

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Harold Goodall (Harry) - Transcript of interview

**Date of interview: 25th September 2003**

<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/949>

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

The embargoed portions are  
noted in the transcript and video.

### Tape 1

00:36 **So we'll just start off with the overview, so basically if you can take me through where you were born?**

I was born in the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital in 4th January 1941 and Mum and Dad, they were renting a house in Aida St Windsor. Then about March

01:00 '42, Mum and Dad moved out here, at the time they were renting the house and in '48 Mum and Dad bought the house. In '46 I started up at Junction Park State School, I went to school till 1954, then I left the school. I left school when I was 13, started working as a painter, but in between that me father passed away in 1951. One of the reasons why I did start

01:30 work at 13 was financial reasons. Mum was living on a single women's wage and she had the house to pay off, pay all the other expenses so I left school when I was 13, started working as a painter, from there I went to work at Morgan Slippers. When I turned 17 I enlisted in the CMF [Citizens' Military Force]. I was in the CMF for 18 months, then I got me call up to do National Service at Wacol for 77 days. Then I done me 77 days, went back

02:00 in the CMF, the same battalion that I was in prior to joining the CMF which was the 9th Infantry Battalion, the Morton Regiment. Then 1st July 1960 I enlisted in the navy, got down to Flinders - as it was then known as Flinders Naval Depot, but now known as HMAS Cerberus. I got down there on 4th July, was there until December 1960, came home on leave, went on the Warrego. From the Warrego I went to

02:30 HMAS Watson. From HMAS Watson I flew over to England to pick up the HMAS Supply, was on the HMAS Supply for about 18 months, then from the Supply I went to the Creswell, HMAS Creswell, was there for about another 15 months and went down to Flinders Naval Depot. Sorry should call it HMAS Cerberus now. Went down to the HMAS Cerberus to do my leading seaman gunnery course, then I went from there to the old HMAS Gull which

03:00 was a tank class mine sweeper and we went up to Singapore for a patrol duty in the confrontation. Well we were there from February patrolling the Malacca Straits, Singapore Straits, over in Borneo with a couple of trips to Hong Kong. Well the confrontation ended in September, August September of 1966. We stayed in Singapore till April '67, we came back home.

03:30 I came on 9 weeks leave then went to Sydney, joined the Vendetta. From the Vendetta I went to HMAS Attack, by this time I had been promoted to leading seaman quartermaster gunner, was on the Attack from November '67 to October '68, then I came home on leave, went down to Flinders and got my discharge. Well I was, technically I went to the -

04:00 while I was down in Cerberus, I went to the Commonwealth Employment Office, Frankston and applied for a job as a postman in the PMG [Post Master General's Department] as it was known then. Come home and Mum said to me said, "You've got a telegram. You've got to go up to Coorparoo to be interviewed for a postman's job." Well I got the postman's job and technically I started in the post office on the 25th of June and technically I still had a week to do in the navy.

04:30 I was still technically a serviceman in the navy because me discharge didn't come through until the 30th June. Well I stayed in the post office from June '69 till I retired from work in April 2000. And since then I've been, I've retired and since then I've sort of like been pottering around the house doing odd jobs. I'm a member of the John Oxley sub section of the Naval Association.

05:00 I'm the Vice President there and I'm also, I go to the State, I'm a delegate for the State Council meetings which is held every month over at Newmarket. And that's basically a condensed version of my life up until now.

**Excellent. Now that we've come right to the end,**

05:30 **we'll go all the way back to the beginning. Tell me a bit about your parents.**

Well Mum and Dad were married on Christmas Eve 24th December 1936. Well at that time Dad was sort of like unemployed and Mum was working as a tailoress. Well they went to

06:00 live at Windsor. Mum got pregnant about July of '37 it was. She had a miscarriage and she had a son and he died at birth. Well those days the child was - there was no registration of him being born he was just a non-identity. Well when he died the

06:30 midwife, all there was when she gave birth, there was only a midwife there and they put me brother in a little box, a cardboard box and Dad took him off to [UNCLEAR] and he got buried in an unmarked grave for two shillings. Well, then I was born in 1941, Dad was still sort of like doing, even though the war was on he still had it hard

07:00 trying to get a job, so he enlisted in the army. But he got rejected, he was two weeks in the army and he got rejected as medically unfit. They took an x-ray of him and a spot showed up on the lung. Now, if the army had said then, what was wrong, he could've gone to a doctor and maybe had the lung taken out, and as I said he died

07:30 ten years later. But we always joked that he took a Bex before he went to get this x-ray and we always reckoned the Bex showed up on the x-ray. Well Mum and Dad, then Dad sort of like was in hospital for a fair while during my - when I was about two and three,

08:00 different things wrong with him, his nerves and may have been I think may have been related to the lung cancer. Well Mum got the job working at the American Red Cross which was in Adelaide St. I think it was opposite the old Gresham Hotel. Well she worked there for the duration of the war and Dad, when he come out of the hospital he worked down - there was this place in Stanley St. It's long gone,

08:30 now 'cause Southbank's there. It was Maxim's Cheese. And he worked there and then after the war he got a job working at the abattoirs at Cannon Hill. Well by this time Mum had retired and she was sort of like, war was over and Mum was just doing the ordinary housework. Well in those days it was a thing for parents, the wife stayed home and the husband worked and

09:00 you know, Mum had a set routine. Monday she washed, Tuesday she ironed, Wednesday she cleaned the house out, Thursday was cooking day you had - it was all set procedure. Well they went on strike at the abattoirs and Mum went back to work, her old boss Harry Levy, he had a factory opposite the Clarence Hotel in

09:30 Woolloongabba. Well and so in 1948 Mum said, "Look," said to Dad, "Look, you've got a son, we've got to have something for him when he grows up." So they went and bought this house. They seen the landlady who owned it and they said, "We'd like to buy the house." They said, "Right-e-o." So Mum and Dad committed themselves, bought the house for 600 pound, I mean to say you wouldn't

10:00 be able to get a house now. That equates to \$1200. Well Dad finally got a job working for the City Council out at the Grange for the sewerage. Well everything was going okay, Mum and Dad could afford to pay for the house, we could go away, my childhood, you know, I was happy, you know.

10:30 Anyway, in '51 he got a job working with the Tramway. Well he developed a bad cold, he was coughing, so they took him to hospital and the doctor said, "You've got to go in to hospital." And then they discovered he had the cancer of the lung and it was inoperable and they said to Mum, "Look, there's no hope for him

11:00 he's going to pass away, it's just a matter of when." Well Dad was in hospital for about a month I think it was, and he died on the - ten past three Thursday, 27th September 1951. Well that sort of like, that was sort of like, you've lost your father, you only had your mother

11:30 and Mum was a pretty strong woman, she sort of like faces adversity and sort of like came through. She said, "Well you know, we've got to keep going on." Well she worked and that, I was still going to school and I had troubles adjusting to Dad's death because when he died I was staying with me Aunty. Now my Aunty was like a second mother to me

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

- 12:08 Anyway my Aunt raised me sister and me and the day Dad died the neighbour next door called out to me Aunt. Me Aunt went in, she come back and I walked up the stairs and said, "What's wrong?" She said, "Your father's gone to heaven." I wanted to cry.
- 12:30 But she was one of these women, you know, she didn't believe in molly-coddling or anything like that but she sort of like could show you love and she said, "Don't you start crying." Well I went downstairs and was by meself. Well anyway, so I was sort of like living at me Aunt's place all the time. But my Mum like you know, looked after me, let me go down to the doctors.
- 13:00 They took me to a doctor afterwards and the doctor said, "He's felt the death, he's never expressed himself." So Mum had - Dad died intestate, she had all these bills but she could still send me down to Sydney. Like as far as she was concerned I came first. Well then I joined the Boy Scouts. Then she got me to join the Boy Scouts which was an added expense for her. Personally I don't know how she done it, kept the house and me going
- 13:30 being able to join - go to the Scouts, being in the Scouts, going to camps, that all cost money. An Easter camp cost 30 shillings and she was only getting five pound a week which is - equates to ten dollars. How she done it I don't know, I really don't know. Well when I was 13, I was no academic at school, the highest mark I ever got, got for maths was five.
- 14:00 So I started taking days off school and tried to get a job. No you can't go because you're 13, you can't leave school. Well, two months before school was due - the end of the school year, I would've been - school ended up here in December and I turned 14 in January, so
- 14:30 this old teacher, old Carnegie grabbed me one day, he says, "Do you want to be a painter?" I said, "Yeah, I'll be a painter." He said, "Right," he said, "here's a bloke, go and see him, don't worry about coming back to school." So I left and started as a painter, and unfortunately I was terrified of heights. I got up the top of there and start painting, I have the death grip on the gutters so I
- 15:00 had to get away. Well Mum wasn't very impressed but Mum still persevered with me. But I got a job, so I'm on three pound ten a week, well that was three pound ten a week, well three pound really because I got ten shillings and Mum got three pounds, so she was pretty right. She was getting three pound extra a weekend then I got a pay rise and more money was coming in and things were starting to
- 15:30 look up for her like. We weren't financially rich or anything like that, but you know, she could still go out, spend a bit on herself and spend a bit on me. Well my sister got married in '48 and my sister had two grandkids so Mum had two grandchildren. Anyway I, when I turned 17, I got rushed off to join the CMF.
- 16:00 **Just before we get there, what was the impact of World War II on your life? You would've been quite young.**
- Well, I don't - I've got memories of it. The first real memory I can place is at my Aunt's home, a cab pulled up and there's a soldier standing in front of the door. That was my uncle
- 16:30 he'd just returned from the Middle East. I had three cousins, I had two cousins that were in the armed forces at that time, one was in the commandos, one was in the 61st Battalion, they were the first to stop the Japanese in Milne Bay. One of the stories that I do remember, my sister used to work at a clothing factory and just up from
- 17:00 the clothing factory, the Americans used to get their supplies. Well lunch time all the girls used to go, you know just talk to the Americans, you know, just being, you know just "hello, how you going" everything like that, and maybe the Yanks give them a pack of chewing gum, something like that. Well this American really took a shine to me sister, well all he knew her name was Daphne, she rode a pushbike and she had red hair. So, we've got the suburb down the road here, Stone's Corner, this American, got an American army vehicle,
- 17:30 drove all around Stone's Corner, pulled up everybody saying, "Excuse me Ma'am do you know a red headed girl by the name of Daphne who rides a pushbike?" "No sorry." Pull up the next person same thing. This went on, so he finally found out where me sister lived. But unfortunately at this time, he pulled up and me cousin Leslie was home, he had just come back from, he had just come out of hospital, he'd been... he got wounded, real freak accident being
- 18:00 wounded, was the bloke in front of him was shot by a Japanese sniper and the bullet went through the bloke's head, passed through his head and went in me cousin's thigh. So me cousin was home on convalescent leave and me uncle was home just from the Middle East, and they were sort of like - they

sort of like protected Daphne. Well me cousin was there and a friend of me aunt's and he said, "Hey Mum, the other girl next door must have an American boyfriend." Next minute this American's

18:30 knocking on the door, me aunt went out and he says, "Excuse me Ma'm is there a red headed girl by the name of Daphne and rides a pushbike?" And me Aunt said, "Daphne, there's an American here to see you." So here's Daphne talking to this American and here's the three of them me Aunt, me Uncle and me cousin, all giving this American a dead - the look of death, you know. But he got on with me sister, but he never liked me because he used to stand at - in the hallway

19:00 and he used to have his legs spread apart. Of course I was knee-high to a grasshopper and I used to run through his legs. As soon as me sister went out he said, "Daphne, one of these days I'm going to kill your brother." So one day I ran through his legs and he closed them, and I was screaming and me Aunt said, "What are you doing to that bloody kid, leave him alone." But another story was, we had ration books in those days

#### **Did anything ever happen between Daphne and the American soldier?**

Well, he wanted to marry her, but it was

19:30 a big thing going to America and Daphne was sort of like, she just couldn't face the idea of leaving Australia. It was a big move because in those days, it's not like today where you travel and that, you never went - like say a trip away is down to the Gold Coast that's the furthestest they ever went. And Daphne just didn't - couldn't

20:00 face the idea of going - didn't like, I think more fearful of that big transition in her life of going from Australia to America and that. No, but she ended up marrying a boy she used to know when she was young. We used to have ration books and that, everybody had a ration book from the day you were born in those days, you had a ration book. And because I was staying at me Aunt's place

20:30 'cause Mum used to work night shift and Dad was in and out of hospital, my Aunt had the ration book. Well I found it one day and I was sitting on the step, I was about three years old. Got the ration book in my hand saying, "Look at this, they're using my bloody ration book, they're using my bloody ration book." And my Aunt's standing behind me laughing her head off. I also remember Dad

21:00 in 1942, I don't actually remember it but I remember my Mum talking about it, Dad was in town and a lot of the American Marines had just returned from Guadalcanal and he's seen these two American Marines in the city and just walked up to them and said, spoke to them and said, "Look, what are youse boys..." it was about Christmas Eve, and he said, "What are youse boys doing Christmas Day?" And the Americans said, "Oh we're just walking the city." He said "Look,

21:30 would you like to come home to our place?" He said, "Look, it won't be anything flash but it'll be Christmas boys." This American said, "Thank you, we will try to get there." Anyway Dad told them how to get there and he said, "Look, my wife's got a brother over in the Middle East (UNCLEAR) we'd like to think that someone's invited him home." Well we thought - Mum and Dad half thought yeah they're going to come you know, no extra putting a couple of extra potatoes and that on. And they turned up and they really enjoyed

22:00 themselves and they were going to do a lot of things. They were going to get you know, buy me a few things. Mum and Dad said, "Look, we didn't do that. We didn't buy anything..." He said, "No Ma'am," he said, "we'd like to do it." But unfortunately they were sent north and we don't know if - they may have got killed at Iwo Jima, and they may have got home, you just don't know and you see that was one of the things. And we used to have a lot of Americans come -

22:30 my Aunt knew American CB, that was the Construction Battalion of the United States Navy. She had an American friend who was a CB and he brought a few of his friends here and I can remember right over at the window there, we had a glory box. And the Yanks were sitting there and had their meals here and Mum used to have a few of the Americans - Australians home here just for a meal or something like that. That was

23:00 like it was up here, like you had open, like you'd ask a couple of Australian servicemen to come around for tea and that. But the big thing that is really impressed in my mind, it was a July night, about six o'clock, they're all at the - we were all at me Aunt's place, my sister, my Mum. Me and my sister and mother were

23:30 going to go to the pictures and there was an old bloke by the name Ted Munney, he used to rent a room off me Aunt. Well there was a knock on the door and Mum went out and I followed out and there was a telegram boy standing with a telegram in his hand. We knew straight away, Mum looked at him and said, "Is it army or air force?" He said, "Look, we're not allowed to say." She says, "Look, my mother's got a bad heart." He said, "It's army."

24:00 And she had two nephews, Leslie and Sam. Well Sam was back home in Australia. As soon as the telegram boy said army, Mum said, "Bloody Leslie." No sense of shock. So they went in. Mum took the telegram to me Aunt - you know that's as vivid as today as it is now, she gave the telegram. Me aunt opened it and started to cry. It just said your son

24:30 had been wounded in action. Well Mum and Daph thought, "Well, if we go to the pictures now, we're

going to be the worst ones under the sun.” And me Aunt said, “Go on, get out, go to the pictures, go to the pictures. Don’t worry about me. Don’t worry about me.” So Mum thought, Mum stayed there for a while, me sister hopped on her pushbike, rode all the way up to Coorparoo to tell Leslie’s other brother that he’d been wounded. And so Mum went around next day, there’s me Aunty in bed,

- 25:00 she’s got me cousin’s life insurance policy in her hand, she said, “I wonder if I’ll get paid if he dies.” It was just these reactions, like you look back now and you think. And the next thing I actually remember about the war, Mum was downstairs, me cousin was over here and I had two cousins Ernie and Dessie. They were me older cousins, they were about two years
- 25:30 older than me. And of course we used to play soldiers. We had an Australian helmet – tin helmet, an American’s helmet and a Japanese helmet, because we used to play soldiers and someone had to play the Japanese. Of course, I being the younger one, I played the Japanese and when they captured me they used to belt the hell out of me because I was Japanese. But that was – I’m not trying to be racial or anything like that, but this is, we’re looking at – we’re not looking at
- 26:00 19, we’re not looking at 2003, we’re looking at 1945 and they used to belt me up because I was the Japanese and that. Well Dessie was around here this day, Mum was washing up and I was right next to where the drain is and Mrs Cahouns, she lived next door, me niece and nephew come in and they said, “Mrs Goodall, have you heard the news?” Mum said, “What?” She said, “The war’s over.” “Harold, get the flags. Get the flags.” We run up we
- 26:30 had a British – we had a Union Jack, an American flag, an Australian flag and tied them to the verandah. And five o’clock at night the air force is flying across that way there, dropping parachute flares. And me and me cousin, we were waiting just waiting for one of the parachute flares to land in our yard and that. So that night, we went into Brisbane, the streets were packed, it was the first time I’d actually seen Brisbane lit up. Because
- 27:00 prior to that it’d been what they called a brown out, like there wasn’t many lights on. The whole of Brisbane was lit up. Thousands of people in the streets, walking the streets. And the day aft – the next night after that, we went over and seen me cousin who had come back from – he’d been – come back from Borneo, been flown back, in the hospital, in an aircraft, to Brisbane.
- 27:30 But the funny thing about Leslie, one of the stories in the family oral history is – we always thought he’d been shot by a machine gun, but I’ve got the history of this unit he was in, it was a booby trap that blew his leg. He lost all the muscle in his leg here. Well they rushed him to the hospital and the doctor said, “We’ve got to take the leg off.” Well the story goes that Leslie
- 28:00 dragged himself up on one elbow, grabbed the doctor by the scruff of the collar, pulled him down and said, “Listen mate, you cut my leg off and when I get out I’m going to kill you.” So they didn’t take his leg off and that. But you know, you had – like I was only about from two to four in that period of time in the Pacific War and it’s just, I can remember the Americans being up the road,
- 28:30 I can remember you know, seeing the Americans in town and that. But mainly it’s just fleeting memories. But also I remember ten o’clock Monday morning, they used to test the air raid sirens in Brisbane. And ten o’clock Monday morning I used to jump in me cot. That was me air raid shelter. And we had a trench dug in the back, a slit trench dug in the back here.
- 29:00 But Dad, after a period of time Dad covered that up because it was more of a danger to me, because it was full of water and I could have fallen in it and that. But yes, it’s you know, just these little things on the war, the – I remember the ration books, that was the thing, you never lost your ration book, that was the one thing you kept, was your ration
- 29:30 book. And I remember me Uncle putting his slouch hat on one day, walking around the yard playing soldiers and that. Me other cousin was in the air force, I can’t actually remember him but I remember Leslie and I remember Uncle Jack and that at that period time. I remember getting his campaign ribbons after the end of the war. But that’s mainly what I do
- 30:00 remember of the war. And that then of course just after the war the Americans had a ship here and Dad took me over to that. But basically that’s my memories of the war.

