in every opportunity in Australia - and I got to know a few and that's what they call me Ned for I think. I don't know.

**You weren't 'Ted' in the army were you, you were 'Ned'?**

Ned in the army, yeah.

**You don't know why that was?**

14:00 I don't know why they christened me Ned, but they did. It's been good that way because it kind of sorts everyone out sometimes you know. I don't know that's the way it goes.

**We might go back to the beginning if that's okay and just ask you more detailed questions about all the things we've talked about. We've done the**

14:30 **full circle and we know all your experiences. If we go right back to the beginning and life in Hamilton when you were a child. Can you just describe to me, I mean what was the town like at that time? What are your memories of growing up here? What sort of things would you do?**

15:00 Well I have a lot of fond memories of Hamilton, all fond memories actually but - you know how they operate. Boys do certain things and the girls do

15:30 certain things but I went to school. I wasn't much of a scholar. Done reasonably well. Got demerits and that was of course the big thing at my age you got demerits you could get in the bank or get in the police force and all the rest of it.

**What did you have to do to get demerits?**

16:00 What the kids are doing about 4 year old now, I think. I think that was the standard around about comparing with the young ones today so that would be about it.

**But what sort of things, what exactly can you remember?**

Oh reading and writing and arithmetic, and that was about it. If you passed those three, oh, a bit of geography and English, yeah English was the main.

16:30 **And what was the school like? Can you remember the school?**

It's down here. It's good yeah it was good. I got into a lot of strife there -

**How old were you when you left school?**

14, I think.

**What sort of things would you do with your brother?**

17:00 Well, I suppose you'd call it work. We went rabbiting after school. We knocked off at a quarter to four and went rabbiting. We'd walk out, had to walk of course, you could walk out to about six mile, five mile, and you

17:30 could start catching rabbits then but sometimes the owners didn't like the rebels coming in and moving their sheep a bit and one thing and another but generally we got on pretty well. And then the weekends

- of course was football, not football rabbiting again, we had to keep on rabbiting otherwise we
- 18:00 wouldn't have had much on the table I don't think because Dad was only on the railways and their wages wasn't so hot. Well none of our wages was hot then anyhow and the few bob we got for the skins, sell a few around the streets and sell a few gum tips and you name it I had a go at it. And bones, sell bones.
- 18:32 **Could you sell gum tips?**
- Yeah gum tips oh yeah.
- What are they?**
- You don't know what a gum tip is. You know the gum tree and you see them cut off about that high and they all come up in little flowers, bluey,
- 19:00 not blue, reddish and green and you could pick out those cut them off and get a deener [shilling] a bunch for those then. Then you'd take your skins down when you'd dried them and that - dried them
- Did you have to skin the rabbits?**
- Oh yeah skin them and hang them out on the wire.
- And you were shooting them? You were shooting them or catching them?**
- 19:30 **You said you were catching the rabbits or were you shooting them?**
- Shooting them, catching them, digging them out - anything anyway we could get them. We skinned 'em, hung 'em out to dry would take about a week then take them down to the skin buyer there was about three here
- 20:00 then and see which one was the honest one and which one tried to cheat you penny or twopence and sell them the best price you could get for them and that was it. Then at times you could always sell a few around the
- 20:30 town. Up around my place was near the convent there and used to sell them around there.
- And what was in the town at this time? You said there were skin buyers. What other businesses were there in Hamilton?**
- Well I think there was, there was three big stores, four big stores. Two
- 21:00 were in the middle of this side. There was Laidlaw's - everything and Miller's were next to those. They were the same thing more or less with a, they had a bottle winery. On the other side in Thompson's, I was going to say where Thompson's was, where Thompson's used to be, there was another
- 21:30 big store over there and then there were seven pubs. I remember those. And big Strachan's, they were grocers, oh everything. I think on the following corner and then all the little shops around same as they are now.
- So you used to go down the pub?**
- 22:00 No not then. Too early then. I used to go to the pubs when - football a bit before football.
- How often did you play football? Tell me about playing football.**
- Well I never actually - never played football actually. I was an old fellow
- 22:30 actually when I started football because I never started till, I started a bit before. I couldn't get a game here and I got a job, got a game with Jack Culler was there a bit and then of course that was 1938, that '38 I got a
- 23:00 game there - then '39 the war broke out. I never got back into the football until 1946 and then here they had a Western Districts side. It
- 23:30 was Hamilton, Portland, Heywood, Casterton, Coleraine and the Imperials come in in '47 I think, '47, '48. And then a few years after I gave it
- 24:00 away, or after it gave me away. I done me knee and of course at that stage they pull it out here and cut it off and do something and give it a couple of rubs and stick it back in again, and away you go. But back then when you done your knee you'd done it for good. You couldn't get back. Well I'd come back your knee would be all right when you come back and then it would
- 24:30 jump out again. That's finished. So I did happen to gain a little bit of glory but I don't know whether it was a good thing or not. In '47 they got Lawrie Nash, you might have heard of him played with South Melbourne,

- 25:00 leading goal kicker down there, he come out here and he coached Casterton and we had Jack O'Keefe from there too as well, I think, and he coached - no we had a coach in '47 but he only got half way through, and the committee sacked him and they got Jack O'Keefe and we just got into the four then on
- 25:30 percentage and we played Casterton with Bill Rippon and he played for Melbourne and he was a Casterton boy. Two Rippons and Lawrie
- 26:00 Nash and I had the point, I kicked the one point and won the game for Hamilton which they reckon - they said Kenna kicked the winning point, and they only gave me credit for kicking one point. So I reckon that's lousy. I think I had done all right, but they said he only kicked the one point. And
- 26:30 then as I said I done me knee in, I think it was '50 or '51 or something and couldn't go on. Anyhow, I was getting too old. I was too old when I went in actually. I was about 26. When others were coming out, I was going in.
- 27:00 It wasn't fair but the war, that's what the war done.

**So when you were a boy did you used to go, did people go to football games a lot?**

- Oh yes they charged to get in then too - used to be fence around it and I knew how the trees helps you get over - wire netting. I used to have a
- 27:30 nice little spot where you could get the branch of the tree to help you over. It was good. And then of course they woke up to that too many kids were following and they put - around the thing and it couldn't do any good. Then a great friend who used to play
- 28:00 football, and Ernie King - he had the bakery down here. And so I used to go down and Ernie - just as it happened every time, I don't know why every time Ernie was coming out the back gate of his shop down there, I happened to be there just to carry his bags across and help him in and he
- 28:30 would say "He's with me, he's got me bags," and go in. Give Ernie his bag at the dressing shed and off I'd go. So it was good. I don't think I missed a match when I was a kid because everyone donated pretty well. They treated the kid all right.

**What other sorts of things could you do then to entertain yourselves? What could you do?**

- 29:00 Socially I done all right because Nell the sister, younger sister she took it on herself to learn me to dance. I took till after I was married before I learned to dance, so she had to keep me informed, so that was one then.

**What sort of dancing was that?**

- 29:30 Oh all the old time stuff you know barn dance all that. I never had a go at the other. That was too reckless for me.

**Did they have dances in the town?**

- Oh yes they had good dances, yeah. They had them one on every Monday
- 30:00 night, Monday night, just forget the name of it now. One on every Monday night and a few balls and all the rest of it all in the Town Hall. They were good days.

**And who played the music for it?**

- 30:30 Oh we bands - they were the ones I remember. Oh I don't know a few more.

**What kind of instruments did they have? What did they play?**

- Oh they had the lot. Piano, bugle and all those what goes with them with a band that is. Some were squarking and all the rest.
- 31:00 **So did you dance with the girls?**
- Yeah too right yeah. Some will and some wouldn't dance with me. I don't know why they just couldn't see the dancer in action that's all.

**Did you have a girlfriend at that time? Did you have one special girlfriend?**

- 31:30 Well put it this way that's why I actually carried the stick. I had a walking stick then I had to sort them out with the walking stick but otherwise I was fair dinkum. Then when I got fair dinkum they wasn't so it didn't make any difference.

**Did you beat them off did you Ted?**

- Oh yeah had to keep them away but I lost all that in the war.

**Did they have films, did they have movies?**

32:00 Oh yes Hopalong Cassidy and Tom Mix. Do you know Tom Mix? Oh should have, you were born too late, you should have seen Tom Mix. He was a great cowboy. Tom Mix and Hoppy. Oh yeah I used to know all, never miss a movie never miss a cowboy. They were good.

**Where did they show the movies?**

32:30 The theatre, big theatre then well it was a fairly big one. What's-a-name has got it now in Thompson Street [talking to someone off camera]

33:00 Taylor's have got it. Upstairs but I couldn't get upstairs. I got in a few times downstairs but not too good upstairs. The town hall had them too. The old town hall, they had a theatre there too. They used to show them. In fact when - both of them going on the same night.

**33:30 How did you used to get in for free?**

I won't tell you that one.

**Were you a bit of a keen cyclist as well? Did you have a bike, a bicycle?**

34:00 Oh yes yes I tried that - I never trained that much. I used to ride it. I suppose the best I done in bike riding, I wasn't too good it was from here to [UNCLEAR] East and back that's about 32 mile I suppose. I won that one day and

34:30 oh a few others and had a few seasons on the bike on the track but I used to get into a bit too much trouble there. The judges reckoned me elbows were out too far and some said I moved them. I don't know

35:00 whether they were right. I might - and just because one fell over they were a bit severe on me, they said I couldn't ride there the next year, till the next year because I rode too rough. You know I think it was that he was a bit gentle and that's how he looked at it but otherwise I was all right.

**35:30 How many cyclists were there then? How many were there in the race?**

Oh only one, only me. No I suppose there would be, we had a Hamilton

36:00 bike race here I suppose members would be a dozen, 13, 14 something like that and then they used to be all around even down at Condah you could go there Greenwood, Casterton all around, Warrnambool.

**And what did you win? What was the prize?**

36:30 Nothing much. What did I win? I've even forgot what I won down there. Oh a couple of cups I think they've gone I don't know I'm just trying to forget what I won over here. Anyhow I thought it was all right at the time.

**37:00 Can you remember exactly where you were when you heard about war breaking out? Do you remember hearing the news?**

Not exactly. I read it and so forth in the paper and that when they declared war and all the rest of it.

**Did England seem very far away? What was your kind of perception of Britain and Australia?**

37:30 Well as far as I was concerned it wasn't there much. It's only in the school they said it was there and all the rest of what you read about in history and all that, and that's as far as I know. It wasn't much to go on.

**Did your parents have English relatives?**

They were Irish I think. They come from Ireland.

**38:00 So what did you think of the fact that Australia was going to fight for Britain?**

I thought it was the thing to do. I've always been that way inclined actually. What you think is your fight, you fight it, but it's always been my

38:30 way of thinking and I think Australia's way of thinking I think everything went according to plan.

**Tell me about joining the militia. Where did you have to go to do that and what happened?**

We never left Darwin - and we just said we'd do and all the rest of it and we did.

**39:00 So you went from Hamilton?**

No, no we were up in Darwin.

**Just before that, tell me about what happened before you left Hamilton when you first joined.**

When I first joined?

**Yes, where did you go?**

We went from here to Geelong. They signed us in down in a shop down in

- 39:30 Grey Street. They bundled us off to Geelong and we were at Geelong, oh, a few months, and all we done was gun training, marching and learned to blow up a few trees. Had a cocky [farmer, grazier] there I think he must have had
- 40:00 something to do with the army somehow because the army, he let the army in to blow, to demonstrate to us how to blow these trees or bridges or whatever we had to do and of course I'll always remember him. Whitnall
- 40:30 was his name - and he always used to say whatever you do - so forth and so forth one there and one there. Stack it up with jelly [gelignite] but he always said on the majority take the majority - and add to that to make certain. We blew up this tree down on some property near Drysdale somewhere
- 41:00 and we blew it up and up it went. It went that high I thought it was a kite. He put far too much in it and blew it and pieces were going everywhere -
- 41:30 anyhow but that was his argument, add more. So we did and blew it all right. So I wouldn't like to do the same thing now and I think the same gentleman I don't know but I think it caught up to him too. I think he blew his hand off in the finish poor fellow. And from there of course we went to Darwin.

## Tape 3

- 00:27 **Ted, we just heard you referred to as 'No Fuss' Kenna. What was that all about?**

Come again?

**'No Fuss' Kenna.**

- 01:00 Well I think it might apply to - during my life actually. Like a lot of things I've done, although they may be important and all the rest of it to me a lot of times it's quite a build up too much or something like that. I suppose it's only me own self, and no fuss about this and that
- 01:30 and whatever. And a lot of times it's like well say you don't get an interview or something like that or I don't get anywhere you say well what's the difference and that's as far as I'm concerned that is the question what's the difference. You can always say no or yes or anything so after all there's no
- 02:00 fuss is there one way or the other. I suppose that's what it all adds up to. I don't know how to explain it, but that's how it is.
- I think that's a great explanation.**
- 02:30 Well it seems to be that way because well that's what it is it's no fuss. And I think with no fuss as you put it well I think you're always happy about things. You're not, you don't kind of stretch things and say well I'm a big man here I'll suit myself or something like that. After all, what am I
- 03:00 making a fuss about? It's the same thing.