### **Wonderful memories.**

‘Cause like I was only a kid at the time and to us it was

- 30:30 A real big, sort of like a real big adventure. You had your uncles and your cousins in the army and you sort of like treated them like they were sort of like Gods in that respect. But you know, considering we had, I had three cousins in the army, and one uncle in the army, you know we were lucky in some respects, we never had,
- 31:00 we never actually lost any of them. Like Leslie was wounded twice and we knew – we had friends, we had a friend who was captured in Malaya and one of the people Mum knew, a bloke by the name of Georgie Tibbetts, he was on the Perth when it went down in ’42 and they always said, they said, “There’s no worry of Georgie drowning,” they said. “There’s so much water, he’ll swim away from the ship.” He survived, he spent three and a half

31:30 years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Although I didn't know him personally but he was known by the family and that. And that's basically my memories of the war and that.

**You mentioned before that you joined the Boy Scouts. Can you tell me what the Boy Scouts was like in those days?**

Yeah it's well, now see the Boy Scouts wear Akubra hats. We wore, sort of like the

32:00 style of those Mountie hats. We had those. There was no going in the private history of the Scout Master, like you know, there was no such thing, we never knew any, there was no such thing as knowing anything about paedophiles and such like. It was a, you know, it was a great organisation. Basically they've changed a lot now, we mainly, we'd go on our camps, we'd have our

32:30 blankets rolled up in a swag and a haversack on our back and sometimes we had to walk say five - one camp I went to, of course people wouldn't believe it now, Strathpine. That was all bush. You got off the train, you had this bush station Strathpine, you carried your tents everything, and you walked seven miles to our camp, to this farmhouse where we had our camp and that.

33:00 It's different to the scouts now, we never had any girls and they had the girl guides and the boy scouts. They were two different identities. And first off when you joined, when you become a scout you're classed as a tenderfoot. And you had to pass the tender foot exam to get -

33:30 to become a scout. And when you become a scout you'd have an investiture which is supposed to be a secret, sort of like a mini-masons thing. You weren't to divulge the investiture procedures or anything like that. Basically what it was, they had a campfire, I think it was, the troops stood around the camp fire and they called out,

34:00 "Bring forward the one who wishes to be the scout." And they ask you whether you want to be a scout and they sort of like say, talk about different oaths, that you stay true to the oath of the boy scout, you're a brother to every other scout and all of that. Then they tie your - you carried a muffler and when you went to the camp as a tender foot, the muffler wasn't tied in a figure of eight knot and when you become a scout, they tied that up in a figure of eight. But we used to go

34:30 once a month we used to go on either a camp or a hike. Well our campsites now are, one of the places was a place called Wyagunga. That's outer Capalaba now, there's a big housing estate over there. Another place was Kobble, that's up around Samford, I reckon that'd be a housing estate now and Strathpine.

35:00 Sometimes we'd go on a Friday night, you camp out no tent. What they do they put a tent on the ground, and you set your sleeping gear up on the tent and they throw another tent over you. You go to sleep, you wake up the next morning, you'd be covered in dew, especially if it's winter time, you tend to be covered in frost. And then you'd start building a camp and then you'd sort of like

35:30 play games, swim, do scouting, do tests for your second class or first class badge. It was mainly a youth - it brought you all together as kids and taught you like a bit of discipline and a health,

36:00 more of a healthy outdoor life. Of course, being scouts then, being about 11 or 12, you sort of like had the knowledge of what you'd be talking about. You'd get your first introduction to sex in the scouts. All the blokes would be talking about, you know, 12 years old, you knew everything and that. And if you didn't know anything - I remember one time there we were talking about it, I don't know what it was, it was something about girls and that, and the

36:30 senior scouts, to be a senior you had to be 15 and you went into senior scouts and the senior scouts were camped the other way - just over the paddock from us. Well they said, "Listen, we'll nick over to the seniors and ask them that question. They'll know the answer." So here's this bloke running across about midnight across the paddock to go to the seniors tent, to ask him this question. I don't know what the bloody hell it was, some stupid bloody question which was most likely, the whole thing was, everything, all this sex talk we heard in the scouts, was definitely

37:00 not correct, you know. It was definitely what someone heard from another 11 or 12 year old. But it wasn't filthy or anything like that, it was just natural boys, you know, boys being boys. But it was a great life.

**What sort of things would you talk about? What would you say about girls?**

"Oh, look at the big things in front of them.

37:30 Aren't they big?" "Yeah but they're not firm yet, you know." All this stupid bloody things and that like some bloke would say, "Oh, how do you do it?" And of course because you're 11 or 12 years old, you didn't know anything about it. Occasionally I said, "I think it happens in the wed - you know when they get married," I said, "they go in a room, I think that's where it happens. The Minister looks over

38:00 and tells them when they're going to have the baby." You know, you didn't know anything and that. That was generally my idea and that but - you know it was just stupid bloody questions about it and that. And that was basically it because there was no such thing as Playboy magazines and anything like in those days. The only places you got to see a naked woman was when you sort of like went down the

newsagent and got the Man magazine and that.

- 38:30 But mainly, with the scouts you learnt how to live in the bush, be self reliant. Like the old values which aren't here any more, like honesty, loyalty to a friend and that, that's when you first learnt it in the scouts and that. And that's what they instil in you. The scouts today, the different things they do
- 39:00 hang gliding, mountaineering and everything like that, that was never, we never done those things. Basically what we done, we'd go out in the bush, someone'd lay a train with crosses and arrows, then you'd go and follow that trail. You learnt camp life, pitch a tent, how to live in – how to rough it and that. It was a bloody good existence.
- 39:30 I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was in it for six years, from when I was eleven, sorry five years, from when I was eleven to when I was sixteen. And the scout, well my old Scout Master is my best friend now. He just lives down the road. And we sometimes talk about the old days in scouts and of course, you had your initiation ceremony. Well, my initiation ceremony, I was standing by the fire, two of the blokes grabbed me, tore me trousers down and took me photograph nude.
- 40:00 Those things today would be classed as politically incorrect and things like that, but they were never, there was never anything sordid or anything like that in it. And of course, and there were other ones like you'd stand there and they'd throw cow manure over you. That was your initiation ceremony. Like in this politically correct time now, you'd never be able to do it. But those days, you done it and you just took it as a joke. Like you went down the creek after and had a bloody good,
- 40:30 had a bloody good tub and that. But that was your initiation ceremony and that. And in '55 they had the big what they called the Jamboree. That was every 3 years, the scouts would gather for a big Jamboree in Australia. And the '55 Jamboree was down in Melbourne. You see in Melbourne it rained all the time. Rained all the time, it was bloody cold.

## Tape 2

- 00:34 **You were just telling us about the Jamboree when the tape ended.**
- Yeah, well they had it down in Melbourne, it was outside Melbourne, I think a place called Ringwood. And it was for a period of two weeks. For that whole period of time it done nothing but rain. It rained, it was cold.
- 01:00 What they'd done was they'd built the roads, just put a bulldozer through them and they had dirt roads, they'd turned into quagmires. Where the shopping centre or whatever it was, where they had, you know, you could buy stuff, that was a quagmire. You'd be walking through there with your shoes on, next minutes you pull your foot out, you'd have no shoe. It'd be stuck in it.
- 01:30 They had a swimming hole, I don't think I actually even went swimming there. I mean to say there was no hot water, it was all cold water and that so you can imagine how many tubs we had, how many showers we had while we were there and that. But it was a real interesting experience to go down there and see what it was like. Then I came back and I was going to go, I thought
- 02:00 well when the next Jamboree comes along I was going to go to that. But by that time I was out of the scouts. And our old troop used to be 1st Kangaroo Point and that, we had an old hall and that was in Dock Street. Now Dock Street today is upmarket but when we were there it was the pits. Nobody, not denigrating the area and all that, but it was not an in area to live in. 'Course down the bottom
- 02:30 there you had the old coal wharves, a few old boarding houses and that. Well that's where the scout hall was, now we can't even find it, because there's a highrise apartment there now. But 1st Kangaroo Point it was at one stage the oldest troop in Queensland, the first troop to be formed in Queensland in 19 – scouts formed in 1907. So that would've been
- 03:00 yeah, it would've been formed in 1907 till early 1960s when it got disbanded and that.
- You were mentioning something about Brisbane back then. What was it like?**
- I'll give you an example. I used to go out on Thursday night. I used to go to the old Tivoli Picture Show. The Roof Gardens now. The Tivoli's not there any more. It was right opposite the Town Hall.
- 03:30 I used to go in for 50 cents. Threepence by tram in, threepence by tram out, that was sixpence. About two shillings I think to go into the pictures. You got a double feature, a newsreel, a cartoon, a featurette and I had about two and six to spend.
- 04:00 I mean to say you couldn't even get into town for 50 cents now. You had trams running down, it was all trams, you had no railway link. Where they've got the railway bridge at South Brisbane, that wasn't there. The trains from the Gold Coast finished at South Brisbane. It was all trams,
- 04:30 trams or buses. There wasn't the amount of people owning a car then as there is today. My sister lived at Wavell Heights, to go to Wavell Heights was an adventure. You'd get the tram in the city, go to

Lutwyche Cemetery,

- 05:00 get off there, and then you'd get a Sandgate bus to her place. That was an adventure. Now, she's got about two or three city council buses running outside her place. The main entertainment in those days was Saturday nights at the pictures. Now me and Mum used to go to the old Boomerang picture show, that's been pulled down a few years, and we had our reserved seats. Everybody mainly,
- 05:30 the picture show had their clientele, everyone had their own personal reserved seat. The only entertainment really was the radio. Sunday in the city, you could fire a cannon down Queen St and not hit anybody. Brisbane was dead. After twelve o'clock Saturday, everything shut down in Brisbane.
- 06:00 Pictures went to 11 o'clock Saturday night and then that was it. Sunday you made your own entertainment. And where my sister lived, Wavell Heights, she had no sewerage. We were sewered here but up Camp Hill, that wasn't sewered, and you know really, Brisbane was really a
- 06:30 sleepy country town. Nothing happened. Everything just went on at a lazy pace. But when you look back it wasn't bad really, you adjusted to it and that. Yes, as I say it was just after 12 o'clock Saturday, no shops were open. You could sometimes
- 07:00 get the local shop open on a Sunday and that was it. The big places were Cloudland, the Blighs Institute, that was in South Brisbane, they were the main two dancing halls. And the movie shows. Of course every suburb had a movie show and prior to '59
- 07:30 you'd look in the paper and half the column of the paper was all suburban pictures. In the city the three main ones was the Tivoli in Albert St, St James and Metro - they were in Albert St just down from where Albert and Queen join. In Queen St you had the
- 08:00 Regent, Her Majesty's which was later called the Odeon, the Wintergarden - no sorry, the Regent, the Majestic which was later called the Odeon, the Wintergarden and Her Majesty's. And then down George St you had this bughouse of a picture show called the Lyceum which I think today is called the - was later called or built there the George and then later on became
- 08:30 called the Dendy. And in Duncan St, there was only, there was the Embassy and just down from there was the Rex on one side and the Symphony Picture Show the other. They were the main picture shows. And the Valley and the city, today they're sort of like, they're linked, but in those days they were sort of like different identities. If you lived on the north side,
- 09:00 a lot of people done their shopping in the Valley and the three main shops there was McWirters, Overalls and Trippens. They were the three main shops there. And there's an old story going around about McWirters and Trippens. McWirters was owned by a Protestant and TC Boons was owned by a Catholic. Well TC Boons said he was going to fire
- 09:30 all the Protestants working at TC Boons. Well management said, "Righto you fire all the Protestants, I'll fire all the Catholics, then I'll rehire all the Protestants." Because McWirters, there was more Roman Catholic employees than Protestants. See this was in an era where a mixed marriage was a Protestant marrying a Catholic. We've got a funny story
- 10:00 in the family about that one. If you want to hear about it I'll tell you about it afterwards if you like.

**You can tell us now if you want.**

Well my Mum had a boyfriend and he was a Catholic. I've forgotten what his name was, Hughes, I've forgotten what his first name was now. So Mum was bringing him home to meet me grandfather and she said, "Well whatever you do, don't tell him you're a Catholic." Jimmy his name was, said, "Jimmy, don't tell him you're a Catholic."

- 10:30 So he said, "Righto." So Mum brings him home and introduces him, my grandfather's getting on really well with him, "Oh great lad, great lad, great to meet you lad." Then about half past seven he said, "Look Mr Matheson, I'd better go now." He said, "Why lad? It's only half past seven." Then he dropped the clanger, he said, "I've gotta go to eight o'clock mass." "All right son, you'd better go, you'd better go." Throws him out, turns to me Mum and says, "I don't want him in the house any more." Because my grandfather was violently - well which was in the period
- 11:00 at the time, was violently anti-catholic and that. Of course, I mean to say now, two of his granddaughters married in the Catholic Church. His great grandson married in the Catholic Church and one of his granddaughters has turned Roman Catholic. So I think the old bugger would be turning over in his grave now. But that's the way it was.

**Do you remember any divisions yourself as you grew up?**

- 11:30 My cousin Betty, she had this chap Bill, really nice bloke. She was going to marry him but Bill was Roman Catholic. Anyway they went and seen Auntie Kitty and she said, "Where you getting married?" She said, "I was going to get married in the Catholic Church." "No, no, no, no, no, no." He said, "Well Mrs Black, we'll marry in the Church of England."



- 12:00 She didn't want that. Betty ended up getting married in the Catholic Church at Newmarket. So the day of the wedding, my Aunt, Aunt Clare, I was telling you about before, I used to call her Nan 'cause when my grandmother died I went round to her place and was crying, I said, "I've got no grandmother any more, will you be my grandmother?" She said, "You silly bugger, what do you call me, Nana, that's what a grandmother is." She'd been ill, so we didn't think she was going to
- 12:30 come to the wedding. Anyway we meet Bill's parents, me and Mum were there. Me Uncle Jack gave Betty away just to spite his sister Kitty. Me Aunt turns up and Leslie's been to the pub. So we all go into the church, we're all sitting there, and me Aunt, she was sort of like, she wasn't so bigoted, but she was sort of
- 13:00 like anti-Catholic and that, she's in the church and she says, "Christ Leslie, look at all the bloody statues." "Shut up Mum, shut up Mum, shut up Mum." So Betty got married anyway, she gave birth to one of her first children and she had a bad pregnancy and she was in hospital. Mum went to the post office and wrote me Aunt Kitty a real stinking letter saying that you know, your daughter's
- 13:30 in hospital, she's had a bad time, you call yourself a Christian, you ought to go up and see her. Anyway, me Aunt went up there and she's talking there, she said, "You know the bitch got married in the Roman Catholic Church, god bless me, god forgive me for swearing." That was one division in our family but it never worried Mum or anything like that. But that shows you how the division was. I had an uncle by marriage,
- 14:00 his niece got married in the Roman Catholic church, he just refused to go in the church. There was that bigotry, yet my nephew Paul, he got married in the Roman Catholic church in a - but the service is entirely different to the churches. It didn't worry us that he got married in the Catholic Church.
- 14:30 The two kids have been christened in the Catholic Church and that. It doesn't worry me, it never worried Mum, it doesn't worry me sister and that.

**What would they say about Catholics to you as you grew up? What impressions would you get?**

To be honest, I was bigoted, I hated them too, but it wasn't that - it was sort of like you were brought up in that

- 15:00 climate. Now I don't worry. I'll give you a good example, have you ever read Paul Lund's book 'Over the Top'? He gives a good example of the Catholics in the 50s. You know, we had the Mary Immaculate Church up the road and they used to - State Schools used to finish at three o'clock and the Catholic schools used to finish at half past three. The legend was, by
- 15:30 half past three, all the state school kids would be home so the Catholic schools could. But when we did mix, you know, coming home, the Catholic kids would walk one side of the street and we'd walk the other. And there would be a punch up, not so much with the Catholics that went to the state schools, but the Catholics who went to the Catholic school. There was usually a little dust up once in a while.
- 16:00 You've got to look at it, it was the times. The Catholics reckoned us Protestants, we'd all go to purgatory, the Catholics would go to heaven, and we'd all go to purgatory. Things like that. There was some rhyme, "Catholic Catholics go to heaven, Protestant Protestants you go to hell." Something, some nursery rhyme like that.
- 16:30 Used to go on. But there was that division between Catholics and Protestants in that time. Now you don't really notice it what so ever. Trish, because I had a go at her about her kids, I said, "I'm going to teach - when young James goes to the church, the school of Holy Conception,"
- 17:00 this is some bloody mythical church they've got, I said, "He can talk to Sister Marie Johnder, he knows how to say his prayers, he'll go up to Sister Marie Johnder and say 'the name of the father, the son and the holy ghost and John Waite, Amen.'" She says, "You're not going to teach him that." I say, "When he goes to church and that, he'll be right won't he." We just treat it as a joke. You know we just laugh at it now. But in my time, there was definitely bigotry going on.
- 17:30 **I'm interested in actual examples of what they'd say about the Catholics. Apart from just hating them, what kind of stereotypes would they?**
- You'd get the idea, they'd have their rosary beads and they'd be going with their rosary beads. One example was the brother's football team, it was more Catholic orientated. And they were on the field one day playing and they were losing. And some bloke in the background said, "All right you brothers supporters,
- 18:00 you can put away your rosary beads now, god's not going to save you." That was one of them but you know, of course you ... you'd see the nuns and they used to be the old black crows and things of that respect. You'd say to Catholics, "We're not going, we're the ones going to heaven, we're the true religion." Everything like
- 18:30 those things. I know a case where a girl, she married a Protestant and the didn't get married in the Catholic Church, they got married in the registry office, and the priest came around to her and told her she had to get married in the Catholic Church because they'd become Catholics,

19:00 otherwise those kids would be classed as illegitimate. At that time the Catholic Church never recognised that marriage. They weren't married.

**Were there any political times with the groups?**

Yeah, well the DLP [Democratic Labor Party] party, Democratic Liberal Party, Democratic Labor Party, that was more Catholic based.

19:30 There was a chap named Santamaria, I think it was, it used to be on the TV every week, every Sunday, National Civic Action Party, I'm not too sure what it's called now, that was a Catholic based organisation.

**You mentioned your dad earlier, what was his experience during World War II?**

20:00 He was passed medically unfit, but he never worked in a protected industry. He'd mainly worked for Maxim Cheese down in Stanley St. He spent a lot of the time during war years, in hospital. He was basically

20:30 I think the same experience as everybody else. When he was out living at Windsor, he was an air raid warden out there, but when he came over here he didn't become an air raid warden and that. But he mainly worked at Maxims and that was basically his experience of the war. Never got conscripted into war work or anything like that.