**Do you think that's something you learnt during the Depression?**

Well that could be it because there was, a hell of a lot of knock-backs in it

- 03:30 and as I say - you could pick out a place for rabbiting or something like that which is quite reasonable, not to me it wasn't but it is to some and if you did well the thing was he kicked me on that what's the fuss I'll go next door. You went in next door till the next time out and then - it was no
- 04:00 fuss at all just getting kicked out of one place. You probably could say there's better rabbits next door anyhow so you went there. That's it I think.
- You told us you left school at 14 which would have been around about 1933 so there were six years there before you went to war, even more. What were you doing in that time?**
- 04:30 I got in a lot of trouble I suppose. I left school and I had no idea what to do or what not to do and anyhow there was a store down there opposite the
- 05:00 oval and Mrs Donoghue owned it, ice cream and had everything there, grocery shop you could buy bullets there. You name it, she had it and anyhow I don't know how it came about that one. How I got the job I
- 05:30 don't know. Anyhow I fronted up there somehow or other. Grocery boy yeah that was the first a grocery boy - no the first job I ever had was after

- 06:00 school, just after school – a couple of bob for running a water boy. Know what a water boy was in that day? Well I'll tell you what a water boy is. A water boy in that time was the sewerage was going in here then and
- 06:30 some of the trenches were down 16 feet and some of them were even deeper than that and you had this street well for instance where the school is down here – the full length of Coleraine Road you had jokers digging
- 07:00 they would dig this section and tunnel a section – digger here and then a digger there and in between was the same distance and they tunnelled both of them tunnelled in till they met – and I was the water boy and that meant when some joker got thirsty or something like that he said, "Water,
- 07:30 water, water," and I had to run down, run down with a bucket fill it up and drop it down to him and he would have a drink see out of me bucket – and they were drinking out of that and put it over his head or something and off I would go to the next one and the next one and the next one. You'd be
- 08:00 going like a yoyo – I got a few bob out of it. Anyhow that come to a sorry end. This joker was singing out for water, water, water and I was a bit late I was hung up somewhere and was doing the best I could and he started abusing me for not carrying the water. I had to wait for water so he started abusing me. I said, "What are you abusing me for? I've done the best I
- 08:30 can," and he said, "Well when I sing out for water I want water," so I had me bucket here that I used to fill out and I said, "Do you want water here?" and he
- 09:00 said, "Yeah." That was the end of the water boy. And then I got the smell of this grocery boy so I thought I'll have a go at that – wasn't any good – I went down there and I think they used me a bit – still bringing in something and no set wages. They used to give me some wages though but
- 09:30 then she wasn't a bad old sort. She used to pack up a packet of groceries of jam, butter and something and bread and send it up to the family so that was all right and I went along with it. Until one day the bird sat on my shoulder. It wasn't my fault either. I used to knock off at 6 o'clock and at
- 10:00 half past 7, I was still going still delivering on an old pushbike – you're down here – where the cemetery starts there big hill there they cut it down over there and everything now there's only a bit of a rise and she was the
- 10:30 other side of that and I had to ride from there out to there. And we were going out, she had a big order every fortnight she used to and we used to fill up this banana case if you know what that is, about that big, fill it up and take it down – the pushbike and as I was going out with it had the
- 11:00 bike outside as I was going out the girl I worked with there Isobel she said, "Take this box out," she was doing groceries – taking the bad ones out and putting the good ones in you know and take this out and I said, "Oh pigs
- 11:30 I've got this to go," and she said, "Oh take it out." So I thought oh bugger it I'll put it down and took it out and as I was coming back the boss said to me "What did you say?" I said, "All I said was Isobel asked me to put this out and all I said was pigs." And he said, "I won't have you talking to the girls like
- 12:00 that around here and as far as you're concerned that's it." I said, "Okay okay." So I got on me bike and out I went. Started off and got up to the convent up there up the hill and – he had a motorbike he pulled up beside me and he said, "What happened down there in that shop is my business. What happens outside is your business," and I said, "That's fair enough, what are you
- 12:30 stopping me for? It's my business not yours," and he said well and he started off again – I said, "Oh no not again," and he said I'll do this and I'll do that and I said righto – me next job so I picked up the groceries let the bike
- 13:00 fall, tipped them over his bike – chains and an envelope and a bag of lollies – they were in my pocket and I pulled it out – "Now the job is yours too." He said, "What about – ?" I said, "That's yours too. You're making it your business. You said down there was your business. Well up here is my business so that's it." So that was the end
- 13:30 of me job. And then I got on the sewerage plumbing after that and I stopped there till the war and then when I come out of hospital I was too light.

**We'll talk about after the war later on. So before you go in you're**

- 14:00 **working as a plumber. You're painting a picture of a young bloke who's not afraid of confrontation, who likes you know a bit of a fight if it comes his way?**

Well if they wanted it that way well I couldn't see actually them being

- 14:30 disappointed. You take the aim and then it would be was either – or what he reckoned – torment him that much and torment me that much I thought well why not have it now and I think it worked out that

way and that's the way it seemed to go. And I couldn't see them kind of begging me to do

15:00 something about it. Well it wasn't a hardship.

**How did this work within the authority of the army which has very strict rules? How did you find that?**

15:30 Well actually I have to confess that I told you that I got me gong when I was a private and I went out as a private. But a little fact in between that did happen. I went for an NCOs [Non Commissioned Officers] course soon after I joined up with the

16:00 2/4th Battalion in Darwin after I left the other one and I went on this course and I got beat by half a point for the first thing in the whole lot and I thought well

16:30 that's fair enough. They told me this was on the parade that you ran second see and that's why I actually held a corporal's job - record held it for the lowest time ever I think. They said, "Well now, Private Kenna. He was a bit of a Pommy."

**A bit of a what?**

17:00 A Pommy. He said, "Now Private Kenna you've been known as Lance Private Kenna but from now on you'll be known as Lance Corporal Kenna," and the other joker was a corporal and I said, "Sir, now what's that?" and he said - and I told him what to do with the

17:30 stripe. So they marched me out of there and arranged to have it taken off me again. So by the time they typed it out I had time to go out of the tent and get an army escort to take me back and they took it off me again. So all me good work was for nothing. And that kind of thing happened, I

18:00 think it happened three or four times. I might be missing one, three times - I had them and took them.

**Why didn't you want them?**

Oh, I think it might have been deep down, when I think about it, it might

18:30 have been, oh, me brother Jack was in the same section and all my mates, beside that I think down deep it might have been my brother Jack, looking after brother Jack in my book but he could have done the same

19:00 thing. I think that might have been it. I don't know. But anyhow it was on the records -

**Let's just take it back to your training days in Geelong. Where were you set up? What was the accommodation that you were staying in?**

Our accommodation were on the other side of a racecourse on the flats

19:30 there up towards the far fence and there were rows of tents, rows and rows of tents and we lived there eight men to a tent I think. That wasn't bad unless they got a big joker like you in there. That stopped him a bit.

20:00 **What was the life around the camp like? What sort of things did you get up to?**

Oh we didn't have much. Every night you had leave to go into Geelong, but that was only - well, there was nothing - you couldn't have broken many records with the pay anyhow but we done our best.

**You've got a tattoo there.**

20:30 Oh yeah, that was -

**Can you just hold it up here? It's an arrow going through a heart.**

It's supposed to be two hearts there. I got that in Geelong too somewhere

21:00 along the line. That's when I was down there. They were all going in to have a tattoo so I was lined up and he said, "What will you have? I said, "Anything small will do me." So he put that on. Been on there ever since.

**So it wasn't for someone special?**

No I didn't have anyone special. Only me sister for dancing and Mum for

21:30 abusing me, that was about all, but barring that I was free.

**And this is where you learnt how to use a gun. What sort of gun had you been using shooting the rabbits?**

Oh just a rifle, single rifle.

**What size, what gauge?**

24, little one

**22?**

Yeah .22, not an automatic. I couldn't afford one of those. I don't know

22:00 how I got this one as a matter of fact but I did.

**And so when you come to the training what guns did they give you there?**

303 all the time. That's all they had. The Owen gun. The Bren gun took over from the Owen gun. The Owen gun was more or less the same thing

22:30 but it had a round - and the Bren had -

**Did you learn to use those in the Geelong camp?**

Oh yeah, yeah but didn't do much shooting in Geelong. We knew all what you should do and what you shouldn't do you know and learnt the old

23:00 saying which I learnt, oh well I learnt that from me father actually. He told me now and a few of our friends our soldiers forgot which you can't afford to forget is, Dad always said now remember when you're handling that thing, he didn't shoot much but he had this saying remember he said, "It's

23:30 always the empty gun that kills," and it's true when you work it out in a way because the joker that shoots at you or someone like that, he'll say to you first, "I didn't know it was loaded!" Well that's what he meant. Make certain it's unloaded. It is always the empty gun that kills and that is a good

24:00 principle to tell anyone that shoots or any kid that shoots always remember it's the empty gun that kills. It's always the same way. A joker points a gun that way he swings it that way and you're in the road of it and he'll say I thought it was empty.

24:30 **Who was in charge of you at Geelong? Who was training you?**

I don't know who was in charge there. I don't know. Bloody lieuts [lieutenants], they come and go.

**You were about to describe for us your uniform. Just take us through what your wore in that training camp, as militia it was, wasn't it?**

25:00 Yeah militia. Oh it was more or less the same as the army. We used it as a walking out dress, a uniform the same thing.

**It would be great if we could just hear what colours they were and how many layers you had on and stuff like that.**

25:30 Of material? Well I had me pants on anyhow that was one thing about it. It was - pants, singlet and shirt and away you went.

**A jacket over the shirt?**

Yeah.

**And would that be a woollen jacket?**

Yeah it was curly.

**And boots?**

26:00 Yeah oh yeah and boots don't forget the boots - yes no worries about the boots. They were good though the boots good to walk on. Once you got your feet in - just to give you a little idea. When we went on the

26:30 Coronation I used to have two pair of boots down there and I said to them at the time what's the other pair for. They said you'll need them. You had to break in the two pairs - the old time ones - leather - hard till your feet got into them you know and a few blisters - I couldn't see the sense

27:00 in it. But it was further when we got to England the long march we had in that in the Coronation you needed a pair of boots that were good enough so we had two pair and when the time come you kept this pair once you broke them in you kept a pair and you had a good pair for the march.

**Which wouldn't have been broken in?**

27:30 Which wouldn't have been broken in no so I took my hat off to them there. No worries. Full credit.

**So you had to do the long march for the Coronation in stiff boots? The march for the Coronation was in stiff boots?**

Oh no I had mine broken in they were all right no worries yeah but they were boots yeah no worries about that but they were broken in and

28:00 therefore it was good as gold, and you had to have - it was a pretty hard march.

**So where did you go from Geelong once you finished your training there?**

We went straight up to Darwin and in fact we were barracked outside Adelaide River about five mile outside Adelaide River. And that was a

28:30 good one on the officers too - "Anyone want to go to the pictures tonight?" All hands would go up. So they'd line you up and march you in and march you back so you'd done ten miles. And some had the bright idea of doing a manoeuvre around the bush, bushes as you went not straight up the road or on the side of the road. I think they won.

29:02 **Did you continue doing more gun training and stuff like that up at Adelaide River?**

No not exactly. We done a few like competitions - one of them was two

29:30 of youse blindfolded assembling, dismantle and them assemble the Owen gun and it sounds quite easy doesn't it but we had to, Ivan Butcher and myself had the record for our battalion up there at one stage of doing that.

30:00 The sort of things when you're putting things you know no good scrambling around like scrambled eggs or something like that you've got to know. And a few other little things like that. They always had shooting and any sport and that, so it wasn't bad.

**Could you take me through how you do assemble an Owen gun?**

30:30 I wouldn't have a clue now mate. I know what goes on top and left and right south bores you've got to get those in so the south bores I forget now - they keep the rounds all that goes in different fits in different sections

31:00 left south bore - they guide the bullets out of the round -

**Was it a cartridge?**

I don't know mate. A cartridge yeah - shell but same thing.

31:32 **In Darwin were there, there were obviously other soldiers there as well.**

Oh yeah.

**And did you get to mix with them?**

Oh yeah. A little depended on how you were feeling actually because up

32:00 there in Darwin, in Adelaide River - I should say Adelaide River - we were only 4 mile, 5 mile I think, out from Adelaide River. If you wasn't on guard or anything like that you could go into Adelaide River and if you had money - money is the root of all evil, we know that - and up there they had the

32:30 biggest, one of the biggest two-up school in Australia up there and there was more money changed hands up there they had that many troops around all going through and that every night there was thousands of dollars put through it. But someone up there must have put a curse on me and my

33:00 brother because my brother said to me he said this is the way you play this game no worries he said. He said you wait until I go broke and he'd back heads and he said when I go broke he said come in and back heads. He said not before I go broke though he said not before I go broke and sure

33:30 enough it happened every time - and we both went broke. How can you win - that's how they took our money so I always said it was a put up job

34:00 I reckon. I honestly do.

**There would have been a lot of Aboriginal people up there in the area around Adelaide River at that time.**

Yeah but we didn't see a great deal of them up there. We were on the -

34:30 line right across to stop the Japs from coming in and taking the cities and that but I thought they made it easy for them by not having us further up to the coast. But one thing about it actually when I stop they could have took us to any part by truck and that any part of where the Japs - I suppose that

35:00 was their idea you'd still have a force there down a bit move them up and then bring the others in so that was their idea but I don't know. No-one ever told a private so I never found that out. I didn't go that far. I think that was the idea but I never seen a great deal of any of their race - I shouldn't say that - I never seen a great deal of them.

35:30 **Were there any in your division?**

Yeah one or two but not many. When I first went in I

36:00 trained under lieutenant - made a Captain Lovatt - he was as a lieut. He was to go over to England with the Coronation but I don't know he never made it. I don't know why. [talking off camera]

36:38 **Was Darwin bombed before you went to Queensland?**

Oh it was bombed when we were up there.