**How do he feel about not being able to go to World War II?**

He never really said anything about it because he was about 49 when he enlisted and that. I mean to say if the Japanese had landed and they were over the Storey Bridge and he'd been in the army, he would've been sort of like fighting them, but he would've been mainly, if he'd

21:30 gone in to it, he would've been mainly in the labour corps, not combat units and that.

**I'm skipping a bit, but tell us about your apprenticeship.**

I got me apprenticeship at Morgan Slippers up at, just up the road in Jilly St, it was a slipper factory. Basically all I done was make slippers, mainly I used to cut out the felt

22:00 padding for the shoes and that. That was mainly my job. The felt come in a big roll and I had pieces of stick, which was like the measurements of the shoe and I'd have a steel rod. I'd put the stick on the rod, measure the length out and then cut the felt and then

22:30 double it in half and then cut out the soles for the shoes and then I'd - that'd be one of my jobs, cutting the soles out. Another job was putting the felt into the shoes, the felt soles into the shoes and turning them. When they came through they were inside out and I had to turn them inside out. Another one of me jobs was putting the shoes on the lathes,

23:00 then putting them in the steamer, steaming them, getting them into shape, taking them upstairs, getting them heated so they're moulded onto a (UNCLEAR), then taking them off and that. They classed it as boot making but really it was not in the same qualification as boot making and that. I done that apprenticeship for five years. From about April the 18th 1955 to April

23:30 the 18th 1960. When we first started we had two weeks a year off for our holidays and then in about '57 we were ordered three weeks a year. The factory was a family owned factory, the boss owned it and the boss was Bob Blunt.

24:00 He was the manager. Cecil Gellen was a cousin, he was the foreman and most of the staff there were a couple - one of the blokes there, he'd done his apprenticeship there and a lot of them were old time staff who'd been there with the staff for years. It was a really family concern business. But it closed up round about 1969.

**And how did you find this as a young guy?**

Well, when you're 16,17,18, you know - when I first started off I liked it but as time got on I thought to myself, is this going to be my whole life, for the rest of me life. And I yearned for something because ever since I was a kid,

25:00 I wanted to go in the army and I thought well, at least in the army you're doing something different, you're not doing a repetitive job day in day out. I thought well, once my apprenticeship's up, I'm going to leave. Because I didn't see any future

25:30 for me there. I just wanted to see something of the world, see something other than just inside a boot factory. Like as I said, I joined the CMF and later on a mate of mine Ralphie Waterfield come home, he had joined the navy and he told me all about the navy and unfortunately with Ralphie, Ralphie sort of like embellished the story a bit.

26:00 As I found out later, Flinders Naval Depot or Cerberus as they want to call it, was definitely not like Ralphie said. See Ralphie come home and said about the navy. "Right," I said, "once me

apprenticeship's up," I said, "I'm going to join up." But see it mainly financial reasons that I took that job, because as I said Mum, we...

26:30 Mum was struggling to pay the house off so she needed all the money that she could get.

**So tell us about - you joined the CMF before Ralphie came.**

Yeah. We had a friend in the boy scouts, Jack Forbes. He was a major in the 7th Infantry Brigade which was stationed up here in Brisbane. He said to me one day, we were talking about the CMF, he said, "You've got to be 17." I said,

27:00 "Beauty, I'm going to join up when I'm 17." So we went down to Bribie Island for our Christmas Holidays and then on the 6th was Monday, no it was Monday the 6th of January, I was in town, got a bus to Kelvin Grove Army Barracks, walked across and there was the old drill hall, 9th Infantry Battalion with the battle honours up on the wall, Gallipoli, France, all the old battle honours. Walks in,

27:30 walks into the office to the Dadrant officer there. I said, "Excuse me Sir," I said, "I'd like to join the CMF." He said, "Right-oh, come in son," put the form there, he said, "Right, name?" "Harold Goodall." "Age?" "17." He said, "Sorry son, you can't join the CMF, you've got to be 18." I said, "Oh bugger, I was told it was 17." He said, "Look son, go outside, come back in, you've had another birthday." So I walked outside, walked in, he said, "What's your name?" "Goodall." He said, "Right, how old are you?" I said, "18." He said, "Right-e-o." So I put me age up to 18 to get in. And then he said to me he said, "Now you know if you sign off for

28:00 overseas service, you get ten pound a week - ten pound a pay - ten pound a year extra." And I thought oh yeah, I'll be in this, like not thinking what it really meant. So I goes home, I said to Mum - Mum had to sign the papers, and I said, "Can you sign them Mum?" I said, "Look, I had to put me age to get in, up to 18." Well that was.... she said, "I'm not signing them." I said, "Look, it doesn't matter."

28:30 I said, "It's only another year." Well the old bloke down the road talked her into signing it. He said, "Look," he said, "a lot of people during the 1st WW put their age up." What I didn't tell her was I signed up for overseas service otherwise she never would've signed the bloody papers and that. Well anyway I went back, never got me issue with the uniform and that, and they said, "Here's your parade card, you come back this first date." So I

29:00 come back the first parade night it was on, went to battalion headquarters, and they said, "Right, what do you want to be?" I said, "I want to be a rifleman." They said, "Right-o that's the going away company." He said, "Corporal Young take this chap down to company headquarters." So I walks in. I didn't know anybody. I didn't know anybody there. Anyway, I was standing there and I got an itch in me crotch and I started scratching me crotch. And this Dadrant officer said, "Leave them alone sonny, they'll fall off when they're ripe."

29:30 See this was me first introduction. And he said, "You're Harold Goodall aren't ya?" I said, "Yeah." I thought, what's going on here? Anyway this lieutenant walked in and this Dadrant officer was Tommy Green, I found out later his name was Tommy Green, and Tommy turns to Danny Hallam and says, "That's Leslie Arkas's cousin." And I thought oh shit,

30:00 what have I got meself into, because Leslie had a reputation as a bit of a wild man and I thought to myself, what have I got myself into? I don't even know this bloke and he knows me already. So it turned out that Leslie and Tommy worked together and Leslie said to Tommy, he said, "Listen," he said, "me young cousin's joined the CMF," he said, "don't give him a hard bloody time." So anyway, I didn't go into recruit training or anything like that, I was straight into the bloody -

30:30 into it. I didn't know how to slope arms and I learnt everything on me own when I was there. And the first camp we went on was at Greenbank in March, and they took us out to the rifle range. Never fired a .303 in me life. I had the rudiment idea how to fire it, cocked it, they said, "Fire, just press the trigger." Next minute pow! into the shoulder. And I got this bloody fear of the bloody .303 [rifle] from that. Well then we went to

31:00 Canungra. I really enjoyed me time in the C - I really enjoyed it, playing soldiers and that. I used to go to every parade that they had, done every course, because I was getting paid for it. I don't know how much it was but I remember I got for - they used to pay you every six months and you used to go one night a week

31:30 for four hours and the first pay I got thirteen pound. I reckoned that was bloody, really beaut. I said, "This is really great." Because we'd go and we'd do these weekend courses, NCOs [Non Commissioned Officer] course, specialist course and things like that. They had two courses every six months and I done them. They were for Monday night to Friday night

32:00 Then the full weekend. Then on the Sunday you got paid and here I was getting ten pound for it. I thought, this is really bloody great plus on top of me wage, I was a bloody millionaire and I was in the CMF for from January '58 to would've been July '60.

32:30 See with the CMF in that time, we couldn't be sent overseas, we were mainly - I had no worries about being sent overseas because the militia was never sent overseas and to be quite honest about it, not

knocking the CMF, we weren't really, you couldn't really say we were elite forces and that. We were only one - under the National Service obligation,

- 33:00 the Nasho [National Service soldier], who done Nasho and went in the CMF, they had to do one parade a month, but the other three parades that month were voluntary. So you had the ones who were keen, used to go to all the voluntary parades and the ones who were Nashos, weren't really interested, they only did one a month, one parade a month.
- 33:30 You had a yearly camp which was for a fortnight, which was compulsory. You had one compulsory bivouac, two compulsory bivouacs a year, and two voluntary bivouacs a year. So all up you had about nearly about three weeks full time training and the rest was night time
- 34:00 training plus the courses and that. I really enjoyed it then I come home one night and Mum said, "You've been called up for National Service." I said, "Jolly joking Mum." Unfortunately she wasn't joking and that and I had to get out of the CMF to do me National Service obligation. The battalion used to march Anzac Day and the Queen's Birthday, we used to have a big
- 34:30 parade the Queen's Birthday down at Victoria Park. We used to march all the way from Kelvin Grove Army Barracks down to Victoria Park then march all the way up. You got paid for that, but it sort of like interfered with your long weekend and that. But you know, it was a great life.

**Were there any bad aspects to it that you remember?**

To be honest, no.

- 35:00 I never really found it - found any bad points about the CMF. I enjoyed me whole time in there.

**What about any of your commanders or sergeants or any officers which...**

We had a few pain in the arses, but the whole thing was...

- 35:30 It wasn't as though they were your permanent forces, you were there with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, you were only there with them for one hour - for four hours of the day and that. And I mean to say that wasn't too bad. You did have a few of them who sort of like, a bit of arseholes and that you know, but overall see it was a time span, you weren't
- 36:00 confined to it permanently, it was just that time you were with them. Say four hours the night, or the two weeks basic training and that. But you were still covered under military law. If you broke some military law and that you were still covered under that because there were blokes who missed out on that obligatory parade, they faced
- 36:30 the company - the company CO [Commanding Officer] to explain why they weren't at that parade.

**Were there anyone, who one that point of parades or anything, who tried to denigrate people or out of, even out of fun but just...**

What on the parade ground itself? No, no never run across it. You did have a few smart arse

- 37:00 corporals who tried to take the piss out of you. Not on parade but just face to face. I just ignored them because I thought what's the bloody point, I said, "You're trying to make an idiot out of me but you're only making an idiot out of yourself."

**What did they say?**

Just stupid bloody - to be honest I can't really remember what they said. They were sort of like smart arse jokes and that.

- 37:30 It shows you how much importance they had. I'd forgotten all about them. But you just didn't worry about them and that.

**Any initiation ceremonies?**

No. Not that I. I never witnessed any and that. I know one of them threatened to black ball me once. But that never happened.

**What was that over?**

Just being smart. Cause I did,

- 38:00 I think they were only joking. They said to me - I've forgotten what it was about, they said, some fellow said, "If you get too bloody smart, we'll blacken your balls and that." But that never happened.

**What did they mean?**

Get the old boot brush and that around your testicles.

- 38:30 **Did that ever happen to anyone?**

That happened to me in National Service.

### **What was that like?**

A bit humiliating and that. They grabbed me and threw me down. I said stuff, I said, "You wouldn't be able to do it," and that and they grabbed me and threw me down and grabbed the old boot brush out and done it. They done it all right. That was the only time.

## **Tape 3**

### **00:36 So sorry, just take me through again?**

I done to July 1960 in the militia, then I got called up to do my 77 days National Service, which I done up at Wacol in the 11th National Service Training Battalion and then I went

01:00 had to do my National Service obligation in the militia again. But they abolished National Service and when the abolished National Service, your obligation to do that time in the militia was abolished too. So I done from November in the battalion, the nine battalion again, til June. Well in that time I volunteered to join the navy.

### **01:30 We'll just talk a bit about the 77 days in the National Service.**

Bringing back bad memories those, the worst. We went in about, I think it was the 13th, Wednesday the 13th August '59. I had to report at Kelvin Grove Army Barracks to go to Wacol. Unfortunately Mum's alarm clock didn't go off so it was one mad rush to get there.

02:00 I got to Kelvin Grove, got hurled on a truck and went to Wacol. I threw myself on the parade ground. Regimental Sgt Major hopped up on the dais, looked us all over. We had all the blokes there, long hair, bodgie, dove-tails, Bill Hayley, kiss curls

02:30 in front of them, you know, they looked proper dags. He stood up there said, "Listen, you are now members of the 11th National Service Training Battalion, you will not smoke, you will not chew chewing gum, you will double everywhere and call officers 'Sir' and you will not wear Brill Cream." That was our introduction. So we went down, we got processed. My old man'd say there's nothing more greater than standing in a room about twice the

03:00 size of this, about 300 blokes all stark naked getting a medical (UNCLEAR).

### **What did the medical consist of?**

You know, mainly eyes, throat, hearing, sight, bend over touch your toes, cough, basically that. That was the medical, then we went and got our kit and got our work clothes and got thrown into it and then we got

03:30 detailed off to do kitchen duty.

### **What was in your kit?**

One winter uniform, three, I think it was two shirts khaki drill, two trousers khaki drill, two pair of boots, a pair of shoes, about three pair of socks, underwear, brush, comb, a hair brush - brushes hair one, brushes boots two

04:00 as they used to say. One slouch hat and one beret and one grey coat and one jumper. That was the kit. And then you had your - the work clothes they gave you was what they called a giggle suit, a jacket with a zip up and a pair of - two pair of long trousers and - well I don't know whether you call them short longs or long shorts. They fitted you where they touched you.

04:30 And that was what you had plus your tin helmet and your rifle. That was your kit. Plus your eating utensils.

### **What were your eating utensils?**

One enamel mug, knife, fork, spoon, tin soup bowl and tin plate. That was your eating utensils.

### **So no dixies?**

05:00 Yeah sorry, we did have those too. And that was our kit which you signed for. And it belonged to - as they said, it was the Queen's property and you were responsible for it, any damage you'll have to pay for.

### **And then they sent you off to kitchen duty?**

Yeah. Some of the blokes went off to kitchen duty, I was one of the lucky ones, I had to go scrubbing out the bloody

05:30 kitchen floors and that. Next day the rest of the battalion came from up north. The 11th National

Service Training Battalion, blokes who lived in Newcastle, from Newcastle north, they served in the 11th National Service Training Battalion which was a Queensland Battalion and all the other ones in Queensland served there too. And it was a

06:00 ballot. When National Service first came out the old National Service, it was 90 days, everybody got it, everybody done it. And then in about 1957 they abolished the navy and air force and you only done your training in the army and it was by a ballot, a birthday ballot. Unfortunately I can't win the bloody lotto but I won that ballot and that's how I got called up for National Service.

06:30 To be honest I hated it.

**Was there much talk just in the general public about National Service?**

No. There wasn't. The whole thing was the Nashos never got sent outside Australia and they were only there for 90 days and they never served in a war zone. Although some of the chaps who served in the, done their National Service in the Royal Australian Navy, they did sail to Korea but not on actual active service.

07:00 They sailed to Korea and Japan sort of like on escort duty and some served in the atomic tests at Mount Montebello. But the Nashos in the 50s never got. And this was during the period when you had the bodgies and widgies, they were sort of like the wild boys, the teddy boys and that, and a lot of people thought the National Service was great because they get these blokes who were

07:30 sort of like hoons in the street and throw them into the army and got army discipline in them. So there was never any - the only ones who complained about National Service were the poor buggers who got called up. Nobody else gave a bugger.

**And what were the main differences that you noticed in that first little while between being in National Service and the militia?**

Well first off, they hated me, the instructors

08:00 hated me for the simple reason I was ex-militia, ex CMF. The regular army hated the CMF.

**Why?**

They just didn't like them. It was just this bloody thing that the regulars didn't like the CMF and if you were ex CMF you really got it hard from them. And I found out that - well when I look at my training in the navy and my training in National Service, National Service to me was pure bastardisation.

**What did they do?**

Well I had a corporal,

08:30 I was on the parade one day, of course I've got a prominent nose and I had - I was marching, I had my rifle in the wrong position or something like that, and this little arsehole as I shall call him, called out, "The soldier with the long nose." And I thought stuff you Jack, I've got a name. And he kept at it. The next minute, he got the bayonet and he attack positioned like that, and he come charging with the bayonet. Now, in the regular force,

09:00 if that had happened in the navy, that instructor would've gone. You couldn't do that. But he got away with it. If you done something wrong and made a couple of mistakes once in a while, instead of punishing you the whole squad got punished.

**Are there any examples of that?**

Yeah, I know one. One of them was marching, I don't know who it was,

09:30 in our squad, and he wasn't marching properly and the instructor, this little Corporal Warren, got really, he said, "Right, youse can double." And we doubled, we doubled right around the parade ground about four or five times, just because one bloke was doing the wrong thing. You sort of like had to watch your p's and q's a lot of the time with them and that because

10:00 they could... Something I said one day, forget what it was, I should have shut me mouth but I said something, next night, that next day I'm on dixie bashing, scrubbing dixies. What it was, you had a 44 gallon drum cut in half, you fill it up with hot water and they bring the dixies out and you'd be there with a scrubbing brush and steel wool scrubbing these dixies clean and that. You're doing that all day and it was a lousy job.

10:30 'cause the thing was, they would never have got away with the things they done to us if we'd been regular forces. Because we were there for 77 days we didn't know the rules and regulations and they just got away with them.

**Why do you think they wanted to treat you like this?**

I suppose you know,

11:00 it was just their way. We were civilians and they were going to get us in shape no matter what. And I'll

tell you – when I came out of that National Service I was the fittest I ever was. You'd done, you were in the sun, you done square bashing all day, just on the parade ground marching.

### **What's square bashing?**

Marching. You done, you'd be there with a .303 on your soldier marching, you'd have your arm like that. I mean to say, after

11:30 a while carrying a .303, that arm got bloody tired and you couldn't drop it. You didn't dare drop it because if you dropped it they'd be onto you. And your boots had to be spit polished so they could see their faces in them. And it wasn't anything like, I don't think I'll have a shave today because – the hot water system wasn't that great, they had sort of like boilers and you stoked the boilers up all night.

12:00 And you'd be doing picket duty around the fence, and because you were on picket duty, you had to sometimes stoke the fires up to heat the hot water up because if someone was a bit too lazy, you got up next morning and you had no hot water and that. It was really, compared to Flinders Naval Depot, the stuff at Wacol was really primitive.

### **What were the barracks like that you stayed in?**

You know, the Nissan hut, igloo shaped huts?

12:30 They're sort of like a half circle of corrugated iron on a floor. And you had about, I think about 12 or 13 bunks in it and you had a wardrobe and a cabinet. That was your – and a chair. That was your accommodation. Cold in winter, hot in summer. They had no windows.

13:00 You had a door one end, a door the other, that was your air conditioning, that was your breeze and that. I think some were remnants of the Second World War.

### **What were some of the blokes like that went through with you?**

A good lot of blokes, all 18 year old, teenagers, had the same interests and everything like that. All hated being there. All wanted to get home.

13:30 The sudden realisation, you didn't just throw your shirt on the floor and Mum's going to be there to pick it up. You're there for about 77 days, no Mum, no Dad to look after you. You were the army's and the army was your mother and the father. Unfortunately I think they were step-mother and step-father.

### **And did people resent this sort of army discipline that was...?**

14:00 Well put it this way, one day you're out with the girlfriend, with the boys hooning around, the next day it's 'yes sir, no sir, what do you want me to do sir, how high do you want me to jump sir'. You go from one where you're free and easy where you're into a regimental discipline where if the instructor tells you to duck walk and quack, you duck walk and quack, you don't ask why. You don't ask

14:30 when he tells you to jump, you don't ask why, you ask how high?