**When you were at Adelaide River?**

Yeah about five mile from Adelaide River it was bombed. Actually the

37:00 first night that Darwin was bombed I don't know when why or how it happened but we were stretched along as I said - different lots and there was a bit between each company. When I say a bit oh from here to the

37:30 corner or something like that. And three of them come in over our lines and I could actually hear them coming in, someone gave the alarm round me and we had a fire going and everything, cook had a fire going and

38:00 everything and going well - "Put out that so and so fire, put out that fire!," - the planes came in and they dropped some bombs but every one or just about every one had hit in the space in between. I don't know why or how but that's how it happened. They just bombed their lines and hit in

38:30 between. Of course then we heard after of course that Darwin had copped it but we thought and - told there was only a few planes and there wasn't much done at all up there at all. I never found out till years after that there was 56 or something, 36 or something planes.

**From your memory how long did this bombing last where you were?**

39:00 Oh it was only a skip - boom boom and gone over and gone, gone again. Actually only for the bombs it was only like a plane flying over. Nothing at all.

**So they didn't strafe you?**

39:30 No, no, no just dropped the bombs and went and that was it. And never came back either. They might have - but I don't know. I don't know whether - but that's what happened. And of course later on the news a

40:00 chappie from here was up there at the time in Darwin and he reckoned they were wheeling the bodies away in barrows there were that many killed. But I don't know.

**From where you were at did you have a shot at the planes? Did anyone?**

No, no, no too far up anyhow and then they would have had to clean their

40:30 rifles. Couldn't get a clean rifle dirty could you. That wouldn't be gentlemanly. No way couldn't do that.

**How soon after that did you head across to Queensland?**

Ah hell, when was Darwin bombed? We come down in '42 the end of '42 didn't we and then went to Queensland I think. Went over there in '43 I

41:22 think. Yeah, '43 up there.

## Tape 4

00:22 **So Ted when Darwin was attacked this actually was the Japanese attacking Australia. I mean had you ever expected that to happen?**

No, that never entered my mind actually. Well it did but when it did it was nothing I had thought. It was an impossibility, because I don't know why it gave me the idea with the aircraft carriers and everything they could do

01:00 what they liked, actually, but that idea never entered me head somehow. I don't know why but it didn't.

**Because you had been training for all this time and then suddenly here was a bit of action.**

Well that's what it looked like but again there was no action but now I'm

01:30 quite happy about that because that suited me fine. I didn't realise it at the time though but then I can always be proved to be wrong can't I -

**So you then join the 2/4th, you were in the 23rd, 21st is that right?**

Yes and joined the 2/4th up there.

**And then you go to Queensland, you were told that you were going to Queensland to do jungle training is that right?**

02:00 Yes well luckily it wasn't told that at all. Another lie. As a matter of fact when we, as I said I joined the 2/4th some of the company - and then

02:30 much to our delight of course the battalion got a leave pass for being overseas they had to give them so many leave passes so we copped onto that and we got the leave pass with them. So we come home here me to Hamilton here. I don't know how long the leave pass was then but I

03:00 suppose it would have been ten days or something. Anyhow I could be proved wrong now I don't know how long but anyhow we enjoyed our leave here and then joined up with the 2/4th again and went up to Queensland.

**So you got a leave pass because you were supposed to be going overseas, is that right?**

Yeah. So that's what they told us we were going overseas but that took

03:30 another 12 months before - just like Darwin. At Darwin we were going. Queensland we were going but it never happened. Not like some of the first boys they got away straight off and that was it but it didn't happen our way.

**How much were you hearing about what was happening in New Guinea at the time to the other soldiers?**

Well I don't think in that time up there I don't think I heard much at all

04:00 about it. Didn't know much at all. I heard so and so fell. Wewak fell and all the rest of it - when they were knocked back - didn't feed you much.

**Kokoda, did you hear about Kokoda?**

04:30 Kokoda yeah - we heard that -

**Were you impatient to go?**

Yeah well it's a funny thing actually. You kind of want to go very much

05:00 but then you think about and all the rest of it and then you have your doubts and then one thing and another what you'll do and how you'll

05:30 perform. The greatest battle I think the soldier has to perform from actually waiting to go. It's a queer thing to say but the thing that's always in the soldier's mind is how will I go and it doesn't matter where or how or

06:00 what distance in between actions it always comes back to the night before - the first shot how will they go in this will they stand up or will they do something silly or something like that. Let your mate down or something you don't know and that's always in the soldier's mind, I think, and it's a

06:30 question that every soldier, big, small, indifferent, has to answer. And he can't answer that until he fronts up. He can't say I proved meself there or I proved meself there. He can't prove himself until the time comes and it's

07:00 always in the back of his head is that question how will I go and that's it. And you don't know until you've been through it I'm afraid. And then he says I didn't go so hot - could have done more but you only get once chance and that's it.

**Do you think your training prepared you for what you encountered?**

07:30 I'll say yes definitely. A lot of times that I've spoken to higher up like say a captain or lieut or something like that and told him in certain terms that

08:00 what he was doing wouldn't win the war at all but when I look back at it now everything I done and everything I was going to do, going to do and

08:30 failed like they told me and I went against it to me own stupid mind. It was very simple and just the thing I've forgotten and didn't forget but I had at the moment was the fallen log where I got wounded where he hit me.

09:00 It's been told to me many a time that that position was no good whatsoever and be covered by fire. There was an inviting log across here right across perfectly I couldn't have laid it better meself and what did I do plonked straight down behind it and the Japanese up here shot down beside it. And

09:30 how many times the lieut told me that or a private or a corporal and at the time of the moment I'd forgotten it didn't register or something or whatever. Therefore everything, everything - but honestly they do count.

10:00 They're trying in the best of their minds to try and teach you or something that you should know probably but don't - and I'd forgotten that one little thing. Bad blue. And of course - it cost me a trip home - and a few

10:30 months after the war ended so that was all right.

**And you got to meet Marj.**

So it definitely helps.

**Just on that, what kind of things did you do in training?**

We learnt which I had a fair idea of anyhow learnt the way to treat a jungle

11:00 and the way the jungle treats those that is kind to them somehow and the way to walk and the way to move in the jungle. It might only be walking

11:30 from here to there but you've got to move with certain care or something or certain respect I'll put it that way and that's how it is. If you do it the other way you run into trouble if trouble's there of course.

**What about sort of fighting tactics, like how you fight in the jungle?**

12:04 Oh, how you fight in the jungle you do it probably the same way as they do it if they want to live or if you don't do it that way and you've got to kill

12:30 without thinking about it without even it doesn't enter your head. I'll put it this way it's survival of the body. That's more or less I want to live and if I don't do the right thing and the wrong thing comes up and you're in

13:00 trouble right from the start and that's where a lot of deaths on both sides happened. Actually they put themselves in the position where it gives the other chappie the advantage. If you do that of course you pay the penalty

13:30 like I did with the log. It's the same thing. But in war of course all these things add up. They don't, they're not written on a book they're in mind and they've got to come out. Your mind tells you that's how it is, I

14:00 suppose.

**So let's talk about actually leaving and going to New Guinea. Tell me about getting on the ship. You went on an American ship didn't you?**

Beg your pardon?

**Tell me about going on the ship and actually going across, actually leaving.**

[talking off camera]

14:30 City of Mexico. Oh, that was a lovely ship. I really had a good time. They lined us up, well, some had half a deck each. It was a lovely layout you could lay anywhere there had to be a layout but I had a bit more trouble

15:00 than a lot of them too. I happened to be seasickness hit me as soon as I stepped on deck and the boat wasn't even going and I felt myself going and I was really - I was going, the ship wasn't going and when the ship was

15:30 going I was going. So I had very, very good time on the boat and every time dinner companies used to line up and I don't know how many men was on it I don't know I never got time to count had to go down - lovely

16:00 boat and had to go down 1, 2, 3, 4 passageway, passageway about four the line was going down and around this passageway to the kitchen where I believe I don't know if this is true or not where I believe they handed out so and so, so and so, your tea, your spuds, and whatever there. But I never got

16:30 there. I had to leave - upside down and outside every time. Anyhow when they said - couple of nights I think couple of nights out -

17:00 someone was having a go somewhere or other - someone said, "I hope they don't come and sink us." I said, "I hope they do it would have been a blessing." Anyhow I finally got there but it puts me in mind of when I got on the boat to go to the Coronation. I said, "Oh not this," and I could feel it but I was as good as gold right through so that's how I felt about our lovely

17:30 boat that took us to New Guinea so if it had of went down I would have been and I can't swim either at the time. I can't swim I would have been thankful. So that was me trip.

**Where did you sleep?**

A few on bunks and the lucky ones they got a - bunk. I was on, I don't

18:00 know where it was - about six foot by five foot and they rise up out of the decks - I skittled on one of those - they were good summer nights of course they were all right so that's where I slept. They were all over the place

18:30 hanging everywhere. So we had a fair trip over -

**Did you have to keep doing training on the ship?**

No it was too, it was too crowded. You couldn't hardly walk let alone do any training. It was just a day off, couple of days off.

**Was it just Australian troops?**

Yeah, yeah.

19:00 **So tell me about actually landing in New Guinea. So it wasn't until you landed that you knew where you were going?**

No. Oh well as I said they picked that right because we didn't actually, we trained for it, we trained for amphibious training but we didn't have to do any of it because the Yanks had landed there and they had a little area there

19:30 all laid so we just pulled in and got in the little boats and went in just like a landing but no fire of course. We were lucky that way that everything was right.

**And what did you think of New Guinea? This was your first time you'd been there. Do you remember your impressions of it?**

Yes my first thoughts was because I'm a bit hard to please you know, a bit

20:00 hard but my first thoughts was when I seen the Yanks laying around and I thought, "What in the hell are we over here for? What's the use of fighting for this?" It's only jungle as far as I could see. There was nothing there at all. I said, "Well this is out of my reach. I can't see what they're doing."

20:30 Anyhow, the whole of New Guinea when I was there was the same. There was nothing. When I went over -

**What did you get told about you were going to do? Did you get told anything when you first arrived?**

21:00 No we didn't get told anything or I didn't hear it anyhow if they did but no. I didn't know Wirui Mission until we were up there, Wewak itself but I didn't know that.

**And just tell me a bit about the camp where you were that night. What was that like?**

21:30 Well it was all right. We got some ice cream off the Yanks and some beer off the Yanks and some cigarettes off the Yanks and what else did I have. I couldn't say women because they hadn't got any. [talking off camera]

22:00 **So this was the first time you'd seen American soldiers or not?**

Yeah the first time.

**What did you think of them?**

Oh no, no, not the first time. I seen them in Melbourne when we were going through and that but my first opinion of them I seen more of them

22:30 after actually when I went over to the Coronation but my idea I can't actually say to be honest because they must have been reasonable fighters although they had ammunition and bombs and shells and all that they poured everything in before they went in which was a good idea to save

23:00 lives and they must have been in my book fairly good soldiers. But after of course they went a bit against my principle a bit in telling you how good

23:30 they were and all the rest of it and you know I just couldn't - we went to Yankee land and found them all right but they still had that I'll tell you later business, yap, yap, yap, all the time so I don't know. They were good jokers. They must have been.

**What did you give them in exchange for cigarettes and ice cream?**

24:00 Nothing. We gave them the pleasure of giving it away. We didn't have anything anyhow -

**So you're there just for a couple of nights you said.**

I think it was only overnight. It might have been two.

**Okay so then tell me about what you did next. You headed off along the coast?**

24:30 Yeah we went from there down to Wewak, which is about 300 mile I think and a lot of fighting and stopping and fighting and hitting patrols and so forth. It was kind of all on the go until Wewak actually. Adelaide River,

25:00 not Adelaide River, this river I was telling you about.

**Tell me in a bit more detail about going out on a patrol. How many men were with you and what did you find?**

25:30 Well actually the few patrols I went there was only, I went on oh I don't know many patrols but there was only a lot of walking and then towards evening or getting back to your camp you might run into fire enough to stir

26:00 you up and all the rest of it but not enough to cause any damage and when you went forward to get it half the time you ran into nothing and half the time you'd get one or two and then back again. I done more patrolling

26:30 actually when we got down further to the river. We were held up crossing the river for about a week it might have been more and we'd patrol, went down each morning about left our camp at about 2, 4, 5 whatever time and

27:00 went down to the riverbanks just spread ourselves along the riverbank and some of the Nips were a bit dull and some still come down and done their washing and so forth etc the day after you say killed two or three of them and they come down and start washing and all this so you knocked them

27:30 off and then go back. Just do what you had to do and that's all. But I done more there than anywhere I think. But the others were patrols that had to be patrolled of course. What information they had and that I don't know but we were walking all day out say south west and come back and hardly

28:00 sight them and that was it. Then again you could the next day you might run into a band of them you know. You never know.

**Did you take any prisoners, any Japanese prisoners?**

28:30 We took oh about three or four at one stage and I don't know what happened to them but they were sent back and as I told you before when I got wounded, I might be changing a bit here but you can fix that, when I got wounded I went to the hospital and then I went to another hospital up

29:00 the coast further up the coast and in there there's I think there were four or five Japanese there when I got in there. So we had Japanese and Australians in the same tent.

**What was that like?**

Oh I don't know. I was beyond talking me head off then. By that time I

29:30 was in and out of memory. I would come to and know everything and next time might have a black out and come good again.