### **How long does it take to get that sort of mentality in your head?**

I think about a couple of weeks and you start to get that way of thinking. Mainly it's – the discipline's there if not so much for the 77 days National

15:00 Service but say, for the regs, for us guys on active service later on, they tell you to do something, you don't say why, you do it. And that's it. If you're ever in that situation where you're on active service, and you're told to do something, you don't say, "Why have I got to do it?" You act instantaneously to do it. And that's the reason why you get that discipline in you on the parade ground first, that you

15:30 know when you get something – you don't question why you're going to do it.

### **Did you ever meet people who couldn't handle that discipline?**

Yeah but – we had a few blokes who tried to buck the system. You can't buck the system.

### **How did they try?**

Tried to be a bit smart,

16:00 Backchat, things like that. They weren't going to do it. But you've got a five foot five little corporal barrel chest, he's not going – he's telling you what to do, you're not telling him what to do. They come around and they take six weeks. But they're not there to love you. They do succeed

16:30 I didn't know anybody who really bucked the system. I knew blokes who did try to buck it but they got worn down after a while.

### **What were some of the techniques that the instructors used to try and instil this discipline?**

Verbal abuse. Physically, not so much hitting you but getting you

17:00 doubling on the spot, push ups, running around the parade ground rifle held above your head like that,

just doubling till you fall down. I don't say whether in this era now whether they'd be able to get away with it, but those days they could. Physical abuse, not so much as I said

17:30 physical abuse say punching and things, physical abuse they'd make you do exercises like doubling on the spot, running, push ups. In the verbal abuse, him standing face to face with you, screaming at you. Virtually his face is going red, screaming at you virtually telling you what your parenthood is and

18:00 what have you got for brains, or tapping you on the head like that saying, "Is there anything inside, hello, I'm talking to you, is there anything inside?" That kind of abuse.

**Would people, like if someone did that to me it might get my back up a bit. How did people respond?**

What could you do? You couldn't say, "Listen Mike, come outside and I'll punch you." You were under military discipline. They could do it.

18:30 They had the power of doing it because you could not really physically retaliate against them. Or if you did, if you abuse them, tell them to "go bite your arse" something like that, you could be running before the CO for contempt. So you had no alternative but to do it.

**Do you think this is right, what they did?**

19:00 I think it's the times. It's wrong in a way being humiliated like that but that was the accepted thing in those days. You just took it. When we get on to the navy, I can give you an experience what a chief done to me but I didn't worry about it.

19:30 I thought fair enough mate, you know, I played the idiot, I paid for it and that. But it was humiliating in a lot of respects. I know when that bloke charged me with the bayonet, I know how I felt. I sometimes think now what I should've done and that. But if I'd done it, I could've been up for a charge for assault. You had no recourse.

20:00 A lot of blokes when they had the corporals playing good cop, bad cop, you had the real nasty corporal and this real kind corporal, "What's wrong son?" "Corporal X is giving me a hard time." Next day on the parade ground Corporal X will say, "Oh you can't handle it eh? You've got to go and tell somebody. What do you do, do you go and tell Mummy when you get home?"

20:30 So you learnt to just shut up and take it, that was it. You knew you had 77 days, get the bloody 77 days over then. Put the finger up at them that you've finished and that.

**Do you think that if they hadn't have behaved like this it would've been harder for the discipline to have been...?**

You've got to instil discipline, there's no two ways about it, and that was the way, I think maybe they still

21:00 might've got discipline from them, but it's hard to say. I'm looking at a different era to what it is now. And things weren't - they weren't exactly hard in those days but they weren't exactly easy. You had no welfare or anything like that. You just had to take what come and that.

21:30 When you're 18 you're resilient. You get over it, I've got no mental scars about it, I don't go to bed at night crying about what happened on the program. I sometimes think I would've loved to have met that bastard about three years later when I was in navy and thump him and that. See how good he is. Things like that. You think of that, but you never really dwell on it after it's all finished.

22:00 Sometimes I would've loved to meet him. When I was on the Gull around the - we were sitting on (UNCLEAR) we made up a death list. Half of them on the death list were ex National Service training instructors. That was my death list I had. But as I said, you're 18, you copped it, you've done your National Service, you've finished, you come home and that was it.

22:30 Wrap up and finish.

**Can you tell me what a typical day during the National Service training would have been like?**

You heard the old bell ring, it wasn't a bugle they had a big steel pipe and a steel bar and they whacked it. That was six o'clock. You got up, had a shave, had a wash, got dressed, made your bunk cleaned, your hut out.

23:00 Cleaned around your hut, went to breakfast. Then you done fatigues, cleaned up the yard, the company area, some of us went over to the canteen area cleaned that up. Then you had - your platoon commander inspected you like your boots, rifle inspection, that was around about til nine o'clock.

**What would happen if your boots weren't clean enough or something like that?**

23:30 You could find yourself marching picket next night, something like that.

**What would you do on a marching picket?**

That was like yard duty. Two hours on, four hours off, then two hours on again, like you'd do from say



six o'clock to eight o'clock then from twelve o'clock to two o'clock. And they'd inspect your rifles, god help you if your rifle wasn't clean, like the instructor'd say, "I'm glad to see your rifle's healed -

24:00 that hole's healed up in your rifle, Private Goodall. That's great. Now get the bloody thing clean so I can see my face in it." So you'd get, your turn to be inspected around about nine o'clock, you'd go up on the parade ground, start drilling until about half past ten, then there'd be - two blokes would go down to the

24:30 cookhouse, get a brew of tea, bring it up to the parade ground where you were, you'd have your field pack, get your mug out, have your cup of tea. Then the two blokes would take it back again, then you'd start drilling again until twelve o'clock, then it'd be lunch from twelve to one o'clock. Then back on the parade, maybe parade around training or go to the

25:00 huts to learn more instruction. Four o'clock, you finished for the day, go down, clean your webbing, clean your boots, some of us would be getting ready maybe for battalion guard that night or picket duty, go to tea from round about five o'clock.

25:30 About half past five at night, those who were going to picket duty fall outside the company headquarters to be detailed what picket they had. All the rest was just back to the hut, maybe clean up, do a bit more brass, clean your boots, doing blanko - clean your blanko a bit more.

26:00 Then around about say ten o'clock it was lights out and you went to sleep.

**And during this time maybe when you were cleaning your boots or that sort of thing, would you chat to the other blokes?**

Yeah, we'd talk and that, you'd have the radio on and you'd be talking or maybe if not, you'd go across to the canteen, buy yourself - there's no grog, you couldn't drink, buy yourself a coke or a milkshake. I don't remember, we never, the whole time I was there

26:30 I think I only went to the pictures once. That was the only time, the time we had pictures and one time there was a Salvation Army came out and played - their band came out and played for us. But mainly you stayed in your hut and talked and cleaned your equipment and maybe the platoon commander would come in and walk around and have a look at you, see how you're going. Like that.

27:00 **And you mentioned, when you were in scouts, the boys would talk about girls and how it all worked.**

Yeah, we were immature. In Brisbane there was a brothel down the bottom of Albert St. Of course a lot of the Nashos used to go there and a couple of blokes went there one day, anyway, they walked in and seen the old madam

27:30 and they said, "How are the girls?" She said, "Well there's nothing under eight and nothing over eighty. What, are you boys down here for the experience?" The blokes said, "No love, we're here for the practise." See a few of the boys went down there and tried it out and that.

**And would they tell you stories?**

Put it this way, it was like in the navy times too, the story got embellished.

**What was the most embellished story you ever heard?**

28:00 One bloke reckoned he had two girls at the same time. I said, "You get six pound a week." I said, "You must've spent all your money there because I believe it costs you three pound for a girl."

**What was his response to that?**

He didn't say anything about it. Well actually, you know, blokes went there and told the stories but it was mainly

28:30 half - because mainly, you see we were 18 and of course in those days there wasn't much sexual liberation and that as there is today, and some of the stories I think were bloody furphies and that.

**And what was the brothel's name, down at Albert St?**

No, they didn't have any names, they were just known as Albert St, Ernest St and Margaret St. That's the three of them. Everybody knew where they were, well actually a funny story, it doesn't concern National Service but

29:00 me sister and me brother-in-law took me to the Theatre Royal, that used to be sort of like a vaudeville place in Elizabeth St. Anyway, because I was only 16 sweet and young and we were walking past this place and it's a corrugated shed and there's a couple of blokes waiting outside. I said, "Gee, Daph, I wonder what those blokes are there for." My sister was biting her tongue, they didn't say a word what it was. It was the local brothel.

**So what did the brothels look like?**

29:30 I never been inside it but all it was was this tin shed. Sort of like a tin shed and that. That's the only one, that's the one I seen in Margaret St and I didn't see - Albert St, I didn't see the one in Ernest St or Margaret St, don't know what they looked like. But those days there - to be honest, I wasn't really too worried about it and that.

#### **Was it legal?**

30:00 No it was illegal, but the police turned a blind eye to it. They used to get checked out by the Queensland Medical Officer. Make sure they never had any contagious diseases and that, but it was never legal, but it was, you know, we'll let you operate as long as you don't cause any problems. But I think they did close them down later on.

30:30 And they sometimes regretted it because I believe the spread of venereal disease got out of hand after that. But while they were there they used to get checked out by the Commonwealth Medical Officer and that. Everybody in Brisbane in that era, knew where they were. It wasn't a big secret, you knew where they were. Of course the funny part about it was, one of them was next

31:00 to a glass factory in South Brisbane, the one in Ernest St. And they had a fire in the glass factory and the paper reported, scantily clad women were seen leaving the premises next door to the glass factory.

#### **Did many of the guys have girlfriends in the National Service?**

Yeah. We had - yeah. They had girlfriends. Would they talk about them, but not in the context - there were a few blokes

31:30 who reckoned what they'd done it to their girlfriends but a majority of them still had that respect for their girls and that. The first, we were there for about two weeks in National Service and parents were allowed, your parents were allowed to come and visit you. And of course all the girlfriends came and they said to us, "Right, when you meet your parents, you've got to salute."

32:00 I've never felt so much the geek. Mum and me sister and me two nieces come I gave them a big salute. Anyway, next minute you heard this voice from the parade ground, "That soldier up there." And instantaneously there's about 20 blokes, all turned around towards the company, "Us sergeant?" "No, not you. You. You, with the hat on."

32:30 Of course we all had hats on, no-one knew who it was and it was just after I saluted Mum and me sister. And they were laughing, they thought it was a great joke.

#### **Why was he yelling?**

I don't know, (UNCLEAR) bloke was doing something wrong and that. Trying to make a geek out of all of us. No, they come up and visited us. All the girlfriends come up. Thank Christ the girl I was going with never came up, would've felt a geek saluting her.

#### **Were the guys, like would you be interested in the other**

33:00 **guy's girlfriends and kind of, you've heard about them a little bit.**

Oh, you'd heard about them, but there was no way you could get to them or anything like that because we were - you only got leave once a week, either Saturday night or Sunday. It was never, I did get leave, they did give you a weekend leave only once. And then a mid-week leave only once. And then you had the Saturday night or all day

33:30 Sunday. All day Sunday, I used to go and take me washing home, give it to Mum to wash and that, hang it out on the line and hope to God she could iron it before I had to go back. And we used to - they supplied buses to take you to Brisbane, but a lot of us used to get the cab from outside the army base and it used to cost us 25 dollars,

34:00 which is \$2.50 in today's money - they didn't have a meter it was a set 25 shillings to go from Wacol into the city. We used to come past here and I used to get off here. The blokes used to carry on, about four of us used to get the cab and then we'd get a cab back from the city to Wacol

34:30 on the night time and that. It was always cheaper for four of youse to get a cab than just the one person because all we were getting was - I think it was six pound a week, but out of that you lost it in tax. You were paying tax and a pound of that was for what they called the third pay, when you finished National Service, you got the bulk of that money back.

35:00 And there was also the train you could get home, but no-one ever used to get the train, you used to get take a bus or a cab.

#### **And what sort of things would you do on a Saturday night leave?**

Well I used to come home here and get a decent bloody meal. A lot of the blokes used to just go to the pictures. You couldn't drink. You're gone for a start because the age up here, was 21.

35:30 Being a National Serviceman you were 18, so there was no way - the pubs wouldn't serve you beer and that. You maybe were able to go home and have a beer with your Dad, your parents and that, but you

couldn't get a beer in town. But most of the blokes mainly went to the pictures or mainly went to a dance and that. I used to come home here, get a meal and sort of like say to Mum, "I'm going to have a sleep for a couple of hours." Then have a sleep and go back to the

36:00 go back into town and get a bus home.

**When did they put the age to 21?**

To be honest I couldn't tell you. I think it was in the '60s. I know it was 21 when I was in National Service and even when I was in the navy up in Townsville it was 21.

36:30 But they were more relaxed up in Townsville with us because we were in a bar one day and none of us were 21, we were all drinking. They didn't worry about us and that. I think mainly if you're a serviceman they sort of turn a blind eye.

**Would you wear your uniform when you were on leave?**

What in the National Service? Yeah. You were buggered because you were doing National Service and you wore a slouch hat and you had two things

37:00 that picked you out as a National Serviceman, you had a crew cut hair and you had a white mark right around there, where the chin strap was. All your face was tanned, but you had this white mark and that's the way you could - you could sort of like change into civvies. Once we were living in Brisbane you could change into civvies while they were on leave,

37:30 just to get out of the uniform, and go down the road, or maybe go into town, but the crew cut and the white mark on the face gave you away. That's how you could tell a National Serviceman in summer time.

**Would you ever, like I don't know what interaction you might have had with people who were not National Service, but in the army, was there any division between regular army and National Service?**

38:00 They discarded you. You were Nashos. You were only there for 77 days, you weren't - I don't think they really considered you as real soldiers. You were just there doing your obligation, it become an obligation for 77 days and that. And we got on, you got on well with some of the regulars and that. But I don't think they really - they were just doing a job training you and that was it.

38:30 So I don't think they really cared that much.

**Would you cop any flak from them at all?**

In what way do you mean flak? Besides being shouted at, being humiliated, like you know, oh, you don't mean me instructors, you mean the ones who were just in the base?

**Yeah or...**

Oh no, we never got any flak from say the non-instructors, just the

39:00 regular army who were there doing work and that. We never got any flak from them and that. They just considered us, you know you're there you're there, you're doing your training and that was it.

**Had your training in the militia, had it sort of in a sense helped to prepare you for some of this?**

I knew what I was in for when I went in. I knew me rifle drills, I knew me left from me right. I knew how to halt

39:30 and I knew all that, but they weren't refined. You see when I was in the militia I taught meself. When I went in National Service, I was instructed how to do it and that. And so I think I did learn a bit more, I did sharpen my skills up. But there was nothing they could teach - well I'm not trying to brag but

40:00 there was nothing they could teach me. And I think that's what really cruelled me with some of the instructors because they'd be giving a demonstration and I'd say, "Yeah that goes there, that goes there." And you could see them really getting saying why don't you shut your bloody mouth up. I'm giving the lecture and that. Of course we had an old sergeant, ended up owing the blokes about 50 pound, borrowed off -

40:30 I'll help you out if you help me out, and I wanted to go on leave and he wanted some money and that, and I gave him a loan of some money, and when they found out he had to pay us all back. That's one thing you weren't supposed to do, was borrow money from the serviceman and that. This old sergeant was going around borrowing money left right and centre. And no one actually knew what he was borrowing, because everybody didn't say anything, then two blokes got together and said, "I gave Sergeant Prince so much money." And somebody else said, "Yeah I gave Sergeant Prince so much money." Then all of a sudden it

41:00 all come together, here was about say, I don't say it was 50 pound, but some figure like that. Then he had to go round and pay all the blokes back, how much money he borrowed off them.

## Tape 4

00:37 **Tell us about what you did after you got out of the National Service?**

I finished me Nasho about the 28th October '59 and went back to me job at Morgan Slippers. I'd done my National Service obligation with the militia.

01:00 Well that lasted from November to June and I decided then that I was going to join the navy.

**Why had you decided this?**

A bloke up the road, Ralphie Waterfield had come home. Up to the point of National Service I was going to join the regular army. Well National

01:30 Service disillusioned me entirely against going in the army but I still counted on being in the military. I was 19, I was in a job where I wasn't doing anything, going nowhere and I just wanted something different. Well Ralphie came home on leave. A real Jack Taro,

02:00 Ralphie was. I mean to say, six months in recruitment school, he was a real sailor. Had the flapper jack back, and he was telling me all about Flinders Naval Depot or HMAS Cerberus as it is now. Unfortunately, as I said, Ralphie sort of like embellished things and I thought, this is great, down there it must be really great. After 77 days of purgatory at Wacol. Anyway, I thought I might bloody well, I might think about it,

02:30 and the more I thought about it, I thought bugger it, I'm going to join up when I finish my apprenticeship.

**What had Ralph said?**

What a glorious place Flinders was. You have a great time. A great lot of instructors there. I really had a great time and I'm going to a great ship. Just generalising, painting a glossy picture of what the training depot was like.

03:00 I thought this is really great. This is me. My apprenticeship was due to expire on the 18th of April, 1960. Well I went in the army recruiting office which was in Mary Street on a Saturday, got my

03:30 forms, then on the 18th of April I filled them out, put the whole lot in, I wanted to join for 9 years. I went to Mum, and Mum said, "No, I'm not signing the papers." Well this was a bit of a blow because I couldn't get in. She said, I said, "Right, I'm going to sign the papers." She said, "But don't you ever bloody come in here and start complaining that you hate the navy." I said, "Right-o Mum." I said,

04:00 "If you weren't going to sign," I said, "I would've done like Uncle Jack done, I'd shoot through from home and enlist under another name." She said, "Yeah," she said, "I'd like to see you do that." So she signed the papers up. I made a promise, "No matter how rough it gets, I'm not going to tell you how I hate the navy." So I put the papers in, but just about then I got this bloody rash around the groin area. It was bloody tinea.

04:30 Well I got me call up papers to go for me medical, which was in about May. Passed flying colours except this bloody, I'd cleaned most of the tinea up, but there was still slight traces of it. And of course, those days I was still a bit, I'd get slightly embarrassed and I had this Chief Cunningham, he was the PO [Petty Officer] recruiting chief down at Mary St

05:00 in the navy section, and there was the WRANS [Women's Royal Australian Naval Service] typing away on a type writer, typing away and old Cunningham says, "Right Goodall, I'm afraid you can't enlist at the moment, medically unfit." He said, "You've got tinea around the arsehole." And here's this WRANS, I thought well thanks chief, I really appreciate this. So I failed that and about a month later I went back and I passed the test, so basically that was

05:30 what I - between ending National Service and joining, that was basically, I finished me apprenticeship at Morgan Slippers, finished me National Service obligation with the militia and then I went and put me papers in to enlist in the navy.