**The Japanese that you were fighting what kind of condition were they in because some of them had been there for a while hadn't they?**

Yeah some of the weak some were in prime condition and others were,

30:00 others were a bit weak on it but they seemed to have a condition there where we were but you could hit they would still fire at you of course so they were still fighting you could hit the weak so you run into the attack

30:30 here and you run into a lot of weakies and sickies and kind of run all over them and in other cases further on you run into the good ones. They seemed to, if you were crook and that they'd put you aside and

31:00 you're sick went the one way and the good went the other way what I could work out and if you happened to meet the good ones well they're in for a fight. They were kind of hard to understand the Japanese in their way of fighting because you come up and they would fire on you from a position

31:30 that you thought afterwards that it could be held you know could be held and after a bit of a scrap they'd nick off and leave it. And yet I've seen them in other cases where they were in kind of impossible positions and still be

- 32:00 very hard on the company. That's another mystery somehow along the line. But then the Japs themselves, I don't know. I thought they were, oh, I don't know, they were good soldiers and then at times whether their captain
- 32:30 wasn't thinking bad or someone was thinking bad they'd up and leave it and so it was hard to work out, very hard. That's my opinion of that.
- I read some things about some of the Japanese were so starving, I read that the Japanese were so short of food that they resorted to**
- 33:00 **cannibalism. Was that something you were aware of when you were there?**
- 33:30 Yes. Yes. One of our boys was shot - and they couldn't do anything about it at the time and they had to leave him there. I think there were several there till things got organised but they were still out in the bush in front of the company here and anyhow when
- 34:00 we did finally overtake it, and killed the ones that were there when we held the position, they found several of the Nips had the muscles of this chappie
- 34:30 in their containers. Not cooked or anything, but just say the muscle of a leg there, cut off, and had them in their containers. So that laid down the message that they were doing it, that some of them were hungry
- 35:00 but I don't know. That's what I heard. That's what they said.
- What did the Australian soldiers think of that?**
- Well I don't know about that. I thought it was a bit hard, I suppose, but then
- 35:30 again when you're soldiering and when you're doing things that actually you shouldn't be doing in the first place, at times, what goes on to carry out and carry on doing those things that this thing has got to be broken and of
- 36:00 course they were probably in that position that they had to break it. So I suppose the soldier would get around to the right way of thinking in the finish but not in the start and that was a bit hard to take but then again as
- 36:30 they say they either bury us or will set fire to us when we're a bit hard, to get on they set fire to you but I suppose the poor joker that got shot didn't mind it and, put it round the other way, the poor joker who shot him, he
- 37:00 didn't mind it either, so there you are that's war. We don't want to get into - but it's war.
- If men were shot in your section were you able to give them a burial?**
- No when they were shot they were shot. We didn't, not even your best mate,
- 37:30 the stretcher bearers and what's-a-name would come back to the doctor, once you'd seen it well actually it was past like even your best of mate, once he goes down and sometimes you've got time to do something and
- 38:00 sometimes you haven't even got time to do something, you've got to keep going and if you've got time to do something you're only there for a few minutes anyhow to put a field dressing on him or something like that and then you're off again because there's two reasons for that. One is, of course,
- 38:30 your own survival. You're sitting there just where he is and he got shot there, well the law of war says he can shoot there again. He mightn't be there but nine times out of ten he's going to have another shot and you're going to be the next one. So if you don't pull him aside or under protection you're
- 39:00 doing the wrong thing by doing anything for him. So you've got to have the protection before you start thinking of it. It's one of the horrors of war because at times that's how it happens and sometimes you've got to do it that way.

## Tape 5

- 00:24 **Ted, I'm interested that your brother was out with you in New Guinea. Were you fighting with each other, alongside each other not with each other?**
- That's a bit of a leading statement that one. I don't think I'll answer that one. Yes actually we were. We were called up together and went together joined the AIF together. We done more or less everything together as one

- 01:00 and I think there was times when things got a bit tight with the brotherly love kind of business that actually happened and you can understand the force the powers to be seen when two brothers go into action together and it was
- 01:30 with us. We went in and my brother Jack, as first or second scout in our section, then followed by the corporal and followed by me, I was the
- 02:00 Bren gunner. Actually in a tight position you can I think and I do think now that they were quite right in not letting brothers join together because the - is there. "Where's Jack and what's he doing?" and all this, "How's he going?" And it does weigh a bit on your mind but actually the good Lord cast
- 02:30 his blessings down upon us because when I did get wounded he would have been right there with me in the same position more or less and he was. I had a bad batch of malaria and at that particular time he was away so
- 03:00 when I got wounded he was the first one to meet me in the beach camp. So I can see now where it is a very dangerous position because one brother can lead to his own death by looking after the other brother. That probably happens in war and I think in our case I think it would have happened. I'm
- 03:30 nearly certain it would have happened that way and therefore the two of us could have been in a lot of trouble. So that's it. It is a dangerous position.

**I mean did you have arguments because he was the older brother? Would he try and tell you what to do sometimes?**

- 04:00 No, I think it might have been a bit the other way somehow. Jack was a good soldier, a very good soldier but he went a bit too - what I reckoned and we finally got together well, because he was a good directions man and all of
- 04:30 that and whereas I was a bit haywiresey. I'd be going north - as he once said about me to a lieut. I was out in charge of a section on a patrol and I had given me report in and Jack happened to be there, which he always was, and he
- 05:00 just said to the lieut, "Turn that around and you'll be right." So that's what he thought of my directions. We got on well so that was it.

**You said he got malaria. Was that a problem a lot of the time, malaria?**

- Oh yeah malaria was always a problem. I think at times the powers that be
- 05:30 were very, very disturbed actually because too many was getting malaria and they thought then of a lot of soldiers in the area, not only in ours, that a few of them were kind of deliberately forgetting so they could
- 06:00 get malaria to have a spell, but actually it proved later that that wasn't the case. The officers had to come around. Well they kept it going for a while, a month or so, and every time when they checked that you were taking anti-malarials and they'd give you a dose of anti-malarials under their guidance, so you really took it, you know. And I think at one stage the malaria was a
- 06:30 pretty good enemy and got us into a bit of trouble and cut our forces when it shouldn't have. That was the case right through so we done pretty well. And I had it the once and that was actually when I got wounded so I
- 07:00 didn't actually I had it on there and they gave me a dose in the hospital but then it was a funny thing in my case. While I was in the hospital I got malaria three times running, just boom boom, one period nine days were up and then another couple of days and I got it again and a couple of days after that
- 07:30 up again. I had it three times and they reckoned that was impossible but it did happen. So nothing's impossible.

**What other kinds of sicknesses and things did you have to put up with?**

- 08:00 There was a lot of bones things and all the rest of it, but I never had any of that.

**Bone things?**

Yeah I forget the name of it now but

**Was it something that affected your bones?**

- 08:30 Yeah and there was of course the beetle that bit you and you got, oh I forget now. No I've forgotten.

- 08:57 **Ted tell me a bit more about what the conditions were like. You said you got malaria so obviously insects were about. What were the other sort of difficult things about the jungle?**

It was very hard to move in. Clammy and wet just about all the time and that

09:30 didn't help the boys too much. Oh it was just smelly and awful you know.

**And you said you went out sometimes with your brother and then two other men, is that right? There would be four of you?**

Yes four or five of us at a time yeah. Billy Neaves, oh there was a couple more behind us, the riflemen but there was two riflemen and Billy Neaves

10:00 the corporal and myself the Bren gunner and then the Owen gunner come half way through the section. A section was 11 and a corporal and a lance corporal were in that 11 so that's when we were at full strength. It wasn't too long

10:30 before we were never at full strength. There was always oh 7, 6, 5, 4 in the jungle but in camp of course in Queensland and Darwin and that there was a section, full section.

**Was this because you had lost men or because -**

11:00 No that was the state everything was in in the platoon, a platoon of three sections of about 11 men, round about 30 with the officers so there would be about 33, I think. And then three platoons to a company and then six companies to a battalion and headquarters.

**So when you went out just in a small group how did that work when**

11:30 **you were attacking the Japanese or they attacked you? What would happen?**

Well see the first section well it made contact first, it always did, and we more or less attacked to a certain thing and then stopped and then the others would get in position - join and see how many of us there were and what we were

12:00 up against and all the rest of it and then, if it was only a bit of a section each, well they go ahead but if it was a big turn out well the companies would come in, as I said, in platoons and then companies whatever, whatever the size of the battle was. It was generally the case that by the time we got to Wewak and crossing the river

12:30 we were all in big companies, all companies but as we went forward in the sections and what's-a-name put the platoon and company formed behind.

13:00 **How did you communicate with the rest of the company?**

That's what I said we had walkie-talkie, our lieut, so we didn't need anything. No they had like communications and they'd ring up - but we didn't need one of those. We had our walkie-talkie with us so we

13:30 were right. And communications - the company headquarters and all the rest was -

14:00 **Did you have problems getting hold of supplies?**

Yes. They were brought in by the Pidgin group which was the Fuzzy

14:30 Wuzzies. They carried them in and when we went back for a spell before, before we crossed the river actually we went back for a spell there for a week or so after nine weeks of fighting I think. We went back to rest up,

15:00 supposed to rest up back a few mile and we had duties where they kept us right on our toes of course, drill and that - biscuit patrol as

15:30 they called it. Biscuit patrol which was the Fuzzy Wuzzies carrying all our gear into the - main fighting areas where we had to come back from and they were carting them up - there wasn't a great deal attached to that. We were guarding them but a couple of times we did fire a few shots

16:00 here and there to keep the Japs off. They didn't mind bully beef either so they wanted their share of it too but we denied them that little pleasure. It was good there. It put a bit of humour back into it and gives you a break

16:30 from war. You're actually in war but it was actually a break from war, a different thing and you're guarding them. I used to smoke and smoke fairly heavy and, when we were marching, at ten minutes to the hour break for a smoko if you wanted or

17:00 whatever and at every smoko a little fellow that I was guarding - we changed over on the line, cause we'd been last, then second and first and then back again to last, you know it all depends how far you were going - and the little fellow, he

17:30 used to always find his way next to me. Every time I sat down and was resting he'd be sitting there and I used to give him a smoke of course and he used to smoke this smoke and really love it and everywhere I went he kept at me all the time I was there. I would just roll this smoke and just started it up and just

enjoying it and here he would be sitting next to me,

18:00 grinning all over his face. So I would give him a smoke and he'd be happy as hell so away he went again and the next spell didn't matter where we were he'd be there again for his smoke. Didn't miss a trick. They were good fellows.

**Tell me a bit more about them. Tell me a bit more about the native guys. Were they fighting with you as well -**

18:30 Ah yes some of them done, a few of them done scouting. Actually at the river, I forget the name of the river, at the river where I was telling you about before they crossed the river to a shanty. They had a shanty on the

19:00 other side. You could just see it in the timber. At one stage we went down about 4 o'clock in the morning to our positions there and all lined up

19:30 and I lined me Bren gun on this hut and these Japanese. We fired on them and of course three of them kind of went into the hut that I had seen and then one come out and we worked out that two of them were still in the hut. But we had

20:00 to wait for the rest of the section or company to get in line up further. They had to go further than us up along the bank and so we had to wait. Anyhow one of them disappeared up the track and two went into the hut that we had seen and anyhow I fired at it at the time. I was the first one to fire because

20:30 at my fire anyone with a target fired then too. Anyhow, I wanted to know for meself if the two was in there or whether I was just firing blindly out at nothing and anyhow these two are going over and my Corporal Neaves told me this, and I said, "Get the scout up here and ask him how

21:00 many Japanese were in the hut." To see if I made good or not and anyhow he came back after a while and there were two there, so I got the two of them all right but they'd done a bit of scouting for us like that. I don't know what the hold up was we couldn't cross that river for a week or more I don't know why but that was the orders. So they done a bit of

21:30 scouting for us and a lot more in other cases than our case. They were good.

**Did you talk to them much?**

I couldn't talk to them. It was a different language altogether than ours but my corporal he had it down to a fine art. He could speak anywhere and they used to send for him to the captain to see what was what. We had first

22:00 hand information there with the corporal so we were right.

**Did they tell you other things rather than just military stuff?**

Beg your pardon?

**Did they give some good tips about -**

Oh yes they had it all laid down like and they could move in the jungle a lot better than we could the boys and as I found out when I got wounded

22:30 when they carried me back. It was down hill and up dale and all the rest of it and you'd hardly know you were moving actually but it took eight to carry one so I had four men, four on each side with the pole - but when

23:00 they come to change, even downhill, they'd walk under and you wouldn't know the ones that take the weight and the others that walk out beside it, you wouldn't know you were moving. They were great.

**How many days was that they were carrying you on the stretcher?**

Carrying me? They carried me for 4 or 5 hours and then one night, a day

23:30 two nights and half a day, a day, a bit of a day and then a few hours I think and the next day.

**They didn't stop all the time?**

No they kept going and it took two days to do that.

**And that was back to, where did they take you?**

Back to the beach, the hospital on the beach.

**Were you conscious when they were carrying you?**

24:00 At times, at times and there were times it was a bit vague but most of the time I could hear and see all right but couldn't speak of course. I just

24:30 couldn't speak - it was the same more or less all the way back to hospital. I was kind of off and on, you know, all the time. That was it.

**Let's go back a bit to before you were wounded, can you tell me about, you said before about attacking Wewak and there were these tunnels**

25:00 **that you had to go down. Can you tell me a bit more about the tunnels, how big they were?**

Well the tunnels in Wewak when we took Wewak of course, I should have showed you the map of Wewak which is just out there then you could

25:30 understand more. It's kind of sitting out in the sea actually. The port and all the tunnels they done underneath was storage rooms and big storage rooms and tunnels leading just about all under the horizon, all under Wewak

26:00 was kind of built was formed up under a cliff-face up from the sea and they used it for tunnelling and storage. That's what in the finish the Aussies blew up, they blew it all up and closed it all up, all the tunnelling.

**Could you stand up in the tunnel?**

26:30 Oh yeah. Most places you could stand up. Some you had to crawl but not too many places. That was the worst part of it I think like complete darkness more or less until you got to a place where it lit up, ventilation and all the rest lit it all up. That was it.

27:00 **So were you involved with blowing up the tunnels?**

No I wasn't no. That wasn't no good. No it was done after we passed on.

**Tell me a bit more about what your section and company were doing there? What exactly were you doing?**

Well actually after we took Wewak we were on guard duty, more or less,

27:30 because we cut it off.

**Tell me about what you were doing when you were capturing Wewak. Tell me about that bit before.**

Wewak, the entrance to Wewak, as you come into Wewak there's the

28:00 sea there, swamp there and a road up through it and the Nips had their first defence, it was a machine gun, facing down the road, right

28:30 down the road. But we discovered that of course when we advanced up and it opened up. We went that way of course. We had to go that way. You got a bit of protection from the end of the beach. You got a couple

29:00 there but the majority went to the right and got our defence from the scrub and swamp but then on top of that they had a gun up near Wirui Mission, up on the hill. They fired down into the swamp so it wasn't too

29:30 comfortable there for a while but they brought a tank up then and got rid of the machinegun and of course we just went up and wiped out the few Nips that was visible and then formed our own defence across it so we could fire it that way and that way. Actually Wewak was out to the right and we cut

30:00 the short, the sort of entrance cut that off altogether. And then after that they brought up two or three days after that and then we went on to the Wirui Mission.

**Can you talk me through what happened up at the Wirui Mission? Can you**

30:30 **talk me through the action that happened that day because your company went in first?**

Yes. Our company went in first in Wewak and went in first at the Wirui Mission, but it was -

**Just tell me a bit what the land was like, just describe where you were.**

Well it was pretty rugged like even when they say it was flat it wasn't

31:00 mountainy but it wasn't flat either. You were walking up hills and down dale all the time and we went up the track but we had the tank which cut out more or less we were behind the tank guarding the tank so that they

31:30 couldn't attack the tank more or less and our job was walking behind the tank. It was as simple as that. Anyhow but come to the time just before the Wirui Mission the tank couldn't go any further. The tank was stranded up on the hill there and we had to go forward on our own to take the Wirui Mission.

**Why couldn't the tank go any further?**

- 32:00 Oh the country. It couldn't go in the rough country. When they say it wasn't hilly it wasn't mountaineer but it was that mountaineer and hilly, that it took climbing. You were climbing on it but it wasn't a mountain or anything. It wasn't classed as a mountain but you couldn't drive a tank over it, it was so rough and we had to take the position then the
- 32:30 Wirui Mission and that's when, it was all right. A few bullets were flying around but nothing much. Then when we really got inside of it they opened up completely there and we went to ground of course.

**So where were the Japanese firing from?**

- 33:00 There was a kind of a mound, bit of a mound, a hill and they had they were dug in and had the machinegun and that half way up but when we went down of course it was close enough to them and that but the ground was
- 33:30 that hilly and rough that you couldn't see anything. You're kind of looking at nothing.

**Was there long grass as well?**

Long grass and you were out of sight that's all so that was the time when I got up on the - to see what was going on.

- 34:00 **Just tell me what was happening because you went in the first day didn't you and then waited a night, is that right?**

No, no.

**Was this the second day?**

This was after we took Wewak. We took and stopped there a couple of nights and then we got there advanced on to go to Wirui Mission and this was

- 34:30 all in one day this all happened. When we got within their range or what they reckoned was a good thing they opened up and of course we all went to ground and our section was there, Brownie's was over on the right and

- 35:00 they were doing the same thing and anyhow this machinegun opened up as I said at the entrance of it and that's when I got up. I couldn't see down below I got up and opened fired three shots and was a bit lucky there and a couple got in the road of a couple of bullets.

**So this is with your Bren gun first is that right?**

- 35:30 Yeah but then another one opened up further up and that's when I called for, I couldn't get at it properly with the what's-a-name so I called for a rifle which one of the boys threw up from the grass and I happened to get hit there so I was all right. So that was it.

- 36:00 **Were you scared when you were standing up there firing?**

I don't think I was scared. I don't think I had time to be scared I don't think. I wouldn't know. But I never expected anything I was wearing so I wouldn't know how I went actually. I suppose every man's scared. I

- 36:30 suppose every soldier I think is scared - but that's it.

**What made you stand up and fire?**

Well I said to one joker who had a lot of brass on after the war he asked me the same question and I thought to myself "He shouldn't have to ask that

- 37:00 question because it's simple." I'll give you the same answer I gave him. That answer is just because I couldn't see down here and I had to stand up to see up there so that's the answer. I couldn't see where I was so I had to

- 37:30 stand up to see and standing up got me into trouble that's about all.

**Because there were a few bullets coming at you?**

Yeah a couple of them flew around. One actually, actually marked me but didn't hurt me but it ruined me good shirt I had on. It ripped me shirt

- 38:00 under just above the ribs and it only left a pencil line there so the shooting wasn't so hot, so that was all right. The next couple of weeks - same way, it was all right until I got into trouble with the log.

**Just to finish off from you standing there, now Marjorie said, it was your Irish - she reckons it was your Irish temper that made you get up.**

- 38:30 **You don't think that's true?**

No I was an easy-going joker. I didn't have a temper much but I don't know what it was actually. It's just

one of those things that you do, I suppose. It's hard to say. I think anyone would have done the same thing in the

39:00 same position because well it's no good laying down there and doing nothing. You had to do something and I don't think the Nips would have brought tea or dinner for me so I had to get up and do something and I honestly think that any soldier would have done the same thing.

39:30 **But the other guys in your section didn't.**

They mightn't have been as courageous as I was but you can't blame them for that.

**Did they think you were crazy doing that do you think?**

They reckoned I was but then again a lot of people thought that too but that's different.

**Did all your rabbit shooting come in, it was good practice for this?**

40:00 I think so. We were all always fairly good shots and even - all around the camps we had - shooting, my brother and I were generally pretty well up at the top. It kind of come natural to me. I don't know why. Not that I was a champion shot, I don't believe that but I was reasonable. A lot of

40:41 people were better.

## Tape 6

00:21 **So Ted, the moment after you shoot the guys in the post, what happened then?**

Beg your pardon?

**After you'd stood up and you'd got the rifle and hit the guys in the post, what happened after that?**

Well the whole lot - we just went forward past them and took another two

01:00 or three out of action and we lost a few men but we gained our position quite well and that was actually the end of the Wirui Mission. I think -

01:30 the other section, 9 Section, they took one. They got in a little bit of trouble up further and that was the end of that complication, that was it. We took that and rested there for that night and the next night we went on.

**Did you empty the bunker on your way through?**

02:00 No. We reckoned the bunker was all right and you could see a fair way into it and I think one of the other boys dropped a grenade in it. Later on they dropped a grenade in after we went past and that was it.

**How many sections were there at this stage?**

Beg your pardon?

**How many sections were in this operation?**

Against us?

02:30 **No, with you.**

Well we were the only one actually. 9 Section, Brownie's section, it went up the ridge on the other side of this and we were going up down below them actually. They were going up on the ridge and we were down below them

03:00 and coming up that way and then we all went in together at the top. And took another bunker up there and that was the end of it.

**So once you got the first bunker there was another bunker as well?**

Yeah and then there was another one after that. This bunker here the first one that opened up as I said before and we didn't know anything about the

03:30 other one until actually we were going from where I was up towards the first bunker and when I was doing that the second bunker opened up on me and that's when I put that out of action too, with a bit of luck, and then 9 Section ran into another one up further but it was over in no time.

**So you put the first one out of action?**

04:00 Yeah the first one out of action.

**That's when you stood up with the Bren gun first and then got the rifle?**

That's the first one yeah.

**And then you put the second one out of action as well?**

That's right.

**How did you put the second one out?**

With the rifle just kept on firing.

**And was that at the same time? Did you simply move from the first bunker to the second bunker?**

04:30 Well actually I was moving up from where I shot at the first bunker. I reckoned they were finished and I was moving up to that bunker when the other bunker opened up on me before I got quite to the first bunker and it opened up then and we didn't know anything about that bunker at all until

05:00 it opened up and then that's when I got me shirt ruined I might add. And he wasn't a bad shot so we put him out of action and that was it. And we went up with 9 Section and they took the other one.

**So 9 Section took the third bunker, that's when you followed through?**

05:30 Yeah when followed through and that was it. That was the end of that session.

**And what was the response of the other men in the company after you had done this?**

A couple of them said nothing much. A couple of them said, "Nice shooting," something like that. That was the main thing. "Good shot, nice shooting." Just that was all. The rest -

06:00 **Did anyone mention that you know this could lead one day to you being awarded the Victoria Cross?**

Oh hell no, no. No-one mentioned that. Well I was with them until I got wounded and that never come up all that time and in fact it was later in

06:30 hospital when that come through so I didn't have a clue - I got the VC but it seemed a bit strange but that's the way it goes.

**Did they give you an extra can of beer that night or something?**

No I don't think - teetotaler by that time, in hospital. I was getting to be a teetotaler.

**I'm talking about the night of the action when you were out in the field.**

07:00 No no-one sent any beer. There was more to be done than drink beer. That was no good.

**Was your brother on that mission?**

Yeah he was there. He was kicking around there somewhere. He was a bit behind me that day but never mind, he was doing his job.

**You talked before about the relationship of brothers you know**

07:30 **perhaps being a hindrance, you know, because you're worried about each other but I also wonder if it could also help in terms of acts of bravery in that there's a little bit more.**

Well I think in our case I think that might have been close to it, actually, but

08:00 you haven't got that much time. You know you say you're thinking of this and thinking of that well you do too but actually when the time comes you're

08:30 thinking of yourself and that fellow up there. I would say it was - I think - because we were pretty good pals pretty good mates. But I think too - the whole thing, the whole war, that not only brothers - but you're all kind of

09:00 brothers in a way, and to miss them is something. Hearing they got killed or seeing them get killed or hearing them get killed. It's a hard thing and

09:30 you've got that close feeling right through the army so there might be one or two in C Company you get along well with and really well and B Company and C Company, you know, it's all kind of scattered. Very hard,

10:00 very hard. If you stop and think that the idea, as they say, is not to think but that's the way it goes mate.

**I suppose this for someone who particularly from our generation who haven't experienced war this is probably the most difficult thing to understand is that loss.**

- 10:30 I would say yes and it's for probably the younger generation and the younger soldiers you feel this and like it's
- 11:00 hard. It's easy for me. I can go into a company of young men which I've done a lot of times and given out trophies for the best rifle shot and the best that and the best this and mix with the young soldiers of the day, the up and coming ones at the reunions, not the reunions - at their walking-out parades
- 11:30 and all the rest of it. I go there and I can stop into a club now and I can close me eyes actually and listen to them talk to one another and you can go back to me talking to you or to one of me mates. You can hear them
- 12:00 say that but to tell them this is very, very hard for me to explain to them what happens to a soldier. It's like many have asked me how would the
- 12:30 younger generation soldiers of the day operate in the same position I was in. Now to me this is quite easy to answer that because you've only got to
- 13:00 put yourself in an old man's position and try and think what the young one would do. Well the young ones would be a lot better soldiers than we were. They've got to be because they've got a better education for a start.
- 13:30 They're more knowledgeable. They've got better weapons and they're better trained. All they've got to do is to like the job. If they don't like it they can still be a good soldier but just not too often. So I say and I will say this and I'll say it to the day I die that the younger generation must be a
- 14:00 better soldier than we were, they must be. Like it's quite easy to understand right through I'd say. They say the 1914-18 war they reckoned the young chap which was us couldn't compare with the 1914-18 fellows. Well probably as far
- 14:30 as medals and that go we didn't get as many or anything like that but the type of war had changed that way too then. Even then and we proved that the younger generation was up to the older generation and I'm certain, I'm absolutely certain, that the younger generation today are equal if not better
- 15:00 soldiers than we were. I reckon -
- Weaponry aside, obviously technology is going to give the modern soldier a lot more efficiency and skills in that regard but one of the things you talked about yesterday was mateship which seems to have**
- 15:30 **been a pretty important ingredient.**
- Well it is but then again you come up against a brick wall again. What is mateship, how do you get this and the answer is still the same. For me to
- 16:00 try and tell anyone what mateship really is I'm stretching it. I can't put words to it. I think it's something that grows there. Well that's it. I don't know. I'm damned if I know.
- You said just then it helps if you like being a soldier. Did you like**
- 16:30 **being a soldier?**
- Well it wasn't my first choice in the world but I suppose I liked it, yeah. Liked it enough up to a certain thing but I don't think I'd ever make a general.
- What do you mean up to a certain thing?**
- 17:00 Well, I liked being a soldier. It was all right but they had some fancy
- 17:30 ideas that you had to march like a, march properly and all the rest of it which is a good thing, They all looked good and all the rest of it but somehow that kind of didn't impress me a great deal. But put me out in the bush and that's a different thing altogether and that is the life. We'll leave it at that. I'll be getting in trouble here.
- 18:00 **On the contrary. New Guinea was the first place you visited.**
- Beg your pardon?
- New Guinea was the first country you visited outside of Australia. It must have been very different to the countryside in Hamilton for instance.**
- Well you can put it this way, I suppose it had to be different, didn't it? But
- 18:30 then again the war actually changed everything our way. For instance I reckon the biggest town I'd seen outside Hamilton was Portland down here and you know how big that was then, and Portland wasn't as big as

19:00 Hamilton then. Because the only reason I visited Portland was that Dad had a free pass on his holidays and Portland was a day trip, down there for a bit of a picnic or something and home again. So then going to Melbourne, even Melbourne from here, well it was a big step as far

19:30 as I was concerned. As far as just being a soldier just visiting your own country more or less so it was a big thing all told.

**Tell us a little bit about that moment when you arrived in Melbourne. What did you make of the city?**

20:00 Ah well it's a long time ago too. Well as I said I didn't know anything about it but a very big surprise. Anyhow I got over that and all the rest of

20:30 it, but Melbourne was a big thing yes. So then you put New Guinea under that and then that was a big thing too.