**How had you got your mum to agree to sign it?**

I think, I just said, "Look Mum, I want to join up." I sort of like, used the term,

06:00 "Well you see, if Uncle Jack could run away from home when he was 14 and enlist in the 1st AIF [Australian Imperial Force] when he was 18," I said, "I can do the same thing." You know, using threat and guile and everything like that. Mum said, "Well if you want to join up, I'll sign the papers." That's what she said, she said, "Don't ever come back whinging about the navy. Don't ever whinge to me about the navy and that." I said, "Right," and I got the pen and she signed the papers. I think she would've signed it because she wouldn't have stopped me.

06:30 But I think she thought that she wanted to give me time to think about it. But the main thing I was thinking about whether joining for 9 or 12 years and I decided to join for 9 years.

**And tell us about the immediate place you went after joining up.**

I went down to Mary Street on the 1st July and got sworn in. From that moment I was sworn in I was in the navy.

- 07:00 We left here on the 2nd July, to Sydney. We got to Sydney on the 3rd of July, we went to Penguin Navy Base, stayed at Penguin Navy Base for the day and then we got on the train and went to Flinders. I call it Flinders because I'm still in the habit of calling it Flinders. We got off at Melbourne, Spencer St railway station.
- 07:30 There was an officer to meet us, "All right chaps, hop on board the bus now chaps." You know, really nice, "Hop on board the bus, get on, don't be slow there get on the bus." And we're hopping in and away we drove from Melbourne through Frankston and we driving and here was this gate with this figurehead of a mermaid. And this bloke turned to us and said, "Right-e-o guys, you can kiss your freedom goodbye now." And we drove in and there was a complete change, change in this
- 08:00 officer from "come on chaps," to "right, move your arse, get off the bus," and things like that. So we all get off the bus, stood in a parade and they started calling the names, "Goodall," so and so "over there, over there." This was when we first become, first lot, when we met all the blokes who were going to do the seamanship course. They took us over to
- 08:30 the mess hall, we got a meal which was stew, took us down, we got a hammock, mattress, sheets, blankets and pillow. They showed us how to lash, do a hammock. No-one had ever been in a hammock before. So we found out how to do the hammock, how to get into a hammock. So we're just stuck in this hut, like Brown's cows, didn't know what was going on and then four o'clock
- 09:00 you hear these pipes, "Hands secure, hands secure, hands to detina, hands to tea," and that. And everybody comes running in, and all these blokes start walking in, "Anyone from Queensland?" "Yeah." And they start telling us about Flinders. Well holy bloody hell, what have I got myself into, this is not what Ralphie told me about. "Oh yeah, you'd better watch Lieutenant Ross mate, he's a real bastard. You'll be doing time if you get on the wrong side of him." You know they're giving us an introduction to the navy. Mind you, these blokes had only been in a month, but they were sailors.
- 09:30 So night time, we went over for tea and we went back to - and next minute this condom came flying in our bunk, in our cabin and it was full of water. It was called - I have to say it, it was called a flying fuck. That's what they called this condom full of water. So it's still on the floor the next morning. Anyway, we're all - we went over. We went to bed that night and next morning we wake up
- 10:00 and we head the blare of this pipe, "Wakey, wakey, wakey, rise and shine. The morning's fine. Wakey, wakey..." the shrillest pipe you hear, this pumping the noise and we're in our bunks and we're wondering what's going on. And this old PO said, "Right you go, get out, do your bunk, do your hammocks up," and this is - it's bloody pitch black. Mind you we're in Melbourne, middle of winter. And I'm thinking what the bloody hell am I in for here? So we go over for
- 10:30 breakfast. Anyway we come back from breakfast and just standing there, doing nothing, next minute this bloke walks in and he says, "All right you guys, what are you doing here?" There's this PO. He says, "My name's Bourke. Paddy Bourke. Don't you forget it." Well within meeting Paddy Bourke, we knew about divorce, venereal disease and navy punishment.
- 11:00 And then he looks down, here's this condom on the ground, still on the ground. And he turns around and says, "What's that?" Well there's this Eric Foster, he springs to attention, stands up like this and says "A flying fuck sir." And Paddy Bourke says, "A what?" "It's a flying fuck sir. That's what they call it." Well that's one of me first memories of the navy,
- 11:30 was poor old Eric Foster saying that to Paddy Bourke and old Paddy asking what he meant by it and that. Well basically what happened then, we started the transition from civilian to recruit seamen. They took us down, we got a haircut, got our medical, went down, got kitted out then we changed into our
- 12:00 work dress which was a grey, sort of a grey shirt and denim trousers, took our civilian clothes over to a store, packed them in a bag and sent them home. Well that was it, we were in the navy then.

**How were you feeling about the concept of nine years?**

First off I thought

- 12:30 it seemed a long time, but then nine years, nine years, nine years is a long time but that was the only time of enlistment you could join up for and I thought, well you know, nine years, I want to be in it and that. But then the realisation came and that you know, all of a sudden we were on the parade ground and that was the gunnery school parade ground and the gunnery school parade ground was sacred ground.
- 13:00 As soon as you put your foot on that ground you doubled across. The grass around the parade ground, you couldn't walk on, but the thing was you doubled across that parade ground. You didn't walk, you doubled. You doubled everywhere. And but see, I was lucky, I had that 11 weeks National Service which prepared me, because some of the poor buggers who came in, they suddenly realised this - the illusion

was different to the reality.

- 13:30 I had blokes there, you know, they wanted to get out, they wanted to desert, they were going to shoot through, they weren't going to stay in. We had one bloke going down the Padre every day, he wanted to get out and that. But we were lucky, we had - I always felt we had a different kind of instructor in the navy to what I had in National Service. My instructor was an old Yorkshireman, Vic Clegg, he was a chief PO.
- 14:00 And he started training us. And we were on that parade ground, we marched, feet in, heels dug in, we went through the eight weeks training, but old Vic, he was a white man when you look at it. We had a case one day when we were grounding arms, what you do is ground arms, go down, your legs go like that as you go down and you put your rifle down.
- 14:30 We were doing this all the time. And we had this bloke, Lofty Malone, six foot and nothing, he was grounding arms, grounding arms, and old Vic says, "We will now ground arms again." And old Lofty's in the back, he says, "You bastard, Clegg." Now for a recruit seaman to call a PO, a chief petty officer, a senior chief a bastard, that is not on. That is definitely not on. A hush fell over us and I thought, oh Christ Lofty, you're for it.
- 15:00 Old Vic Clegg says, "Malone, my mother was a red rose, and my father was a white rose and they were married six years before I was born." That was it, and Old Vic took me out one day, 'cause I was sort of like playing up a bit you know, and he dragged me out and took me behind the - I grounded me rifle, he grounded his rifle,
- 15:30 took me behind the gunnery school shed, drill hall, grabbed me by the scruff of the collar, pushed me up against the wall and said, "Listen you little bastard," he said, "if you keep stuffing up on that bloody parade," he said, "I'm going to flay you so far up the backside you won't be able to sit down. You got me?" I said, "Yes chief." Walked out. But I didn't go running to the officer saying, "The chief threatened me." It was part of the course, you accepted it and that.
- 16:00 Mostly we done parade ground drill for the first eight weeks and then after a month we got our first weekend leave which was from a Friday night to Monday morning. But what they do, before they send you on leave they march you down to the cinema and you sit down and you watch the VD [Venereal Disease] film. So they got this old American movie
- 16:30 made by John Ford about the dangers of contracting VD when you're on leave. And basically you don't see anything what-so-ever, it's just this American meets this girl, he goes up to the room, goes in the room and comes out and is doing his belt up. You know. But what they emphasise is he's smoking - he's just lit up a cigarette and puts the cigarette on the post and it shows you the cigarette burning down while he's inside.
- 17:00 And it's basically, why they're showing you that, how long it takes you contract the disease. So we watched this film, we're all coming out, "Yeah we all know about this, we all know about this." Anyway old Vic said to me, he said, "Did you learn anything by that Goodall?" I said, "Yes." He said, "What did you learn?" I said, "If you have sex, don't smoke." Old Vic shook his head and walked away. But basically then we went on leave, we went to what was called
- 17:30 the White Ensign Club, that was up next to the Exhibition Building in Melbourne and we had our first lot of leave, then we came back. But what we done, we done eight weeks basic training down there which was drill, learning the rudiments of seamanship, navy, navy tradition, different ranks, how to identify them, who you salute, you know just general. Then the next three weeks
- 18:00 was seamanship school where we learnt - see I was going to be a seaman. So we done our seamanship school. So while we were doing that we went to see the psychiatrist and he determined what rate we were going to be like, whether we were going to be Tas [?] ratings, radar plots, or gunnery rates.

#### **What does a rate mean?**

Right arm rate which is what you are, gunnery rate which is maintain the guns, service the guns, UW [Under Water] was they were anti-submarine

- 18:30 warfare, and radar, they operated the radar, radar operators aboard the ship. And that was what your rate was, a gunnery rate, a UW or a radar rate. And you got a right arm rate on your right arm, your uniform with - being a gunnery rate you got crossed guns with say a Q [Quartermaster] underneath the crossed guns which was (UNCLEAR) that you were a quarters rating.
- 19:00 You went down to see the psychiatrist. Well that's when the class first started to break up. We were classed as Walla One - Walla One class [?].

#### **What kind of questions did the psychologist ask you?**

Why do you want to be that rate? Why don't you want to be a gunnery rate? Why don't you want to be a radar rate? Why do you want

- 19:30 to be that rate? Mainly concentrating on why you wanted to be that rate. I just said I wanted to be a UW but I got gunnery. He said, "Why do you want to be a UW?" I said, "I just feel I want to be a UW, I don't

want to be a gunnery, I don't want to fire bloody guns." The next thing I got gunnery rate.

**How do you think the psychiatrist or psychologist was working? What was the logic?**

20:00 Bigger if I - I couldn't figure out their logic. You didn't try to figure out their logics. The whole thing is sort of like intimidating. Your divisional officer was there too. One of the questions was, "Do you want to get out of this, out of here because you don't like the officers?" You're not going to say, "No, I want to get out because this bloke's a big mug lar, I hate his guts." You're not going to say that. You say, "I like all the officers here." So I...

**So was it a very natural**

20:30 **kind of test?**

Basically it was just asking why you wanted to be that rate and you had to give a good enough answer to satisfy the psychiatrist. And my answers weren't just good enough. And I got gunnery. Well that's when the whole class started to break up we lost a lot of them who went up to Sydney to HMAS Watson to do their UW course

21:00 and their Radar course. They went up there and we stayed down at Flinders to do our gunnery course which was a six week course. And then we done our gunnery course, done our firing out at West Head, and then that great moment came when we stood before the gunnery officer, went up, saluted and got handed our right arm rates. We couldn't get back to the bloody, our quarters fast enough and everybody was there, there they were sewing

21:30 up their rates. And we walked in the cafeteria that night, with all the recruits, which our right arm rates. Our right arm slung out like that. So all these recruits who were still doing their basic training, could see we were gunnery rates. I done that then I stayed another couple of weeks down at Flinders till I had my Christmas holidays. But basically Flinders wasn't bad, it was bloody cold.

22:00 It was cold down there, but we had what was called a hamburger shop, it was called The Millionaires and everybody used to spend their money there. You had a picture show there, the Southern Cross Picture Show, where they showed movies every night. You had a lot of entertainment down there to entertain you, but you see

22:30 the whole thing was - a lot of the time we were studying so we didn't get time to go some of these things. But The Millionaires Club was where a lot of us went. You'd buy your hamburgers, soft drinks, you couldn't go to the wets when you were recruits and that, that was forbidden. But a lot of blokes got themselves smashed on leave and that. A few blokes come back drunk after their leave, they were half intoxicated and they got run in.

**How was your leave?**

23:00 Pretty good. I stayed at the White Ensign Club and spent me leave in Melbourne and that. But Melbourne's like Brisbane, Sunday's it was dead. There was nowhere to go. So I used to go back on board Sunday night. A lot of the blokes used to go back on board Monday morning.

**What stories would come back from leave?**

23:30 We had one bloke, Boots Bailey, he met this girl on one leave, the next leave he was engaged to her. The usual sailor story, 'I met a good looking Sheila, spent the night with her.' But half the time half of them were bloody lies and that. Talking about some of the bars they went to, Young and Jacksons.

24:00 I was in Melbourne for the Melbourne Cup. I went to the Melbourne Cup in Melbourne.

**What was that like?**

Pretty good experience, Hi Jinx won the Cup that year. I put my money on another horse, never got a thing. Then I come back on board and I got run in. I had a bit of non-service uniform and - it was like the black silk that goes round your neck. I bought one of those

24:30 from, there used to be this place called Sinbad's in Melbourne. They used to supply service gear but it wasn't service issue. Like, you bought a uniform tailor made and wide fronts, hats, sailor's hats and that, they weren't service issue but they weren't, you could get away with them. I had this silk and they opened my bag up and I forgot to put it underneath and they found it. I

25:00 had to face my divisional officer and the bastard gave me seven days kit muster. I had to pack my kit bag every night, take it over to this hall and then lay it out every night for seven days. And that was my punishment for seven days, kit muster and that.

**What was wrong with having that?**

Not issue. It wasn't service issue, we were recruits.

**Why did you get it then?**

25:30 Because I wanted to be a sailor, I wanted to be a jack sailor that's why. The tattoo came later, but the

silk came first and that. And then the bellbottoms – 32 inch bellbottom trousers came later after that with the flap fronts. And I got the punishment there but every Sunday we had to go to church. That was compulsory, church parade on Sunday. Saturdays if you weren't, didn't go ashore,

- 26:00 you worked in your block, cleaned your block up for inspection on Saturday morning. And then Saturday afternoon, if you weren't duty you were free to do what you liked. Sundays you went to church and then you were free to go. But a lot of blokes tried to avoid church, and in one of the blocks was this manhole and a few of the blokes decided they'd miss out on church,
- 26:30 and go in a broom closet and go up the manhole and hide in the manhole. Well this Paddy Bourke, he was a leg – he was sort of like a living legend in Flinders, he heard about it. So all these blokes, they rushed up and go in the manhole and old Paddy comes along, he said, "Guys," he disguised his voice, "guys open up, get out, get out." They're saying, "He said open up, Paddy Bourke's coming. All right mate." They opened the lid up,
- 27:00 and down there's old Paddy Bourke, he said, "Gotcha." Another one was, "Wakey, wakey, go." And it's bloody cold and you want to spend that last couple of minutes in bed as long as you could. The next minute the pipe says, "You know who this is, this is Paddy Bourke. You know where I am now, but you won't know where I am in a minute's time." And then he'd switch off the loud speaker. The next minute you'd hear this voice.
- 27:30 "Paddy Bourke's coming." And there was these, this dormitory what they called partitioned off, there was about ten partitioned rooms and all of a sudden you'd hear one instantaneous thud. Everybody's getting out of the bunk, Paddy Bourke was coming and that. Yeah he used to come around and get you out. And then we had another chief there, he'd stand at the top of the hallway.
- 28:00 They had the old blocks, the old wooden blocks and they had the new blocks which were brick. And he'd stand in the new blocks on the bottom floor next to the door. And wakey wakey'd go and of course you never got out of bed first thing, you'd – and he'd go flying through and by the time they finished wakey wakey he's at the other end of the block and pulled everybody out of bed. That's the way they used to get you up in the morning.
- 28:30 Night times if you weren't duty you were free to do what you liked. But mostly you'd go to the pictures, go to The Millionaires Club or there was a lot of blokes, they had sort of like the church, Ministers used to run some dos in the church hall and they used to do, a few blokes used to go there, or you just stayed in, you'd go to the TV [television] room and watch the TV.
- 29:00 You were able to entertain yourself and that. I rather enjoyed my recruit training down at Flinders.

**You mentioned Vic Clegg was a white man.**

In terms, like a good bloke. Like you know, he was fair dinkum, he gave you a fair go. That's how I meant it. Not in the context of the colouring of his skin or anything like that. He was a really,

- 29:30 he was a really good bloke. He was your instructor but he wasn't like they were in National Service, he had a sense of humour with him. Of course we had one case, old Lofty Malone again, we were doing seamanship and old Vic Clegg gave us a lecture on the lifeboat. And if you ever got, had to abandon ship, what was in the lifeboat to sustain your life.
- 30:00 And old Vic's giving this lecture and it was just close to smoko and the canteen wagon pulled up and old Lofty said, "Hey chief, the canteen wagon's out there." Old Lofty said, "Don't worry about this though, this is important, you may be at sea when your ship gets sunk, but don't worry about that. Men, the canteen wagon's outside there, Malone's got to go to the canteen. Don't worry about this. This isn't as important as the canteen wagon is it. Get out there to the canteen and get your stuff then Malone."
- 30:30 That's the way he was, but he could still be a bloody tough on you, same time as being fair and that. But that's why I always say he was sort of like a real white man in a lot of respects and that. I often wondered what happened to him. He could be dead now.

**And you mentioned also that a lot of the guys at first, because they didn't have National Service, were having trouble. What kind of expectations were you and them?**

- 31:00 I went in there, I knew what it was going to be like, but I think a few of them went in there not realising that there was the discipline they had to go under and it was pretty hard for them, it was sort of like hard for them to adjust. This was the first time a lot of them were away, some of them were only 17 – some of them were only kids of 17 years of age and
- 31:30 it was just, as it was in National Service, just the adjusting from a concept of a civilian to a concept of a serviceman. And you know, being told not why I've got to jump but how high I've got to jump. A lot of them adjusted to it. We only lost – one bloke actually did get – got left.
- 32:00 He was medically, he couldn't handle the pace, he was medically unfit. Well he was six foot six and weighed three stone and he just couldn't handle the pace and that and the poor bugger was crying. And we had Jimmy Watkins, used to go down the minister every day. He wanted to get out, right or wrong, he wanted to get out. He wanted to get out on compassionate reasons because his mother was a widow and his brothers and sisters weren't still, not going, were still going to school, and he was just about to



get out on compassionate grounds,

32:30 and he said, "I think I'll stay in." We couldn't believe it, after all the trouble he went to trying to get out. You had the smart buggers in there, I remember old Tex Hawthorne was one, boys who had a smart remark for whatever come out and that. And of course Tex sort of like knew what it was like doing punishment, what we called (UNCLEAR) WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s, used to be a term for people doing punishment.

33:00 Old Tex done WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s a few times when we were down at recruiting school. But I think it was just the adjusting from civilian street, from being a civilian to a service bod [body], I think within a month to six weeks they'd adjusted to it. We had a couple of blokes in there who had done National Service prior to coming in,

33:30 so they were adjusted to the fact of what it was like.

**And so after a few months standard training you were separated, tell about your training still in Flinders at the gunnery.**

We did gunnery. We trained on the old four inch and the 4.5's. Basically it was just learning the drills, loading, aiming, firing the gun.