**Do you remember the first time you saw a Japanese?**

21:00 When I seen one? Yeah. Well I didn't put much thought into about the Japanese, actually, but one thing is as I said before, it was him and I and that was it as far as I was concerned.

**When you were training did they give you any idea about what you would encounter as far as the Japanese soldier was concerned?**

21:30 No I never heard anything no. I don't think they knew too much anyhow about his fighting ability or anything like that. Well there was - actually as far as the Japanese was fighting overseas in India and China and all the

22:00 rest of it and then come here and they had a good up-bringing in jungle warfare in China and all the rest of it, whereas the lads that was coaching us or teaching us didn't know much about the jungle anyhow in the first

22:30 place. They didn't know the way to fight in the jungle and ambushing and all that. They didn't know anything about that until they learnt themselves and what the Japs learnt them all this in the first part of the war where the Japs set a lot of ambushes and we walked into them. It was totally a

23:00 different war altogether than what the English and all the rest of them were fighting. It was totally different.

**So did you basically learn on the job?**

That's right you had to learn. To ambush, to get ahead of the enemy and surround them and all that, that wasn't done till later on in New Guinea and

23:30 that - same as, well everywhere just about - they were doing it.

**What did you think of the Japanese as a soldier?**

Well that comes about in two parts too. At times I think he was a good

24:00 soldier, a very good soldier but other times he seemed to go walkabout in lots of ways. You'd come across him at times in a position where he looked to be pretty well set in and take a lot of moving and half the time

24:30 he'd up and leave then when you attacked. He'd fight for a while and then he would retreat back again. He would leave a good position and go back further which seemed to me like a roundabout way. In other positions he

25:00 reckoned he'd lay down and - quite easy and he'd fight and he would fight to the last man and you had to kill him simple but he wasn't, I don't know he was hard to understand and that but he was a good fighter.

**Because he was tough? Because he was quick?**

25:30 I don't know. I think for the simple reason that you didn't know what he was going to do. I don't think so anyhow. It's confusing not stand up and fight or anything like that -

**Fair?**

It wasn't fair no.

**Is there such a thing as fair?**

No not in war, no, but I use that word.

26:04 **You talked about when you were clearing these tunnels you actually pulled out a Japanese**

**colonel.**

General or colonel or whatever he was.

**What did he look like? What was his uniform?**

26:30 Oh just a bit of brass on him and all the rest of it bit of crosses and a few medals and so forth. I never took much notice. The other ones tied his feet and the others pulled him.

**So what did you do? You tied his feet together?**

Tied his feet together and pulled him out.

**And then?**

Then they took over. They reckoned they got valuable information off him, I don't know -

**But he was dead, wasn't he?**

27:00 Oh yeah he shot himself. Saved us a lot of trouble. So that was the last of him.

**Do you remember, was he the first dead person you'd seen?**

Oh no, no. There were a few more of them around the joint, a few of ours

27:30 too. The first person I seen was, we shot a few back a bit but you don't get to see them much you know but the first casualty we had was in our section

28:00 too. He got killed the other side of the river I was talking about and that was the closest contact to me - the first one.

**What was that like?**

28:30 Just like anything else - like persons of your own family more or less -

29:00 **Did a padre travel with you guys?**

Pardon?

**Was there a padre that travelled with you?**

Very good padre. His name was - oh, he's a friend of mine too.

29:30 [talking off camera]

Doug Christian. Him and I had a few - I said to him "When I got wounded - "

30:00 No, before that I said to him, "You never gave me a cup of tea when I went in there." Next time he made certain he sent it up to me and I said to him, I said it in the paper sometimes, that Doug Christian he wouldn't

30:30 even give me a cup of tea. Next time he - tea bag and what's-a-name, everything to make a cup of tea at one of the do's in Melbourne. He's still

31:00 going. He was a great chappie and I forget - Catholic priest and our doctor, the doctor that fixed my wound up when I was in hospital and he got killed a little while after me, going with the doctor from one company

31:30 to the other and they shot him and that was the end of him. He was a great chap. But as far as the priest goes, Doug Christian goes, I was pretty well all right with that. I don't know - he probably wouldn't have told me

32:00 anyhow.

**So would you have burials, would you have like funerals for these guys when they got killed? Is that how it would work?**

No, no. That was all done, like we'd get them to if we could we'd get them

32:30 to the first aid or if we couldn't it was in the fighting. We'd call first aid and then the first aid people would get him and if it wasn't the doc, just corporals and privates, in the first aid they'd probably bandage him up or something and put him on the stretcher and then carry him back which

33:00 happened to our first one that died. He got shot and we got him onto the stretcher but by the time we got him out from where he was, by the time we could get him, he'd lost too much blood. He was shot through the

33:30 leg here somewhere and by the time we got the others around him and got him so that we could handle

him and got him onto the stretcher but, before the doctor could do, much he had died. A lot of cases like that happened where you just couldn't get to the person at

34:00 the time and you just had to let him go until you'd done what you had to do and if the stretcher bearer couldn't get to him well that was just too bad, that's what happens.

34:30 **You talked yesterday about being next to someone and them being shot and you would realise being next to someone and they'd be shot and you'd realise if you're next to them and if they could be shot you could be next.**

That's right.

**Was there ever a moment where, you know, you would pause to say goodbye to someone?**

35:00 No. It's happened but like it's a quick evil thing and he's fighting and shooting and you're shooting and he gets it well you haven't got time to

35:30 knock off shooting and just know he's gone and you keep going. You don't realise it till after that you were next to him - just go that's it. That's the way it is. Just go. If you stop too long in a certain position in places like that well you're kind of asking for it.

36:05 **You mentioned earlier this morning about the army got suspicious that people were faking malaria.**

Well it was a funny time kind of half resting at the time and we were going

36:30 out on patrols and that but holding the position and there seemed to be a few more getting malaria than what was normal you know and anyhow that wasn't to be actually. They were taking their Atebrin and doing the right

37:00 thing but there was some fault they found with the Atebrin in the finish. It was the Atebrin's fault not the soldiers' fault and that was all around the area. They had to get the officers - they had to give you the tablet and

37:30 put it in your hand. You had to put it in your mouth and take a glass of water and swallow it and I said to Brownie "What's all this about?" They said, "I reckon that you haven't taken the Atebrin," and I said, "Oh pigs you know that - " Anyhow I said, "How would you know if I took it or not?" and he

38:00 said, "The water." I said, "Righto, I bet I can prove you wrong." And he said, "How?" I said, "Oh it's quite easy." He gave me the tablet and I said, "Righto, put it in me mouth," and I said, "Give us the water," and I swallowed it back and there we are -

38:30 "What are you talking about?" He said, "Oh you - that's the way that worked." We were all taking our Atebrin. We would be mad not to. Anyhow that's what they reckoned anyhow - out in the fighting just take it in there so it wouldn't make any difference.

**Did soldiers ever crack under the pressure?**

39:00 Ah yes but that's one thing I won't go into it I don't think. I won't talk about that because - there was two or three cases I've seen but only very, very few -

39:30 **It's interesting for me because you know once again it's that thing of I'm trying to understand what it's like to be under that sort of pressure.**

A few of them have that I've seen - one particular case at 4 o'clock in the

40:00 morning I forget the name of the river you'll find it out anyhow the big river when we crossed it and - at 4 o'clock in the morning we crossed it and we knew the Nips were on the other side because we had been shooting them for a week, off and on, silly enough to come down and get shot and

40:30 anyhow our company crossed this river at 4 o'clock in the morning and one chap was crossing it - all quiet the less noise you can make - and he was taking it very easy. He pulled out his pipe put the

41:00 pipe in his mouth and was trying to light it - in the wind you know and the matches were going out and flames going everywhere in the middle of the river but the poor fellow, he was making noises and singing out and that - they got him to the other side, the side where

41:30 we were going and then that's the last I seen of him. Just one case where it was just too much - big joker, tall, he was six foot, quiet, just couldn't

42:02 help themselves -

## Tape 7

- 00:00 All the time in New Guinea, well every day was a day of war, but you can't say, "I'm not in New Guinea," you can get shot at any time and, as I said, on lots of occasions too you hear
- 00:30 some soldiers here of my age say that "Oh I was in the thick of a certain area." I don't know but war isn't it isn't an area of numbers
- 01:00 before here in war. You're in war in a country. In the Second World War, when they went over to France, and you were in war, and war could be a little patrol. One men, two men, three men on patrol and you
- 01:30 get shot, well that war is the biggest war he's ever been in - only a handful of men. It's not the number of shots that counted - well real hits, I suppose - but that's the biggest war he's ever been in and if you call them big in my
- 02:00 book the small little patrol could be the biggest war of the lot. But you hear some chappies skiting about "Oh I was in that big war - lost so many men," and all the rest of it but it doesn't take men, it doesn't take anything. It's one life as far as they're concerned and that's the big war. That's my
- 02:30 idea of war. You can't tell me that war is something like taking Wewak or the Kokoda Trail where they stopped the Nips coming out, that's no bigger than the others and what's-a-name said on the Kokoda that it was one of the
- 03:00 biggest wars of the lot. Now they might have been a better unit than ours and they lost less men on the Kokoda Trail than we - we had more killed and wounded on the Aitape, down in the Wewak area, and yet they say
- 03:30 Kokoda was the bigger, the big war. It's the same in Vietnam and all the rest of it. There's no such thing as - war. It's a one man job and that's it.
- 04:00 **It's interesting just talking about Kokoda and World War I. Paul Keating you know the Prime Minister once said that you know we should really be celebrating the war in New Guinea as opposed to the ANZACs [Australian and New Zealand Army Corps] as far being a moment of defining Australia as a nation because that was the first time that Australians were really defending**
- 04:30 **their own country. What do you think of that?**  
I think that was wrong actually, because I think we were defending
- 05:00 our country - we were defending our country in the 1914-18 war in France and any war outside that Australia was in. I wouldn't say Vietnam - we were defending Australia in Singapore, all around we were defending
- 05:30 Australia and in fact all those countries, the islands around the joint, it was all part of defending Australia because if the battle of, no, ship battle that
- 06:01 what's-a-name that sank half of the force at Port Moresby -  
**Midway.**  
Yeah, if those two warships hadn't have clashed, I think there was no hope for
- 06:30 Australia. That's my honest opinion. If those Midway and the what's-a-name boats hadn't of clashed they would have had enough men to take Australia quite easily and therefore I think myself that they were all
- 07:00 combined and I think Australia cannot defend itself. I'm nearly certain of that it can't. They say the Yanks and all the rest of it but it took the Yanks - we couldn't have done it.
- 07:30 **You said just then that Vietnam was different. How was Vietnam different?**  
Well I think that, I don't think Vietnam was able to attack Australia and I don't think it was an Australian kind of thing and that's
- 08:00 why I say I've got me doubts about that, whether they would have, whether the others would have. Japan would have to Australia no worries -  
**While we're on Vietnam, what did you think of the Vietnam War when it was happening?**
- 08:30 Well I'll put it this way. As far as the Vietnam War goes, I myself wouldn't have liked to have fought in it. I honestly wouldn't because there was too much, well you're fighting the same people. Half of the people are

09:00 on your side and half are not and therefore you wouldn't know who you were fighting actually and which was - didn't know and if you made a mistake and done the wrong thing and shot up a few of the jokers that were

09:30 against you, you're in trouble. So that's why I say that. I just wouldn't have liked to have fought in it. I wouldn't have known and I would have been the one that made the mistake too -

**There's often a bit of contention between the World War II soldiers**

10:00 **and the Vietnam soldiers. The Vietnam soldiers don't feel they're respected by the World War II soldiers. What do you think of the soldiers who served in Vietnam?**

I would say that they're quite right. In lots of cases it was because some of us - the old fellow's sake because a lot of them have been treasurer or

10:30 president of this club or that club for - since the war - more or less and then they got the young fellow coming in and they actually a lot of them I'm not saying all of them but a lot of them - didn't want the Vietnam

11:00 jokers in, because they take some of the power and love or whatever off the young fellow so they wouldn't give it to the young fellow. They didn't want him in when he was discharged - in Hamilton here. I said, "You're doing the wrong thing." I said, "All you're doing is cutting the club in half

11:30 and you're not getting reinforcements," and they said, "Oh no we can't have them," and anyhow I stepped out in the finish: "If that's the way you want it -," And I've got a nephew out here, he went as a tankie to

12:00 Vietnam and me other sister's fellow he went as an infantryman to Vietnam and of course - they're soldiers, why not? Just because they're in that war. It was the Australian Government what's-a-name people put them there and they got a hell of a time right through it and when they came home and

12:30 I was all for it. I thought right from the word go and that's why I'm not a member. I'm a member only up here. To everyone else I'm right but I couldn't stand that.

**You left the RSL?**

Well I haven't left it I just walked out. Well I don't go to any meetings or

13:00 anything like that - that's the main point. I've got all the time for the young ones and now any club that's run by the soldier and the good ones are run they've got young chappies from the Vietnam War as president or

13:30 in the club. They're a mixture, some old and some new, and more new than old and that is the way it has to be. If they only wake up but the young chappies have got to be in the club to get their intelligence.

14:00 **Get their intelligence?**

Right. I think that they've got to, they've got to have the young ones in well as far as I'm concerned they have anyhow and all the growing clubs they're more or less the power behind them is the Vietnam jokers. So

14:30 that's all I've got to say there. So I don't know whether I'm right or wrong but that's what I said and that's what I'll say right through -

**Let's go back to just after you took the Wirui Mission and there was a couple of weeks there before you got injured. What did you do?**

Where?

15:00 **In New Guinea before the incident at the log, in between taking the bunkers on the mountain, what did you do in those couple of weeks?**

15:30 ...I suppose. From Wewak you mean from Wewak to what's-a-name - for a couple of days when we got Wewak all set and ready and then pulled that joker out of the cave and then went on and took -

**And then after that you kept heading**

16:00 Further round into the hills mount to where I got wounded, oh I forget the name of the joint and that's when I got wounded of course and that was the end of the war.

**There was about two weeks wasn't there, between Wirui Mission and when you got wounded?**

About two weeks.

**And you just continued patrolling is that right?**

16:30 No fighting - following the enemy mostly - did little scrambles in between and then we tracked them

back into this mountain, I forget its name and that's when well he done over our company -

17:00 We walked into it very badly, we lost six, I think it was six there - Most

17:30 of them were wounded. Two killed I think - when they attacked that - We were lucky, I was lucky to get out of it and so were a lot of the others.

**Were those soldiers replaced because obviously that would have depleted you?**

Well as far as I know the war ended there for me. I don't know whether

18:00 they were replaced, probably did. The idea then was the ones that went to hospital and the ones that - A Company, well when I come back that's

18:30 when I got into another bit of strife. They told me that I was going to C Company and I thought that wasn't good anyhow

**Why did you think it wasn't good?**

Because I wanted to go back to A Company. That was wrong, I know, but I

19:00 got back to A Company. I walked back through half the enemy territory and walked back without a rifle or anything and lobbied there and Blah Smith said to me the next morning "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm back." I didn't know this law had come out that one had to go there and one

19:30 had to go there. He said, "Well you've been sent to C Company and not A Company. Now your rations are going to C Company and not to A Company. You'll have to go back," and our section was going out

20:00 on patrol at the time and I said, "I'll go back after this patrol. I'll do this patrol." I went out with the patrol, done it and come back that night. The next morning he said, "Are you still here? You had better get to C Company." I said, "I don't know where they are," and he said, "I'll find out." Anyhow by the

20:30 time he found out I had got wounded anyhow so that ended that. So I stopped with A Company, but that wasn't right.

**So had you been with C Company you might not have got wounded?**

I wouldn't have no. I might have, you never know, but I think when I got

21:00 wounded it was funny actually because we went up through C Company and they were leading - and I heard one of the C Company jokers say - they were in the lead then and we were just coming up to go through - and he said, "Oh we took that hill yesterday," which they did. I

21:30 found out after that they had taken it but they retreated back again. The hill was still there of course when we went up - we stopped and anyhow so I could have got wounded the day before so you never know - so that was it.

**Let's talk about the moment when you were wounded. Were you conscious?**

Oh yeah. You might have thought it would knock me out but it didn't. It gave me a bit of a headache for a while. Me mouth was all shot away. Me

22:30 tongue was all right but I couldn't get anything out. I thought it was all right. Anyhow they pulled me down. As I said, it was quite safe down here, I had to go 100 yards back.

**So you ran yourself?**

Yeah on me own. The lieut had gone down beside me just as I got hit

23:00 and he said to me - I could hear him quite plainly - "Are you hit, are you hit? Get the hell out of here." He rolled me on me gun as I got half way down I heard another shot and didn't know it at the time but poor old Whitehead, he

23:30 got hit through the side of the head and anyhow I got down and they pulled me down and put a couple of field dressings on here.

**So as you were walking down were you holding your mouth?**

No there was nothing to hold. There was only a great gap - and they put

24:00 this field dressing on, two of them, and gave me a drink and so forth and then I had to walk back, I don't know how far, I had to walk back to the doctors where he was operating on a couple of jokers that got hit and I laid down there and he just come along and had a look at this. He said, "Oh yeah that's all

24:30 right," and then he must have spotted some more blood here or something but it could have come from here of course. Anyhow he found out then that the two holes here and the blood was coming to here, or whichever way, -

25:00 pumping out the hole - shooting it out. That was the main danger I think in the first place. He said, "This is going to hurt," and he sewed those two holes up.

**Was he right?**

25:30 Oh yeah - stung a bit but not much. Anyhow he said, "I don't know about that, it will have to be a hospital job." I said will "I make it all right." I tried to say that. He said, "You'll make it. You're all right," and anyhow

26:00 I got - two days ride with the Fuzzy Wuzzies and me brother of course he was down the coast with malaria and he heard that A Company got done over and he

26:30 said, "Damn Ted!" and he borrowed boots and he borrowed a shirt and borrowed this and that and dumped his uniform and went out to the track

27:00 and he hitchhiked a ride up to where I was at the tent on the beach. And when they carried me, then they carried me out to go up the next batch, further up where he was probably, a day's ride up further up

27:30 in the bush, he was sitting on the stone outside the hospital when they carried me out. But I couldn't speak to him of course but that's how it was. That's a bit of connection of brotherly love I suppose. He knew it straightaway, so that's how it was.

28:00 **As the doctor sent you off did he send you off with pain killers? Did the Fuzzy Wuzzies have pain killers to give you on the journey?**

No, no, no. The old doc and the priest came around the next morning at the hospital where the Fuzzy Wuzzies

28:30 dumped me and the priest said to the doc - he was coming down the ward and one chappie next to me who was shot through the chest - he said, "What's this fellow? Oh he'll be all right, he'll make it all right, no worries," and he came to me and he said

29:00 "What's he got and what chance has he?" and he said, "40/60 against." I said, "Pigs. I'm the other way, don't you worry." I couldn't say it but that's what I was thinking - don't you worry and that's the last I seen of him. Then we went further up to another hospital

**Just before we move on, that journey with the Fuzzy Wuzzies, did they care for you at all on the way? Did they look after your dressing?**

29:30 No, no, no. They carried me and they was doing what they had to do and that was it. They didn't even put me down for that they just carried me and that's all. So I was in a bit of a mess.

**Just two of them?**

Eight of them. There was eight. Four carrying. Some of the mounds was

30:00 like that you know, four carrying, and even the changeover they kept walking behind. This one would take and he would walk out like that. You hardly even know you were moving half the time. They were good. Extra, extra good. I did run into - when I went over to New Guinea after in 1960 something -

30:30 [talking off camera]

- the grandson of one of the chaps that carried me out. The grandson was a soldier over there and we went out to his barracks and he was telling me, he

31:00 had it all down to a fine art, it was definitely there all right his grandfather not him.

**And his grandfather had told him the story?**

Yeah his grandfather had told him all about it that he carried me and quite proud of it.

32:39 **Okay, Ted, so just tell me about what happened, so you were in the beach hospital. How did you get out of there? What happened next?**

Put that again.

**After you were at the beach, the hospital there and your brother was there, what happened next? How did you get out of New Guinea?**

33:00 Well then it was a car ride and aeroplane ride. I forget the morning now. I wouldn't have a clue but they got me up one morning from that hospital, drove me for a day in the jungle track up to another hospital. I didn't know

33:30 just an overnight stop, there was some of me mates there and some of the enemies too and some

Japanese and some Australians and I stopped there overnight and then got on the plane the next morning and went to landed

34:00 on top of Australia, I've forgotten now, the big airbase up there.

**Where did you fly out from? Did you get back to Port Moresby?**

No flew over the channel to Australia, from that base right across to - [talking off camera]  
Townsville.

**What kind of plane was that? Was that a small plane? You don't remember you weren't paying much attention?**

34:30 Only a small plane. It wasn't a real big one. I think it might have had about three or four patients on it flying back and a couple of nurses and a pilot and so forth and we lobbed at Townsville. And stopped there for a

35:00 day or two, a day I think. I think they were all overnight stops then from Townsville to Brisbane to Melbourne and it might have been a day or two days I don't know. I was a bit hazy at times. And lobbed at Melbourne [talking off camera]

10th June.

**And no-one had changed your bandages at all in this time?**

35:30 No the bandage was still on, that my mates had put on when I first got wounded and I forget the deodorant they called it. It was a very high deodorant used by all the young ladies and gents around the world at that time. Pretty

36:00 good stuff it was, and of course Sister Scully had to clean me up a bit. Not that I thought I needed it but anyhow and she called my wife in to help her so Marjorie had the pleasure of disarranging my face a bit. She

36:30 didn't like that too good I don't think. She reckoned something smelled around the joint. I never looked myself but I think she was.

**What do you remember of Marjorie when you first met her?**

Oh no just a nurse a pretty nurse that's what I thought at the time but I was delirious and that and didn't know what I was talking about so you know

37:00 those mistakes happen. Anyhow I talked myself into it and I couldn't get out of it actually but this was something that these nurses cook up amongst themselves I think. I don't know. Anyhow I had a nice stay there.

**What did they do because you had some operations didn't you?**

37:30 Oh yes well they had to clean, heal this up first and then they had to get two pieces of jaw, a piece had shot right out of it and then they had to cut

38:00 my golden hair off and put a plastic ornament around it just like a bike riding cap, or it was exactly the same but in the plaster. I had a bike riding equipment to hold your seat of your bike steady when you're

38:30 racing, to hold it steady on the bar to the seat and adjusting screw in the thing. Well they had one of those and they hooked it in the plaster here and that was sticking out here and then -

39:00 Quite an experience this was and then they cut me jaw there and they bored through the bone and hooked some barbed wire or something on that and hooked it onto the bike riding tool here so they could keep that level with this

39:30 [talking off camera]

To put bone from my hip in my jaw which he done my cutting the top

40:00 where the hip is you know the hip comes to a bit of a point of there they cut that off the whole thing off and then they sliced it up like a loaf of bread, the bone, cut up singly and then jammed the

40:30 two bones together and tightened it and kept tightening it with this here till it knitted and then they, when that knitted I was right. I was ready to go home

41:00 but that took, oh it took a fair while to heal for a start because they found in the neck here there was two little bits of cartridges we didn't know about and they kept expelling stuff out and I said to Doctor Rankin at the time I said,

41:30 "Sister Scully still can't fix that up. It's still weeping." Anyhow I opened my big mouth I shouldn't have in front of the doctor. I said, "It's got something in it, doctor." He said, "How do you know?" I said, "I

can feel it." You could too. He said, "You're right there," and they stuck it in the hole and  
42:02 pulled it out and there was a bit of a shell.

## Tape 8

00:18 **Okay Ted, so you were telling the doctor there was something in there.**

Yes. So he pulled that one out and it was a bit of casing shell of some kind I suppose from a faulty bullet or something like that and they got that out and it was the size of me nail on my little finger I suppose and they tried to heal it again and it wouldn't heal, still wouldn't heal, and I said to the doc next time he come around "There's still something in it," and

01:00 he said, "Are you sure?" and I said, "Yeah." He mucked around and pulled another bit out about the same size and everything was perfect then. They healed it all up. Me hip healed up and anyhow I said to the doctor next time "Well right. I'm ready to go home. I'm finished." And he said, "Well in

01:30 a fortnight you'll be right." And I said, "Why?" And he said - you see the jaw never sank in quite far enough and that's when I first done it - he said, "What I want to do now is open it up and shave the bone inside and

02:00 to heal it up again." And he said, "Are you right, Ted?" I said, "No, Doc, I'm finished thanks," and with that I was discharged from hospital.

**And you lost quite a bit of weight didn't you?**

Oh yes at one stage I was a bit under - at the hotel I was about 5 stone I

02:30 think and I was discharged about at about 7 stone I think, down from about... There was a little bit of weight to lose but especially as it was when I was doing the apprenticeship for my plumber and they were in the hard days, like using 2 inch

03:00 pipe and threads and pick and shovel and that, so I wanted a bit more beef on me before I went back to that and I was down at Hamilton Council for a job - to get a bit of condition back on and they agreed and they put me on as a gardener down at the football oval. That's the one you passed

03:30 down there. I was at that for about three years I suppose and then curator of the Town Hall come up, and I thought, "That will do me. That will be all right," so I put in for that and I was still going back to the plumbing when I

04:00 got - but then the plumbing got too hard. I got too lazy, something happened in between and I was quite contented where I was actually and it suited us and everything was fine.

**And did your parents come - your parents would have come to see you in hospital - was that the first time they'd seen you since you got back?**

04:30 No, they seen me a couple of times I think. I had an auntie living at Preston down there it was quite handy and my sister and Mum, and Dad had died when I was in New Guinea or when I was at Queensland I think - Queensland - and Mum and Nell came down to see me a couple of times at the hospital.

05:00 **What did they think of the shape you were in?**

They thought I was a good looking joker. They reckoned it was all right.

**And Jack was back as well?**

No Jack was, oh yeah he was back then, yeah. He was he got discharged when the war ended.

**Do you remember hearing about the war ending?**

05:30 Yeah too right - come over and my favourite nurse disappeared with another nurse in the celebrations and left me home in Heidelberg so the world was crook on me again. They stopped out all night gallivanting

06:00 around. I done me celebrating in hospital.

**Did you get to have a beer?**

No I didn't have a beer.

**Through a straw?**

No very good.

**So tell me about coming back to Hamilton. You said you got here the night before and everyone had a big welcome for you the next day.**

06:30 Yeah, I shouldn't have done that, I know, but I thought well I couldn't actually I knew there was going to be a do and all the rest of it and I don't think I could have handled it somehow. Everyone saying what a good job you'd

07:00 done and all the rest of it. I thought no I'll bypass that and I arrived the night before so I was home. They got the word that I was home and come up home.

**What did they do? Did they all turn up to your house?**

Yeah all come up yeah. It took the shine off it a bit. I suppose they all

07:30 wanted to see me getting off at the station or something. I don't know but that's how it ended up.

**What did they do when they came round then?**

Oh just a lot of shaking hands.

**Who was that?**

Oh, the Mayor of Hamilton, I suppose, and the town clerk and a few others other councillors.

08:00 **And the local people as well?**

Oh yeah a few local people. They were there all the time.