34:00 We had old PO Quigley and Chief Dowling, they were showing us the, what's a name, the gunnery school was entirely different to all the other schools at Flinders. It's like the old saying, bullshit baffles brains. It was all - a heap of bullshit. You'd sort of like,

34:30 you'd say 'gun loaded', it wasn't gun loaded it was, "Gun loaded sir." Throw the fist in on the shell as you loaded it in. You'd be shouting out the orders every time you'd do it and you were supposed to be setting a higher standard to the rest of the school. You're gunnery and that was it. We done the

35:00 gunnery training and we went and done a week's land fighting over at the rifle range firing the Brens, the .303s, it didn't worry me, I knew how to use them. And then we went out onto the main West Head firing range at West Head, and fired the four inches and 4.5. It was just basic gunnery training for us. That went for about six weeks.

35:30 **Where were you at the end of this?**

I was still down at Flinders and we had, I think we finished at about October. Then we went back and done a lot more. They took us back and we got old Vic Clegg again, we had an old bloke called Tuffy Lloyd, a Welshman, I mean to say, if you look at him today, he was overweight and ol'

36:00 Old Tuffy was a funny bugger. We'd tell him how we hated the officers and that, and he got drunk one day and he come to give lectures with the class and he got drunk, got on top of the desk, he's got a pair of shorts, real fat legs, raises his shorts and does a little dance on the desk for us. I don't know how he ever got away with it, but we done a revision of seaman training. And then somebody yelled out one day, "The postings are out." And we all went and looked for our postings.

36:30 I was looking for a destroyer, a frigate, Far East... I got a survey ship, Australian stationed. So I got drafted to the old Warrego. It was an old Grimsby class sloop that was doing survey duty around Australia. And that was my first sea posting.

**So how did you feel about this?**

It was a sea posting, I was finally getting to see what I wanted. But

37:00 I really wanted the Far East, get the Far East, because old Ralphie Waterfield, because when I come home Ralphie was on a destroyer and he really looked a sight. By that time he had the destroyer wave in his hat, flapper back jacket and I come home from Flinders, of course old Ralphie's a AB [Able Seaman] by this time lording it over me, he's an AB and he's been to the Far East on the destroyers and that. He said, "What have you got?" I said, "I've got the Warrego." He said,

37:30 "You're just around Australia are you?" And of course that didn't help me and that. So I come home here and I spent two weeks home here and I went down to Sydney around about the 2nd or 3rd of January 1961 and I joined the Warrego at Garden Island.

**What was your first impression of the Warrego when you saw it?**

Well let's put it this way, I walked on

38:00 the Quiberon, here was this fighting ship, deck's immaculate, then I said, "Where's the Warrego." He said, "Next gangway mate." Here's this ship, rubbish on the upper deck, lime on the deck, dishevelled. That was the Warrego, that was my first impression I said, "Oh Christ, this is just great isn't it?" 'Cause me mate Johnny Sly was with me, I said, "Isn't this great, look at this, this is our first draft."

38:30 Went to see the coxswain, he gave us our bunks where we were going to live. He said, "All right, when you get settled in, get changed and start chipping the paint off in the bathroom." So my first introduction to the Warrego was at one o'clock in the afternoon chipping paint. Yes, that was me first day, but I got used to it. I went to Adelaide.

- 39:00 Went to this place called Moonta, the first time a warship had ever been to Moonta since about 1875. We opened the ship up for public inspection and half the crew come back smashed, drunk as skunks and that. Half the crew got run in that night. Then we done surveys around Kangaroo Island, then we come back to Sydney in about June, went and had the entry - it was the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy and
- 39:30 I participated in the entry of the fleet into Sydney Harbour.

## Tape 5

- 00:35 **That was your first experience at a first posting.**

Yeah, first draft at sea.

**So what were your first impressions?**

I really wanted to get to one of the ships that was really going up north, like one of the destroyers or frigates, but I got to the Warrego and I thought well this is a draft, at least I'll be going somewhere - getting outside of,

- 01:00 going somewhere with it and that. Mainly what it done was, the draft surveys around South Australia and I'd never been to South Australia before, they'd done that in round about March to about June, and then they done the summer survey season was up in the Barrier Reef, that's after the cyclonic weather and they usually done that

- 01:30 around about August, August to October. And you know, first time at sea, it was an experience and I enjoyed the time on the Warrego. First draft, first experience.

**I guess, what were the differences of being on an active ship?**

- 02:00 Well you felt more, you felt like you were more in the navy with it like, you're on a typical warship whereas mainly you'd be going stationed up in Singapore, in the Far East (UNCLEAR) for a couple of months, you were going, you felt like you were doing something. Whereas on the survey ship, you never felt like you, I always felt like you weren't in the real navy.

- 02:30 As a mate of mine said, he was on the Moresby and he reckoned, he said, "The survey navy was entirely different to the regular navy." See they had different, the war ships, the Melbourne, the Hobart, the Melbourne, Queenborough, Queen -, Quick Match, Anzac, the Voyager and that, they were all painted a grey. The survey ships they were buff,

- 03:00 the funnels were coloured buff and the ship was painted white. And that's how you could pick the difference between them and that. But I suppose you know, as I said, someone's got to serve on them and that. Unfortunately I drew the short straw on me first draft. Whereas a lot of me mates were going on the Gascoyne and the Anzac and they were going over to New Zealand and Tahiti and they're coming back bragging where they've been, and they said, "Where have you been?" "Adelaide."

- 03:30 "Anywhere else?" "No, Adelaide." It sort of like got your goat and that at times. When I look back, I come out ahead afterwards and that, with my second sea posting and that.

**And what were the crew like on the Warrego?**

Not bad, I had trouble with one bloke, a bloke by the name of Jim Reeson. He'd been made up to petty officer and he come on board and I was a

- 04:00 bosun's mate on the gangway. You had a quartermaster and bosun's mate we kept watch on the gangway. He come on board one night, drunk as a - slightly inebriated and he abused one of the officers. Unfortunately I was at the gangway, seen the whole lot. I didn't know Jim Reeson from a bar of soap. And I had to give evidence against him. Well he got busted back to a leading hand and he had it in for me. Me and a bloke

- 04:30 by the name of Boots Bailey. Unfortunately Jim was a survey rater and it was only a matter of time before he got a draft to the Warrego. About six months after the incident Jim got a draft to the Warrego and I'm on the Warrego at the same time, so I was treading careful. He was after me and he was after Boots Bailey. He got old Boots, he got old Boots Bailey on a charge and Boots went to gaol, went to cells for 14 days,

- 05:00 and reckoned that he was still after me and that if he ever got me, he'd make sure I got cells and that.

**How would he have arranged that?**

He'd be waiting for me to do something wrong. Make a mistake, something like that, and then he'd pounce and charge me and see how far he could take it. But by that time, I was lucky, I got a draft off the Warrego in December. But all the other crew, they

05:30 they weren't a bad lot. As me mate Shorty said, most of the seamen on there were survey rates and they were different. They were different to the rest of the navy.

**How are they different?**

How I mean when I say different, all they were doing was survey and they'd never get a big, it'd be very unlikely that they would get a posting to the main fleet. They were mainly stationed

06:00 around Australia. Around the Australian coast and that, and we always reckoned they were slightly different to the rest of us. And of course, when we come up here to Brisbane, we done a survey up here in Moreton Bay for about three weeks and of course, the sun rises at five o'clock in the morning in summertime,

06:30 Old Saunderson said, "Well we've got three hours extra sun time, so you put the clocks back on the Warrego three hours." So when it was say three o'clock Brisbane time, it was six o'clock on board our ship, so we had all that extra daylight to do surveying work. And here you'd be standing

07:00 in your pyjamas, three o'clock in the afternoon ready to go to bed. And the fishing trawlers would be going out to sea. It was so bloody silly and that. So we had that three hours daylight saving on board the ship the whole time we were up here in Moreton Bay doing the survey. But they went to unusual places, you know, where the main fleet didn't go to, like

07:30 the small towns like Moonta in South Australia. As I said, the whole town come out and seen the ship. The whole town and the surrounding districts all come out and had a look at the ship. Because it was open for public inspection they reckoned it was a real great day and they invited us to one of the local functions they had. And of a course a few of the boys disgraced themselves when the free grog went on.

**I might just stop there for a second.**

08:00 **So when you went for the fleet review did you go on the Warrego?**

Yeah, we come back to Sydney and the day of the fleet review, the whole of the fleet sailed out of the Heads, assembled outside and sailed in. The Melbourne was the flagship at the time, it led the formation in. Then come I think the destroyers, the frigates and we're on the Warrego,

08:30 we were the last, about the second last ship in the review order. We sailed up the Harbour. I've got a photograph up there, sailing under the Harbour Bridge, and then we sailed up the Harbour, up to around Cockatoo dock, then sailed back and sailed into Garden Island. That was for the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy which was in 1961.

**How many ships were there?**

09:00 There would've been the Melbourne, might've been twelve, fifteen ships. It would've been half the fleet that was here in Australia, so round about two derringsxx maybe, two, three Q-class, the Anzac,

09:30 Diamantina, the Gascoyne, the Barcoo, the Warrego, Kanimbla, yep it would've been about fifteen I think.

**And what was the day like sailing into the Harbour?**

Really calm day. Sunny. We all lined the upper deck. All the, the whole, all the ships company lined the upper deck as we

10:00 sailed into the Harbour and that. It wasn't as big as the Naval Review they had for the 75th anniversary. But they had a few retired Admirals aboard the Melbourne and one of the funniest incidents was when we were sailing out, we had a British Naval officer by the name of Williams on board. The flag aft was just wrapped around

10:30 the flagstaff. We got this message from the bridge to make the flag fly. And I said, because me being this funny bugger, I said, "How are we supposed to do that, just blow at it and that?" The old pommy bosun said, "Make it fly, make it fly." I said, "Christ, anybody'd think this was superman." That was the big high point of that year and that because I shouldn't have been at the review, I was supposed to go on leave the week before, but they cancelled my leave

11:00 so they could have enough crew on board to do the sail pass.

**And how long did you spend in Sydney?**

What on the Warrego?

**Yeah for that fleet review.**

We'd just come back from our deployment down in South Australia doing the survey. We come back, we were here a week, we done the review and we were in Sydney for about another - would've been two

11:30 two months. And then we sailed up north to - up to Townsville, the Barrier Reef, which was really great. We used to do a lot of fishing while we were up there, throw the old line over, catching Red Emperor coral trout. We were never short of fresh fish. And I'd catch a few sharks. We mainly, what we done, a

lot of the survey was around Palm Island.

**When you were in Sydney, was there lots of chance to go on leave in Sydney?**

12:00 Oh yeah. If you weren't required for duty on board you could slip ashore at four o'clock in the afternoon.

**Where would you go?**

There was the old Macquarie Hotel, the rock 'n' roll hotel, very salubrious hotel. We had young ladies like with the names of Penicillin Pat, Wendy the Sausage Machine, Big Linda. Pay night was the big night of all. They had the raffle that night.

12:30 **What did they do? The women with these names.**

They were sort of like sailors' young ladies. Penicillin, she got the nickname Penicillin Pat because she was always in hospital getting an injection of penicillin.

**And the sausage machine one?**

Wendy the Sausage Machine.

**Why was she called that?**

Let's say she was very active, in a lot of ways, let's put it this way, you'd be sitting at your table and

13:00 Wendy would be under the table, if you get the general drift. Then there was Big Linda.

**What was Big Linda like?**

Well she was second prize in the payday raffle. First prize was a dozen bottles of beer, second prize was a night with Big Linda.

**What was the payday raffle?**

You know, you have a raffle like a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK raffle. Instead of a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK raffle they raffle a dozen bottles of beer off and the consolation prize was a night with Big Linda.

**Was that a good thing to win?**

13:30 Depending how desperate you were.

**And what did these girls get out of it, like Penicillin Pat and so and so, did they get paid?**

No, no, not usually and that. They just done it for - to support the navy. Then you'd have a night at the old Macquarie Hotel where we called it the Rockers. And then you'd go back

14:00 on board, the night was not finished until you went to Harry's Café de Wheels. Harry's Café de Wheels was a caravan on wooden blocks outside the navy base. And you'd buy your pie and peas and your soft drink, or gofer, as you'd call them and eat that then you'd go home. Well just recently, I was in Sydney, I thought I'd take a sentimental journey, I went down to Woolloomooloo where the Rocker's

14:30 is and the whole Harry's pie wagon. They'd moved the old pie wagon from where it was at the old main gate at Garden Island to the new main gate at Garden Island. Well I went to the old Rockers and the first thing I noticed is the Chardonnay sippers outside with a glass of Chardonnay, and the tables. The place had completely changed and I went over to old Harry's pie wagon and it's actually on wheels, it's actually enclosed, the girls there are wearing t-shirts with Harry's Café de Wheels.

15:00 I ordered a pie, in the old days you'd just get a pie and that was it, with peas and that in your hand. I got there and I got me pie with me peas and me potatoes with a serviette, a fork and a plate and I thought, Christ it's not like the old days, it's all changed. It sort of like broke me heart when I seen it wasn't the way I'd imagined it to be. But then we'd - you had your other hotels in town, the Brooklyn, the Tattler.

15:30 **What was the Tattler like?**

Oh that was okay. I used to go upstairs and drink there. And you might want to go to the pictures and of course, when you're walking up Kings Cross, you go past pick-a-box corner, that was where the museum was. That was where all the hookers used to hang out. You walk up William St and from pick-a-box corner where the museum was

16:00 they used to call it pick-a-box corner because of all the girls there, and you'd walk up and all on one side would be the hookers asking you, you know, "You looking for a girl for the night?"

**How much was it?**

Five pound for a quickie. I've heard that. I don't know anything about it but I've heard people talk. And then you go back and then, your routine on board was 'wakey, wakey'

- 16:30 was at about quarter to seven in the morning. Breakfast from seven o'clock to eight o'clock. Turn-to from eight o'clock. Smoko [break] at ten o'clock. Lunch from twelve to half past one. Turn-to again. Dinner break, I think we used to have a dinner break, afternoon break I'm not too sure. I think it was around about, no no, we never had a dinner break, we'd work through from half past one
- 17:00 to four o'clock, then we secured, then we went on leave if we wanted to go on leave or we could stay on board. We were in four watches, so one day in four you were in duty. And on weekends they never had a one watch done the whole weekend. One watch done Friday night, another watch done Saturday, another watch done Sunday which was, I think

- 17:30 a bit, a bit rough, because the other ships I served on, say first to starboard or first to port, they'd do the full weekend.

**Why was it rough?**

Well the whole thing was you never got a full weekend off. You'd either have to come back on board and do a say a Saturday and a Sunday or a Friday, so you never had a like a complete weekend off.

**And what did, aside from the girls that**

- 18:00 **were supporting the navy, what did the rest of the girls in Sydney think of all these sailors?**

I don't think they were really worried because the fleet was a fact of like in Sydney. I don't think they really worried about them. There wasn't any animosity with the navy in Sydney.

**I guess, were the navy guys popular with the girls?**

Oh yeah. Yeah we were pretty popular and that.

- 18:30 **How like? Can you tell me about that at all?**

It was just like a norm - it was just like a normal relationship with boy and girl and that, nothing really exceptional about it, you just had a girlfriend and treated the girlfriend the way you wanted to.

**I guess, did the uniform help at all in attracting girls?**

A uniform would help but I know that sometimes... I had a girlfriend once and the old man found out I was in the navy, she had two brothers and I got the word.

- 19:00 You know, regarding his daughter sort of thing, regarding his daughter like a new car, when someone takes my car out, I want it to come back in the same condition it was when it went out. In other words he was just telling me and that. And I had one case once there I went to - I forget what it was, the Jewel Box, I'm not too sure, it was a nightclub up in Kings Cross. Anyway, because I was young and I was

- 19:30 hot to trot and this girl come up to me, you know really dressed up and, you know, and I'm getting on with her and I said, "Boy I've cracked it. I've cracked it, definitely cracked it." And I said, "Listen, why don't we go somewhere." She said, "I really can't." I said, "Why?" She said, "Well to be honest, I've got to go home and do me homework." And I said, "How old are you?" She said, "Really, I'm fourteen years old." So I really, this was the days when you touched nothing under sixteen. You didn't touch nothing under sixteen. I was out of that place as fast as I could and back on board ship and that.

- 20:00 To this day I still reckon she was eighteen.

**What was she doing there?**

I suppose she was looking to get a few drinks illegally and that because you could be 18 to drink in Sydney and that, and she put on her mascara and the dress and went there and that. And when she told me she was fourteen I went for me life. I wasn't going to hang around and that. No but, I don't think actually

- 20:30 the girls in Sydney really took much notice of the navy being there because, you look in Sydney in those days and you'd have the army in their uniforms walking the streets, the air force and the navy and that. So I don't really think it made much difference. If a girl had a boyfriend as a sailor, she had a boyfriend who was a sailor and that was it. The only thing is, like it's sort of like a strained relationship when you had a girlfriend in Sydney and you got a deployment up north for about six months.

- 21:00 Well even with the married families it was sort of like a strain on their marriage and that, because there was no, really no, in those days, there was no back up support for the wives or anything like that.

**How would this affect the way you formed relationships?**

Well it made it hard because you couldn't say well I'm going to meet you such and such a night because you don't now whether you're going to sail. Whether you're going to make sail.

- 21:30 And then you don't know, then you'd be away for about three or four months and you'd come back and she's most likely got another boyfriend. So I think it was a bit hard in some respects.

**Did you ever get heartbroken?**

Singapore I did. I was up there on the Gull and they were, the crew was going, they were going to change over crews,

22:00 but they said if anybody wanted to stay on board, they could put a request in and stay on board and I, I just went 'oh bugger this, I'm going to stay on board.' And I had this girlfriend, I wrote to her and said, "I think I'm going to stay on board." So I was in the Orchard Massage Parlour during (UNCLEAR) and me mate come in with this letter. And it had two words, me or Malaya. I looked around and there was young Suzy walking around scantily dressed.

22:30 I looked at the letter, 'me or Malaya' I said, "That's easy." Rolled it up, flicked it, Malaya. Now I stayed there for another deployment and that and well I can understand, she got a bit ticked off, so I thought well that was fair enough. It wasn't because I was in the local knock shop that I made me decision. I wanted to stay up there because at that time we were being, we were getting

23:00 our pay, full pay, we weren't paying taxes, we weren't paying tax and that. So we were making bloody, well what it seemed like in those days, we were making pretty good money up there. And then I thought, then I thought well bugger, I'm going to stay up here and that. And I was enjoying my time up in the Far East. I've known some blokes you know, on the ships and they get the 'Dear Johns' [letter informing that a relationship is over] and that, and it breaks some of them up.