**A bit of a crowd?**

Yeah - and then I got married to my darling, and then lived happy ever after I think.

**When did you find out that you were getting the house?**

08:30 Well they ran a couple of things here and got some money and then we built it. It was up to the builders to say when we got it or not, so Charlie Pitman down here, he done everything of

09:00 course. All working bees and so I was the working bee one of the working bees every weekend so when we were getting closer we knew what time it would be. It was good.

**I mean obviously you were obviously a sort of an important person in the town after this, did they always sort of get you to do, open things or you know what was that like?**

09:30 No I didn't open too many things in Hamilton I'm afraid, no. It was pretty quiet. I was working bringing up kids that's about all. It was very quiet here. More invitations knocked back in Melbourne and that. I couldn't go because I wasn't rich and had a family.

**Did you get a pension after the war?**

10:04 It was a great pension. I got - the Australian Government gave me a pound, wasn't it? [talking off camera]

10:30 Two dollars a fortnight decoration allowance that's the Australian Government and English Government gave ten dollars which was twelve pound ten then so - was twelve and a half dollars from the English

11:00 government and two dollars from the Australian Government [talking off camera]

And got out on a 30 per cent pension. So the government in all their glory opened the purse and gave me between the two of them gave me fourteen, fourteen pound ten.

**What could you buy with that in those days to just give us an idea?**

11:30 Not much but everything was cheap. You see the wages here was only about four or five, four dollars or something wasn't it, five dollars [talking off camera]

12:00 About eight dollars wages were a week. [talking off camera]

Four pound a fortnight which made the wages ten dollars. It was all right. We battled on.

**Tell me about when you had your portrait painted.**

12:30 Well I don't know how we came to, he was a great joker, I don't know how he come to or how they got him to paint it, actually I don't know. Anyhow when I first met him down there, he looked a decent enough chap and all, and we got talking just talking that's all we done for

13:00 the first two sessions I think was talk and then I thought to meself, "Well he'll never paint this the way he's talking." We had everything going according to plan and then he started painting and it seemed that I was to sit in that chair a long time but he got it done all right and we turned out to

- 13:30 be good mates, actually very good mates, and he told me down at the opening, told the crowd, that he enjoyed painting it and what a good time we had and all the rest of it and he finished up by saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, I think I've got this little bastard right."
- 14:00 Painted just right he reckoned, so he reckoned it was all right. So do I, as a matter of fact. It's a good painting.
- He liked it?**
- Yeah, he done a good job I thought. As I say he didn't have much to work on, but he done a good job.
- Do you see much of men from the 2/4th Battalion? Do you see many men from the 2/4th these days?**
- 14:30 Oh yes. Although I'm not a stranger to them you know. As far as the state goes, they're New South Wales and I'm Victoria but of course that happened when I joined them up in Darwin, a Victorian into the 2/8th and
- 15:00 11th. The 11th was - no the 8th was South Melbourne mob, around South Melbourne. The 12th and 4th were Vics - were New South Wales - and we were Vics scattered in between them. So therefore living today in Victoria
- 15:30 there's only I would say about ten and now and again we have a bit of a dinner between us just to talk but the New South Wales mob the 2/4th every year since the war they have a get together every year at different
- 16:00 places. This year we go to [talking off camera]
- Tweed Heads and we generally get oh about a hundred. It's a lot [talking off camera]
- 16:30 Yeah with the ladies but we can - too and some of the ladies keep going after their mates have died and they still come and the same with the men of course. There's a lot that can't go. I think it's getting very close to closing up.
- 17:00 **Did you talk to Marj very much about your experiences in the war?**
- Oh yeah, I told Marj everything. No I'm afraid like everyone else my family don't know much about it at all.
- Why is that?**
- 17:30 I don't know, just the way I am I suppose. Don't feel like talking.
- Did you talk to your children about it?**
- No, no - they know I went to war that's about all and where I went and - that's all.
- 18:00 **Do you think it's important for younger people to know about -**
- Well actually I didn't in the first part but I do now realise that they've got to know and the more they know the better it will be for the world I think.
- 18:30 Things like what you two are doing now and it's going to be a big thing for the younger generation.
- Why do you think it's important that they should know about it?**
- Well I think - their way of thinking and I think it spreads their mind about
- 19:00 than the government of Australia and more than it just spreads their mind further I think. It does let them know a little bit about
- 19:30 what we're trying to say the dangers of war, the gains of war is nothing with what you put into it and even if you put into it you still lose and you still lose what you're trying to gain in the first part of the whole thing. In
- 20:00 lots of cases the winners are the losers and away you go from there. It's just no good for the coming population. No good at all.
- Do you think being in the war changed you?**
- 20:30 The wife would say no to that one - but then again she hasn't filed for divorce yet and I've got me doubts whether she would or not. But no I don't think so. Well why should she? Look at all the money she's getting,
- 21:00 all that pension I told you about and all that. She's getting that. No I think there's no good in war at all. The only good thing in war is that I found is mateship of course that's one thing you can't buy but and one thing you can't say much about you can't tell people as I said before and of course

- 21:30 my dear wife, that's about all the war brought me because I was down here in Hamilton and Marj was right up the other side up near the Eildon Weir, up there that way, so a bit of difference in the way I used to travel
- 22:00 around Hamilton I mightn't have got that far - getting through Melbourne and all that jazz. I don't know whether I would have made it.

**Ted, yesterday you spoke about before you went into the war you were beating the girls off with a stick and you went on to say that the war**

- 22:30 **changed all that.**

Well it did.

**Tell us how.**

Well I'll blame that onto the war again actually because when I got

- 23:00 wounded they put in the hospital to fix me up and by that time the vultures got in and I couldn't talk me way out of what they reckoned I said. I think they twisted it around a bit to say that we're engaged but I didn't mean it that way. I meant we were engaged to go to the
- 23:30 pictures or something, like not engaged to get married. So when she plonked it on I was engaged to get married well I had to say, "Yes I'll go along with it." I couldn't talk myself out of it, so that is how I dropped the stick.

- 24:07 **Okay Marj, you were in that - working at Heidelberg Hospital. Just tell me a little bit about that and how you came to be doing it.**

[Marj:] Well I don't know. It was just that I had two girlfriends who had joined up

- 24:30 and they persuaded me to do the same. I was about 20, but my father wouldn't sign the papers before then anyway so we all joined up together and we did our training for twelve weeks and then after you'd done the preliminary training we were billeted to different places and I was billeted to the Heidelberg Military Hospital and straight into the skin and bone grafting ward.

**What were you doing there?**

- 25:00 More or less nurse assistant and dieting for the doctor and did a lot to do with the dieting and that sort of thing and generally helping out.

**Tell me what it was like when Ted arrived.**

It was pretty dramatic, really, because you know I was only a young 20 year old and put into one of the worst wards there, I'd say, and he arrived in with this bandage on and the sister called me in to help and clean him up and took it off and well just about rocking on our toes I think from the smell of

- 25:30 it. All this was blown away and all this had a hole. They said, "Put your hand in here," and the sister said at one stage "Go and get him a cup of tea," and he drank the tea and it all just poured out the hole. That was a very good sight actually. I hadn't quite got used to it either because there were lots of bad sights there. And yeah that was the first introduction. And we cleaned him
- 26:00 up and put him in the ward and from then on I was assigned to sort of look after him a little bit. He explained about his operation but he didn't explain why he'd lost weight, because when they did the bone graft they had to keep their jaws locked so their jaws were locked with a lead substance and they left one little hole on the right
- 26:30 side where they could put a glass tube down. So all these boys that had jaw trouble, had locked jaws and Ted had to be fed by tube so that meant they could only have soup or Bournevita and they lived on that for about 9 or 12 months or whatever it was they were there. So that's why they lost weight. Ted used to come out to the kitchen sometimes and soak
- 27:00 some toast in butter and then put that down the hole a little bit but not much. So that's why they lost weight. At one stage oh I think Ted was anointed about three times, once on the beach and then back at the hospital they thought no he wasn't going to make it and the problem was that because of that blood being pumped out he'd lost a lot of blood and then the shock set in so he was put into a private ward and I used to feed him
- 27:30 with a glass tube and so forth. And then we progressed from there.

**So he pulled through three times?**

He was yeah.

**How did you get to know Ted? Presumably he couldn't talk?**

Oh at that stage he was talking once he had the bone graft and sort of

- 28:00 muffled about through the locked jaw. About three weeks after he had been out to it at one stage he looked up and he said, "Oh I think I'm going to marry you." Oh yeah that's a joke you know and so this went on a bit longer and eventually, he used to walk me down to the sleeping quarters where we slept. We were only allowed to a certain stage. Actually they weren't supposed to be down there at all but they weren't allowed to step
- 28:30 over the mark. I used to wheel the boys down to the theatre, to the pictures and so forth. They talked about it they reckoned it was the talk of the duck boards, the romance of the duck boards but I didn't even get a kiss goodnight because his jaws were locked anyway. I don't know whether it was a romance or what. Yeah so that's what happened and we just progressed from there.
- 29:00 **So what's the truth about the proposal then? Give us the other side of the story. He reckons, you tell us.**
- He said I caught him on his death bed.
- He thought he was engaged to go to the cinema not to be married.**
- I didn't remember much about that actually. I knew the female. We had another patient there who was a Sergeant Tucker. And he was a real
- 29:30 comedian even though he had worse injuries than Ted did, because his eye and all was blown out but he was always saying because after the Victoria Cross was announced there was girls all around the bed and he used to say "You'll get caught one day, Kenna." And this girl arrived down from Hamilton. I was on leave I think and I came in to see him and she was sitting there and this sergeant's there laughing his head off and said, "I knew you'd get
- 30:00 caught one day." I didn't really know much about that actually.
- This was an ex-girlfriend was it?**
- Ex-girlfriend yeah. That went off all right.
- Tell us what that was like when you heard about the Victoria Cross because he wasn't there was he?**
- No he was down talking to me, he took me down to the sleeping quarters
- 30:30 and the day before he'd had an x-ray on his chest because they thought the bullet might have hit the lung and so of course when this mate came rushing down and said, "You're wanted urgently up in the ward. Quick, come up in the ward!" And she told them all, "I know where he is, he's under the shower," so of course we rushed Ted straight back and I worried all night. I thought, oh well, it looks like the bullet has hit the lung or something you know. I didn't know what it was all about till the next
- 31:00 morning and there was people everywhere and photographers and women, the girls and women all sitting around the bed. I didn't even realise the extent of what it meant until after that. I mean you read about these things but it doesn't register till it happens. I don't think Ted even realised himself what it all meant till later on when it hit him.
- 31:30 **And what happened later on? Is that when he actually got it, when he got the medal?**
- That was only when he heard about it.
- 31:55 That's Ted when he was about 22, when he first went into the army in the 21/23rd Battalion stationed down at Geelong.
- So this is his militia uniform?**
- That was militia yes.
- 32:39 That's a group of Ted's unit, the 2/4th Battalion. It was before they went to New Guinea. His brother Jack's on the second from the right and Ted's the third from the right on the third row.
- Jack is actually second from the left?**
- Jack's second from the left in the front row and Ted's third from the right in the third row from the bottom up.
- 34:29 This is a photograph of three World War Victoria Cross recipients. On the left is Rogers from the Boer War, in the middle is Ted Kenna from the Second World War and on the right is Captain Borella from the First World War. You can see by that one that Ted's had his hair shaved off. He came home from the war with a lovely head of hair even though he had a damaged face. He had a lovely head of hair and when they had to operate they had to put a plaster around his head so they had to shave it all off and walking down the ward one morning and I asked someone who the baldy headed man was, who the new patient was and it happened to be Ted and I did not know it after he had lost all his nice head of hair. So that was the story of that one.

35:34 This one is where Ted was presented with his Victoria Cross by the Duke of Gloucester in February 1946. Ted on the left, myself, Marjorie Kenna - I'd just become engaged to him, Duke of Gloucester and the Duchess of Gloucester at Government House in Victoria.

**What was your name before you were Marjorie Kenna?**

Marjorie Rushbury. Unusual name.

36:41 Now this one's the Hamilton football team which Ted belonged to after the war and Ted is in the middle holding the football in the front row holding the football.

37:26 This is a photograph of four Victoria Cross recipients on their way to London for the Queen's Coronation and they met up with Sir Roden Cutler who is in the middle in the white jacket. From left to right we've got Reg Rattley VC, Dick Kelliher VC, Ted Kenna VC and Frank Partridge VC and in the front is an official, an official guest there.

**The guy sitting on the left of Sir Roden Cutler?**

The one in the middle in the white coat is Sir Roden Cutler.

38:20 This one's a photograph of the aircraft carrier the Sydney going on over to the Coronation which the five Victoria Cross recipients rejoined the army and travelled on and the Anzac on the aircraft platform is formed by all the men forming the name Anzac on the their way over apparently.

**Do you remember doing that Ted? Do you remember getting on deck and making the word Anzac?**

Yeah and as I said

39:00 I got on the boat when I got on the aircraft carrier I was thinking of going across to New Guinea I thought oh no I'm going to be - all the time here - I got a bit squeamish at the start and from then on was good as gold and we joined up with the battleship -

40:00 on the way over to England they done manoeuvres on the way and we were doing our part in the manoeuvres you know - all had jobs to do.

**So you remember forming Anzac on the deck?**

Yeah but I don't know where I was though.

**Be a bit hard to find.**

40:55 And these are Ted's medals. On the left's the Victoria Cross, the star is the 1939-45 Pacific Star, the other one's the Pacific Star isn't it, the next one is the King's Medal, the next one is the Defence Medal the 1939-45 Medal, Queen's Silver Jubilee and the Queen's Coronation is the last one. The

42:03 other one is the Front Line Medal for service in the front line.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**