**How would you talk to them or help them when they got these letters?**

Sometimes you left them alone

23:30 and say well look mate, well there's always another one around and that. That never helped them at the time and that but they overcame, they got over it and that. Well I dare say there was a point you had to get over, over it and that. But it doesn't help when you're about two thousand miles away and you get the Dear John letter, because there was a couple of blokes there whose wives sort of like, they got a letter from a neighbour across the road and that, you know.

24:00 Saying about the wives, people leaving their houses late at night and that. So that never helped a lot of blokes out.

**Was it something that you talked about amongst...?**

Oh yeah, you spoke about it and that. You tried to talk them out of it. We had a couple of blokes in here they got done, take them out for a few beers, take them to the local

24:30 place of instant pleasure and that and they felt better afterwards. That was always a good answer I suppose.

**Would anyone talk to the Chaplain or Padre or...?**

Only one bloke I know, his girlfriend was pregnant at the time, of course some silly bugger said, he said, "Go up and see the flag officer commanding

25:00 Far East fleet." The silly bugger goes up and sees the flag officer commanding Far East fleet. Sees the flag lieutenant and then they send him to the Chaplain and that, the Chaplain consoled him and then he wrote a letter to the skipper, and this and that.

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

26:00 Let's put it this way, he's getting penicillin injections for the next two weeks. He got a load and that. And of course, that didn't make the skipper happy.

**And did his marriage last?**

As far as I know it did. I haven't seen him for 34, 35 years. Last I heard he was working the prison system and changed his name. But everyone tried to talk him out of getting

26:30 married and that. They said, like, you know, "It's not your kid." And he said, "No, no, I've got to get married. I've got to get married." And so he married her.

**Was that still, I guess it was the done thing?**

What to marry the girl? Yeah it was in those days. I know a few blokes who got married, actually one bloke got married it was a toss-up whether he got married first or the baby come first. That close at

27:00 the wedding - at the altar. We were all making bets she wouldn't make it through the service. Really it

was no different in that respect to what it was like in civilian street. I think with the girls and that, you made relationships with them, of course being in the service,

27:30 when the times you were serving overseas like six months, in my case I was up there for fifteen months, so it does put a strain on a friendship.

**And was it commonly accepted or practiced that when you got to port you'd sort of, you know?**

It was up to the individual. I know a few blokes made their marriage vows

28:00 in bloody Sydney, but as far as they were concerned, off went their wedding ring when they got to Singapore. I know one bloke, he was on board our ship, the whole time he was there he never played up. Of course I know another bloke who went ashore with me and that, not that I'd lead him astray, we all went ashore, a few drinks, someone got the idea

28:30 in a taxi, across the Joe Horboroo, found this bloody place, the next minute when he'd come back he was regretting what he'd done and that. He said, "Jeez I shouldn't have done that, what if the wife finds out." I said, "Listen mate, you're up here for six months, how's the wife going to find out unless you bloody say something. And you're not silly enough to say." He said, "No, no." He only done it once but he felt really guilty about doing it.

**Was there much pressure amongst - I guess the culture of the navy to -?**

29:00 To sort of like?

**Play up.**

Play up? Yeah. Well when you look at it, the temptations were there. You were based up there for about six months and the temptation was always there. I know a lot of blokes who were married who did play up. And I know some who didn't.

29:30 It was just up to the individual. Of course me being young and single I didn't give a bugger. So as me skipper said to me one day, "You're a man of low moral fibre, Goodall." I said, "Yes, I'm loving every minute of it too."

**I guess was it part of the navy, sailor culture, the drinking and girls?**

Yes, it was.

**Did you feel pressures of that at all?**

No. No. No I never

30:00 felt the pressure of it besides I couldn't afford half the time to go ashore because I sent about three quarters of my pay home to Mum for her to - she was on the old age pension and I sent the money home to her for her to pay the house off and that. When I had the money I'd blow it. You go ashore and you knew where the places were but there was always that risk of getting a case of VD and

30:30 that was always, you see AIDS [Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome] was never around then so you didn't worry about AIDS, so all you got to worry about was in case you got a sexual transmitted disease.

**And if you did, what was the navy's reaction to that?**

You got two weeks stoppage of leave but that was only to clean you up. Like you'd get pink tablets, white tablets,

31:00 drink plenty of water and penicillin injections and a lot of the ships had one toilet that those persons used. And it took a week for it to clear up and they kept you on for another week just to be on the safe side that it never came back again. I know a bloke on the Gull, he played up, he went to the Rooftops up in Hong Kong,

31:30 and when we were coming back he got it. But unfortunately it was the symptoms they couldn't get rid of too fast. Another thing too was, he was flying home the next week. So what happened was, he flew home, hopped off the plane, said, "Hello Mum, hello Dad, I've got to go to Penguin Naval Hospital now." So they put him in hospital as soon as he got back.

**Did they know what he had?**

I think they would've found out afterwards, after hopping off at the airport saying, "Goodbye Mum,

32:00 goodbye Dad." Then there was another bloke there, I know he got it and - because some of these strains they had up in the Far East, it took a long time to get rid of and this chap had it and they cleared him up two days before he got to - back to Sydney. And they said, "Well you're cleared up but don't have sex for a week."

32:30 His missus was meeting him on the wharf that day. And he's thinking how the bloody hell am I going to get out of it? And he goes down and meets her and she said, "Look I've got bad news for you." He said, "What?" She said, "I've just had me period." And this bloke breathed a bloody sigh of relief. It's one of those things, you knew you - it was always a chance of getting it if you did play around a lot.

- 33:00 See we never carried a doctor on board. We'd just go to the sick berth attendant there. He used to take you into the toilet, check you out, put it on your record and then give you your tablets.
- Did you ever get sick?**
- No not me, I was lucky. I don't know how but I was bloody lucky. I know me old mate got it, old Chalky. He was cheesed off because we tossed up for the girl. He won the toss and got the girl and I never.
- 33:30 You'd talk about it and you'd know, it's supposed to be a private thing, the Doc would know about it and no one else, but being on a ship as soon as you'd seen the old Doc you knew he had it and that. As they said in 'MASH' [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital - TV Program] he'd developed a cold.
- 34:00 **What about safe sex, didn't they - or was it not really a...?**
- You had the old condoms.
- Did people use them?**
- Well the old saying, you don't wear a raincoat when you're having a shower.
- And even if people had gotten sick once, would it make them change their mind at all?**
- I know some blokes
- 34:30 who got it about three times in a bloody row. I know it's frivolous to say it, but for some of them it was just like having the common cold.
- Were there any particular places or particular girls in places where everyone was like 'stay away from them'?**
- In Penang, they had the old Wahsung Hotel which was out of bounds and the new Wahsung Hotel which was in bounds.
- 35:00 I done a patrol with the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] one night and we went around to all these places and the old Wahsung Hotel was out of bounds, but what I found out later was the girls who worked at the old Wahsung Hotel also worked at the new one. So it didn't make any difference.
- Why was it out of bounds?**
- I suppose because there were a few cases of venereal diseases. They must of like, put it out of bounds.
- 35:30 Being a sailor you could, I mean to say, you'd find it anywhere. We had a case, an old chief said, he had a watch and he wanted to take it to a watchmaker and I was going ashore and he said to me, "Now look," he was showing me where the, he's describing where it is and I said, "I still can't get it. Where?" He said, "I'll make it more simple, do you know
- 36:00 where the Magic Fingers Massage Parlour is?" "Yeah." "It's next door to that." I said, "Got it." He said, "Typical, tell a sailor where a bloody bar or brothel is and he'll know where it is." It was something like they gave us lectures, but no one took any notice of the lectures. They had the condoms, they used to be next to the letter box, if you were going
- 36:30 ashore you could take a few condoms. Nobody ever did.
- We'll come back to various bits of leave time in Singapore, just take me through where you went after you left Sydney?**
- On the Warrego? Well we went down to Adelaide. Then we done a survey around
- 37:00 St Vincent's Gulf, I think it is, in South Australia. We did a survey around there and around Kangaroo Island. That was for a duration of about April to about June. And some of the days it was rough, some days it was wet but you still done the survey. Went in to Adelaide a few times for leave. After that survey we
- 37:30 sailed back to Sydney for a minor refit. We were in Sydney from about June to about July, August, we sailed up to Townsville. Done a survey around Palm Island and in the Reef area and charting a new sea channel.
- 38:00 What they did was they had a station ashore I suppose, would have been the equivalent to a satellite link, the ship was linked to that so they could get their bearings and they had a few blokes stay on, stay ashore there. When they built we had to manhandle all the stuff up a bloody mountain and erect it. When we finished we had to dismantle it and
- 38:30 bring it back down to the ship. When we sailed to Brisbane for leave a couple of blokes volunteered to stay on the island, all they done was just, they had no duties it was like a big holiday, all they had to do was just keep an eye on the gear. Which would have been a great holiday. Except I lived in Brisbane and I wanted to come back to Brisbane for leave. Then



- 39:00 we were up there til about August until October and then we sailed back down to Sydney. We had our Admiral's inspection in Sydney and the early November we sailed back up to Moreton Bay and done a survey around where Tangalooma is, done a survey around there.
- 39:30 We had a funny incident there. The officers from the naval reserve come out and they got invited over to our wardroom, the officers, for a party. I had the middle watch, that's from 12 to four. I'd just got on the middle watch, you're never happy when you're doing the middle one because you're not getting any sleep. There was me and Charlie Messie, we were on the quarter deck where we were keeping our watch. Old
- 40:00 Boots Bailey comes down he says, "There's a bloke in the water." And old Charlie says, "Go and have a look." I go and here's this bloke hanging by a rope off the boat boom singing out, "Help. Save me, save me." I'm just an ordinary seaman, I've got no power whatsoever so I thought, this is too big for me. So I walk around and say, "Charlie there's a bloke in the water." It was like a comedy, there goes me, Boots Bailey and Charlie.
- 40:30 "Look you there!" and there's this bloke going, "Help!" Mind you this is out at Tangalooma where the sharks een known, it's infested with sharks. So Charlie said, "Better go and get the officer of the watch." So we go down to the wardroom and knock on the door and here's the old officers half bloody drunk and I says, "Sub-lieutenant Stratton, there's a bloke hanging over the side." What happened was one of the officers took another officer back to the ship and the
- 41:00 stoker hadn't done the rope, and as he undone the rope Brooks put the motor boat in full throttle and shot off and this bloke fell in the water. Brookes didn't even know that he was missing. So we dragged him back on board, the skipper was out there it was a bit panic stations and we had to make a report about what had happened. When Brooks come back, he didn't even know he was missing one of the crew. Oh yes, you had funny times.

## Tape 6

- 00:34 When I was on the Warrego there called for volunteers to go to England, pick up the six mine sweepers and the HMAS - well it was known as the Tide Austral then, pick up the Tide Austral and back to Australia. I volunteered for it. Basically, I went to Watson, and that's just a stand-by draft.
- 01:00 I left Watson in August and flew over to London by Comet. It'd be the longest journey. It wasn't like these days were you'd fly from here to Singapore then Singapore to London, we had about five or six stops between here and London and I think it took about 36 hours. We got to London, then we went down to South Hampton and picked the
- 01:30 old supply up, which has named, it had been commissioned as HMAS Tide Austral.
- Tell us about the flight in the Comet.**
- It felt like you were claustrophobic in the plane because they weren't like the Boeings or anything like that. It took about 36 hours, we left here, Sydney and we got to
- 02:00 Darwin, then we flew from Darwin to Singapore and every time you hit one of these places, you put your clock back about three hours. We went from Darwin to Singapore, Singapore to Calcutta, Calcutta to Bombay, I'm not too sure if it was Bombay first
- 02:30 or Calcutta, Tehran, Istanbul, Dusseldorf, Germany and then London. So you spent about 45 minutes in each of these places, we never went outside of the airport. It was 36 hours and you were just stuck in a plane. The first couple of hours we thought great,
- 03:00 you know it was a great adventure, but after that you just got tired and you were in the same clothes and you felt like you were getting sweaty and that and it was the longest trip I've ever taken. Same as a milk run with all the places you stopped at. The food wasn't too bad. I think we had
- 03:30 chicken, we had breakfast I think it was eggs, chicken I think was for lunch, chicken or fish, and I forget what it was for tea. Drinks, of course you had to buy your own drinks and had to have English, mainly you were paying English currency for the drinks and of course a lot of the blokes didn't have English currency they still had Australian currency.
- 04:00 By the time we reached London, we were bloody glad to get off the plane. You know, we'd never been so bloody tired, so cramped and that and once we got to London, we thought it was really bloody great just to get off it.

### **Take us through what London was like. Did you see much of London?**

No, no we just hopped on the bus and drove straight down to South Hampton.

- 04:30 Picked up the ship there, boarded, got our cabins, had a bloody good meal of steak and had a shower then a lot of us went off and had a look around South Hampton. And then next day on board we started

to get the ship up to, clean the ship up.

**What were your impressions of the ship?**

When I seen her first off,

- 05:00 I thought, we seen this big bloody ship come in, it was out of the water line, and I thought God, 120 sailors to maintain that. It was bloody big. Then it went and tied up. We had a sick berth attendant on board, he'd never been on board a ship before, and he used to get completely lost on board the ship. He'd always look
- 05:30 where a certain fixture was on the wall, to where he was, and he'd use it as a guiding point when he used to go on and off the ship all the time. It was massive. It was - our flagship, the Melbourne, it was heavier than the Melbourne. Longer than the Melbourne and it only had one tenth of the crew of the Melbourne. At one stage there, it was the biggest ship in the Australian navy.
- 06:00 We were in South Hampton for about three days, then we sailed down to Portsmouth, the British navy base there. And that's when we really started to go through the ropes, do the work ups, train on the ship doing refuellings, manoeuvres, but with the captain, Gladstone, when he come he
- 06:30 got the crew together and outlined the program, what we were going to do, and he said, "All I'm going to do is I'm going to give you two lots of five days leave in London." He said, "It won't be coming off your Christmas leave, it's just something I'm going to give you." So we got two lots of five days leave to have a look around, to have a look where we wanted to go, say London or up to Scotland, we had one bloke who went up to Scotland because he had his family living up there.
- 07:00 We had two lots of five days leave which I reckon was pretty fair of the skipper.

**What did you do?**

I went to London.

**And what was that like?**

Great. Great. I found the people pretty friendly there. You'd be there with a map in your hand, scratching your head trying to find your way around. People'd come up and say, "Can I help you?" Then you'd always have the ones who come up to you and say, "Are you from Australia?" "Yeah." "I've got a cousin in Sydney, you must know him."

- 07:30 You'd say, "Oh look mate, there's a million people in Sydney." "Oh yeah but you must know him, he's been there for five years. I'll give you a name." Sometimes you'd hear them and say, "Oh yeah, I know him, I met him once and that." I was in a pub one day, this bloke come up to me and say, "You're from Australia." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Whereabouts in Australia are you from?" I said, "Brisbane." He said, "Do you know Greenslopes?" I said, "Yeah, it's just a suburb away from my place." This bloke's getting really excited, he said, "You must know my
- 08:00 brother then." And he said the name, I said, "Oh sorry mate, I don't." Well he really got upset about it because I didn't know his brother. They had an impression of Australia that everybody knew everybody else and that. And it wouldn't be unusual, you'd be walking and someone would come up to you and ask you did you know them and that. They'd get disappointed when you said you didn't. I liked London.
- 08:30 I had two lots of leave. I never saw all I wanted to see, it was so big and most of the time I never used public transport, I walked most of the way around London. Then we finished our training in Portsmouth and we sailed for Australia.

**What kind of training were you doing?**

Learning how to refuel ships.

- 09:00 Passing provisions, doing transfers of provisions. What the ship was going to be used for mainly was refuelling ships at sea.

**How did you refuel a ship at sea at that stage?**

What you've got, you're sailing like that, a ship comes up to you like that. You've got a bloke, one a sailor with a, well it was an old 383

- 09:30 but it's got a rod, it's got a special cartridge and you've got a rod down the barrel with a rope attached. You fire the rifle, you hold the rifle at a high angle, fire it and the rod shoots out, flies over the other ship. They pick up the rope and they pull the rope in and you attach your, attach another rope to the first rope and then the second rope you attach to the hose, the
- 10:00 oil fuel hoses and they pull it over and you've got the derricks. The derricks go out like that so they're on an angle, you push the hoses out, connect them up to the other ship and you sail side by side with the hoses from your ship attached to the destroyer or frigate whatever it is you're refuelling. And that's the way they do it. Or you do a jack stay transfer where you've got a rope, it goes across, attaches to the ship

10:30 you put a block and tackle on and attached to the block and tackle either side are ropes which you pull in and pull out. And that's the way you transfer stores, mail or a person across from one ship to the other. It may sound dangerous but it's not really dangerous once you get the knack of it.

11:00 **And from Portsmouth, where did you go from here?**

From Portsmouth we went to Gibraltar. Well we were supposed to stay in Gibraltar three days but one of the minesweepers broke down so we had to spend two weeks in Gibraltar. And of course, everybody had no money but there was money owing to us so they paid us the money owing to us and there was a border town from Gibraltar, La Linea. Most of the blokes when into La Linea. But some blokes brought back little,

11:30 nice little presents for the ship, a dose of crabs. So we had this outbreak of crabs on board the ship. Half the crew came down with crabs. They'd be standing beside you they'd start scratching their groin. They had the crabs so what happened they had to shave all their body hairs off their body to get rid of the crabs. So we were there for two weeks.

**What was La Linea like?**

12:00 Great place. Great place, real border town and that. Nice young ladies, good food, good drinks, but you could only stay there until about eleven o'clock because you had to go back to Gibraltar because they closed the border at twelve o'clock. A few of the blokes got trapped on the other side, they spent the night in the town. La Linea is basically a border town. It catered for a lot of the sailors from Gibraltar.

12:30 But you had to go across in civvy clothes and you had to have a passport to get in and out of La Linea.

**And what were the girls like?**

Not too bad from what I remember.

**What do you remember?**

Some little senorita sitting on my knee making me a proposition and that, but unfortunately I refused her. I was too terrified, too many blokes were coming back with

13:00 the crabs.

**And what was your impressions of Gibraltar?**

It's a small - you've got the main street and that's it but you've got this massive rock and when you go up the whole of the rock is completely hollow. It's been hollowed out since the Napoleonic wars, and the Second World War they completely hollowed it out

13:30 and placed gun emplacements overlooking Spain because they thought, in the Second World War they thought there was going to be an invasion by the Germans through Spain to capture Gibraltar. The whole of the rock has been hollowed out and there's been positions placed so they could fire their artillery over onto the Spanish side. So the rock's got a catchment area for water and they've got the

14:00 Barbary apes there. There's a legend once the apes leave, the British will leave. That's the legend. It's a very small place, you know you can walk around it in half an hour. The main road cuts through the air field. You'll be walking along - some of the boys were half drunk and were walking across the road, they were walking along the main road and the next thing they seen this pair of lights coming towards them, it was a plane taking off.

**And what was Spain like**

14:30 **Considering at the time...?**

Well that was during Franco's era. Friendly. You know if you played up, I mean to say, we never went over there to play up, we just went over there to have a few beers, have a look around. But if you played up, there was no - the police, there was no mirandising [reading of rights] in the police like,

15:00 anything you say, you'd get the old baton around your head and that. But we never had any problems in that respect.

**In regards to guys playing up a bit to get crabs. Was there any concerns with Franco being a fascist government?**

No, we never. No I don't think we even worried about it. Most of us didn't give a bugger we just went over there for a few beers and something

15:30 to even look around. That was it, like we never even gave much concern about the political side of it.

**It might have come later but how did the guys and yourself and stuff, with the girls over there, how did that compare to Asia or other parts of the world?**

I think the same. You paid your money and you got what you wanted.

16:00 They loved you while you had the money, once the money was gone they didn't love you any more.

**How would they act when you had the money then?**

They were all over you, they couldn't do enough for you, couldn't drag you into the bedroom fast enough. Mainly over in Spain, most of the bloody knock shops were sort of like in the back streets. So a couple of blokes went off

- 16:30 one night to - one day to the knock shop. I went with them but just stayed in the back room with the old madam having a drink. But they were just bloody, basically what they were, it was just a room and a curtain partition between the two beds, that was it.

**What was it like waiting downstairs?**

She was speaking to me in broken English and I knew about two words in Spain and that so we were having a real great conversation.

- 17:00 She was asking me about Australia. She said, "I like Australians." I said, "Of course you do sweet heart, they spend their money here." Everybody knew the Australians.

**Why didn't you go up?**

I was terrified of getting a dose of the crabs. That put me off it altogether. When they started coming back and started scratching themselves, I said, "No bloody way in the world."

**Did you notice anything**

- 17:30 **in the community there being quite a strongly Catholic community?**

No, didn't notice that. No, most of the places there, like I said, we were only just over there for the drinks. It was really, you could say really it was just mainly a border town really. I didn't see any churches there. They would've been there but I didn't see any.

**And when you were waiting**

- 18:00 **downstairs would you be hassled to come upstairs?**

Oh yeah, she had a nice girl for me. "Nice girls sweetheart." I'd heard those ones before. And then she brought the girl out, she wasn't too bad I mean to say, but I was partly drunk. Once you get more drunk the more beautiful they are. But I wouldn't come into it.

**And where would you where did you go after this?**

After two weeks with Curlew,

- 18:30 we got to Malta and the Curlew broke down again, but then it started to get a bit bloody serious. This is October '62 with the nuclear crisis. We weren't hearing much of it. But the Skipper, Gladstone cleared lower deck and read out, he sent a signal to navy office asking what procedures were to be taken

- 19:00 if war did come. And he read it out and all of a sudden - you suddenly thought a couple of days we'll be at war. He gave a commentary about what the situation was that the Russians weren't - the Russians had the missiles in Cuba. America (UNCLEAR), if they didn't go the Americans would retaliate against the missiles and

- 19:30 it could escalate into a 3rd world war and he said, "Within the next couple of days we'll know what's going on." So here all of a sudden, we're 10,000 miles from home in the middle of the bloody Mediterranean with a bloody war eventuating. We thought, struth, this is going to be bloody great. So we just thought well, fair enough. It looks like

- 20:00 we're going to get paid for what we're supposed to do now. But we were lucky, the crisis eased. Next thing we knew we were sailing out of Malta and going through the Suez Canal to Aden. That was our next port of call. And Aden was an eye opener there. Dirty place, the poverty,

- 20:30 you really started to see poverty in its true form. I remember I seen one bloke, he had no legs, and just had a sort of like, you could say it was a skateboard and that was his mobility. We never went outside, we only stayed in the main area of Aden, we didn't go out, venture out anywhere else. This was before the troubles, before they started, the British started to have troubles with the communists.

- 21:00 We stayed there for about a day, then we left. But it was as hot as hell in that area. As a matter of interest, at that time, the supply had a - we had a swimming pool on board the ship. Before it was manned by civilians and they'd put a concrete swimming pool in the middle of the ship, and we had a swimming pool and most of the blokes were swimming in the pool each day.

- 21:30 When we got back to Australia, that's when the pool got taken off. We went from Aden to Colombo. I never went to shore then. Then we made, got to Singapore, that's where we joined the rest of the minesweepers, the other five minesweepers had gone on ahead of us. And they waited in Singapore for us to turn up. When we turned up, we sailed for

- 22:00 Australia and we got to Australia about the beginning of December. And we made an entrance in

Australia and everybody come on board and had a look at what the Australian Government had bought.

**What were their impressions?**

They like it, six mine sweepers and the oil tanker. Then we, I went on leave. We came back and then

22:30 our first trip outside, first trip away after our Christmas leave, we sailed out to Hobart for the Regatta, that's where all the fleet go. At that time the Queen visited Hobart and the whole of the fleet was in Hobart for the occasion and we had to line the rails when she came by, take off our hats, give three hearty cheers to Her Majesty the Queen.

23:00 Then we went off and got drunk.

**Did you have any loyalty to Britain?**

Not, well put it this way, if I had to choose between Britain and Australia, I always regarded my first loyalty was to Australia. Maybe second, well when we joined up we took the oath that we would protect Her Majesty the Queen and her sovereignty.

23:30 That was the oath of allegiance. I did swear allegiance to the Queen but to my way of thinking, my first allegiance was to Australia, not to a foreign country. But see we were still guided by the Royal Navy. Our discipline was under the Queen's and Admiralty's rules and instructions.

24:00 We were sort of like guided by their rules and regulations and our traditions was all English. We carried battle honours from the British navy, so we were still intricately tied to Britain and as such we were tied to the Queen.

**Were there any of the officers which appeared very British in nature?**

24:30 I think about 95% would have been because a lot of them, see they were trained under British discipline and a lot of them went over to England to do their specialist training so they were - I'd say they were Australians, Australian officers per se, but they maintained the British tradition. It wasn't like the ocker

25:00 tradition or anything like that. They still trained, they were still more British officer than Australian officer.

**Tell us where you went after this.**

Well we done that Hobart trip. Then we sailed in about March to do a CO [Co-Operation] exercise up in the South China seas. That was the nations of Thailand, America, New Zealand, Britain, France, used to

25:30 do an exercise up there each year and we went to Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, done the CO exercise.

**What is the CO exercise?**

CO exercise, well one fleet, you've got the red fleet and the blue fleet and they're sort of like playing war games with each other. They had the aircraft carriers flying their carriers off like

26:00 searching for their, searching for the blue fleet to destroy it. Basically a war game training, getting us up to efficiency.

**How do you play a war game without missiles and actual weapons?**

They got sort of like got umpires on board and they say, "Well that submarine spotted you and torpedoed you, you're out." Sort of like playing hypothetical and that.

26:30 Like when you're a kid and you play cowboys and Indians, you say, "Bang, bang you're dead." You've got to fall dead. "Now you're dead." Basically, in simplistic, that's the way it is. They do have live shoots but not at the other fleet. But they do have live shoots out at sea, just to maintain training.

**How did the**

27:00 **Supply go?**

I think we done all right. We were always filling up, refuelling the ships. You know, day and night, pull up and fill up was our motto. We'd go to about, we went from about eight o'clock in the morning till about midnight working our tail off and then from about five o'clock in the morning.

27:30 So I had the middle watch so all I got in 24 hours, I only got about say one hour sleep. And you didn't get paid overtime. I got my head down for an hour then went on watch at twelve o'clock. Come off at four o'clock, I thought well bugger it, not much point, I'll go and have a quick shower, not much point going to sleep because I'll be getting up again at five o'clock. And then five o'clock we started going

28:00 through it again, refuelling the ships. Like when you were on those exercises you work your butt off, but once you get into harbour, you have a good time. We had a little incident when we got to Manila. We were anchored in Manila Bay. Now up forward on the Supply was one of the hatches, inside the hatch was paint. And one night, we had 60 cans

- 28:30 of paint, 350 gallons of paint pinched from the forward focsle. Don't ask how it was done but 350 gallons of paint was pinched from the forward focsle. Some of these Filipinos come on board, climbed the ship and took, pinched the paint. No-one knows how it was done but. So then they kept a bloke on watch on the focsle, all he had was a hunk of stick,
- 29:00 walking around the focsle. And they said, "What happens if the blokes come on board again?" He says, "Bugger, I'm going to throw the stick and fly down the after deck." Then from Manila we went back to Singapore, then Singapore we sailed home via Western Australia, pulled in at Fremantle and Albany. Then we sailed into Sydney, then we went on leave, and after we went on
- 29:30 leave, before we went on leave we took all the hoses off the ship for a refit. And then when we came back we sailed up to Singapore and this was the start of the confrontation when Indonesia started this confrontation. Well we had to sail up Lombok Strait and by this time,
- 30:00 prior to sailing, the Supply had never been -- had no armament on. Prior to sailing they put some forty-sixties up forward on the Supply and the guns crew were trained and we sailed for Singapore. We had to go through Indonesian territory and at night, the guns crew were closed up. And when we were going up the Lombok Straits we had a bit of an incident where one of the
- 30:30 Indonesian planes flew over us and the old skipper got a bit panicky and told everybody to clear away from the gun, not to make us look like we were hostile. So we sailed up to Singapore and we got a load of fuel to bring back to Australia. We sailed up from Singapore to New Guinea, because what was going on then, the six mine sweepers that came up to Singapore with us were
- 31:00 going over to Bougainville, a place in Bougainville called Kieta, and they were going to mine sweep a channel to make sure it was clear. They were going to use this channel for shipping. And to make sure it was clear of mines from the Second World War. And we were going to act as the mother ship. So we were up in New Guinea for about a month, doing this - the mine sweepers doing the mine sweeping of the channel, and every night they'd come back and refuel from us.
- 31:30 And we were there for about a good month and on our way back we learnt about Kennedy being shot. Then we were in Moresby and then we sailed back to Australia where we had Christmas leave.

**There's a few things I want to ask. What news were you hearing of the confrontation? What would they tell you?**

Well only what they

- 32:00 to be honest, I didn't know much about it, all I know about Indonesia stirring up trouble was in the forming of Malaysia and that. The sabres were rattling, Indonesia was rattling sabres and that was about all I knew about it. And for instance, when the sailors, they started putting night curfews on Singapore and there was a
- 32:30 few demonstrations outside the navy base, but we never struck any of those demonstrations when we were there. I think there was a bit of concern when we were sailing up there, you know, something could go wrong but it was furthestest from our mind really, we never really worried about it that much.

**And you mentioned that you closed down the gunners.**

Well this Indonesian bomber flew over us and I think

- 33:00 Gladstone didn't want to give the impression that we were acting hostile. So he just gave the order for the guns crew to clear away from the gun. There wasn't much we could bloody well do anyway if the Indonesian fleet come out of that, but he just didn't want to give the impression that we were the cause of, that we looked a danger. But see, that Lombok Passage, that was an international seaway. We had all the right in the world to be there sailing up it.

- 33:30 **Were there any fears of facing potential attack?**

I don't think we were worried about it. No-one really gave a thought about it. I suppose 50/50 hindsight, nothing happened but at that period of time it was starting to get a bit tense and there was, I think there was a bit of fear amongst some of the officers. There could have been a confrontation.

- 34:00 Once we got to Singapore we weren't worried, and of course when we sailed from Singapore we sailed via Manus Island, so we stayed real clear of that area when we sailed to New Guinea.

**Did you sail up in convoy with any other ships?**

No, it was just the six mine sweepers and the Supply.

**And at Bougainville, how would they operate?**

- 34:30 They'd just go in and they'd sweep the channel. We were just at anchor and when they come back at night we would sort of like refuel, if they needed refuelling we'd refuel them, give them water, stock their water supply up, give them food if they needed any food, we'd supply them with food. Just the general supply - we were just there for a general supplying the support ship for the mine sweepers. I

don't think they discovered any mines or anything like that.

35:00 But they wanted to make sure the passage, the channel was clear.

**And what were you seeing, what did it all look like?**

Jungle, we had a - it was an old island, it was an old Japanese air force base in the Second World War and they let us go ashore. Oh there was stacks of stuff, a few crashed air craft, a few anti-aircraft guns still there, shell

35:30 shell cartridges. I mean to say, I think we cleaned half that island up. Everyone was taking back souvenirs of shell cartridges. There was some silly bugger there trying to get a live shell out of the anti-aircraft gun. It was just a complete, the aircraft weren't any, they were just the - the framework, that's all that was there.

36:00 There was no, except for those couple of shells and that anti-aircraft gun, I don't think there was any real live ammunition around there.

**Did you get any souvenirs?**

Yeah, I got about a few shell cartridges, a saki bottle. I don't know where they are now, they're lost to posterity now.

**And where did you go after here?**

Well we come back to Australia and I went on leave then I

36:30 came back to the Supply and we went to Jervis Bay to HMAS Creswell and I got drafted off there and I spent about 15 months at Creswell, in the ship's company.

**Were you there for the sinking of the Voyager?**

No that was - I was there after that. That was in February and I went to Creswell on the...

37:00 the Voyager went down in February, I was at Creswell in March.

**What news were you hearing about this?**

First thing I knew was when Nooky Van der Haar, he was sharing the cabin with me, come and said, "The Voyager's been sunk." Well I think it hit the navy pretty hard because when the casualty list come out, see it was only a small navy, 13,000 so everybody knew somebody. Mightn't have known them personally but knew them and you looked at the casualty list and you seen

37:30 all the blokes that you knew who were missing. And you know, a lot of us thought, you know it's going to be a cover up. And sure enough it turned out to be a bloody cover up altogether. They - it was just on TV last night, 'Unfit to Command', and everything they said was what a lot of the sailors knew was going to happen and that. A complete cover up. But it affected the navy a lot, psychologically.

38:00 Losing a ship and then you lost, there was 82 blokes and you knew them and that. And you knew blokes who survived.

**Who did you know?**

I knew a bloke by the name of Johnny Fenwick. I knew him on there and I seen him a week before the Voyager went down. You don't think it's going to happen and that. And then here it is, Voyager sunk.

38:30 **I don't know enough about it, but what had been covered up?**

Well, the skipper was named Stevens, he had the nick-name Drunken Duncan and it turned out he had about a triple brandy before he went on watch, which he wasn't supposed to do. And they covered up his - about him being a drunk and everything like that, and it come out in the second enquiry. They had to find

39:00 a scape-goat. Duncan was, Stevens was dead, so they blamed Robinson who was the skipper of the Melbourne who was not really responsible for the accident because the Voyager had to stay clear of the Melbourne. What happened was she turned to starboard then she turned to port and turned into the Melbourne, and you've got a carrier about nineteen, twenty thousand tons, you just can't

39:30 pull it to stop and it's going to stop. And you can't just pull it stern. It's not going to go to stern straight away because it still had that way ahead on it, and the Voyager sailed in on it and before anything, when they realised it was too late, she went under the bows of the Melbourne.

**Better stop there.**

00:34 **So Creswell. Can you take me through I guess what your main duties there were?**

Mainly, what I was, technically there's a funny story about this. I had a draft to Creswell and they send out the listings of drafts and that and I was down for Creswell.

01:00 So here's the HMAS Supply anchored in Creswell Harbour, Jervis Bay. The coxswain of the Creswell come through, walked down the waterfront one day and says to some of the crew, he says, "Have they caught Harry Goodall yet?" And the bloke said, "Why?" He said, "Well he's supposed to be here on such and such a date." He said, "We've got a desertion order out on him." I'm on board the ship, so immediately he says, "Right, you'd better go now, they've got you down as a deserter."

01:30 Someone mucked up my, someone hadn't seen my draft notice to go to Creswell and they had me down for a deserter. They had a signal out for me, a desertion order out on me. But I was, basically from about March when I went there to about January the following year, '65, I was a quartermaster.

02:00 Basically, what that is, I stood at the main gate, I'd do four hours on four hours off then I'd have say 24 off or 48 off, or whatever. And I used to stay at the main gate for security, like any cars coming in I used to check them in, check them out and that's basically what the quartermaster's job was. And the skipper was happy with me because he said, "He does a good job up there." I liked it.

02:30 No-one ever worried me except stupid old, well the, we had this officer Donnelly, used to call him Jungle Jim. I mean to say, he was mad. And he used to have a little motor bike and used to ride around and check you out that you were doing the right job. And I got a call of nature one day and I rushed into the bush with a bit of toilet paper and I come back and here's old Jungle Jim at the main gate.

03:00 He says, "Where you been boy? Where you been?" I said, "I've been in the bush." "You're on a charge boy. You're on a charge boy. Desertion boy. Absent from your place of duty." I said, "Well sir, you'd better see the commander about that because I asked him about if we get the call of nature, what do we do? He said 'Just go into the bush.'" So old Jungle Jim walked away. It was basically quartermastering there, then I come off that and I went into the

03:30 cafeteria as - in charge of the cafeteria. But, one of the other things we used to do there too, was bush fire, fighting bush fires. There was a few bad bush fires around when I was there and they rushed us out to fight the fires. We were away for about nearly 16 hours one day, fighting fires. One Saturday, I could see the smoke

04:00 up, it was really thick. They called, "Clear the lower deck," and we went out. Well by about seven o'clock at night, nobody had had anything to eat. And there was a little shop up the road. One old bloke said, "Let's go see if I can get something and charge it to the navy." So he goes up there, he says, "Hey, can I get a packet of cigarettes and you charge it to the HMAS Creswell?" They said, "Oh yeah." So this bloke got a packet of cigarettes, so everybody thought well

04:30 if he can get a packet of cigarettes, so we all went in. The navy got a bill for 250 pound from this one little shop. That would've been their - that 250 pound would have equated to a month's work in normal times for them.

**And what did the navy say about this?**

Well they paid it. I think they paid it grudgingly because they couldn't find out who bought what and that because the old - the truck come out with the old meals and that and here's everybody lounging up there puffing on cigarettes, drinking soft drink, eating potato chips

05:00 and old Ned Weaver comes out with our meal and nobody felt like eating anything because we'd filled ourselves up with potato chips. But that's basically what the navy done out at Creswell when there was bushfires, they sent us out to fight the fires.

**What equipment did they give you to fight the fires with?**

A backpack, you know with the water, and you've got the nozzle and you've got a pump, and you kept on pumping and the water come out from the hose. And they had a fire wagon that they took out.

05:30 It was really primitive stuff compared to what they got now.

**Was it frightening fighting fires?**

I got, we were fighting a fire and the officer said, "Look, get over the other side of the road, the fire's just burning out here and the road'll be a fire break. Now if anything jumps over, you can take it." So we were sitting there

06:00 and a big gust of wind got behind this little fire. From a little fire about a foot high, it rose to about ten feet and came rushing towards us like a locomotive and we just heard one order, "Get the bloody hell out of here." And it just leapt the road. That was damn frightening, because you're in there and your looking up top. You've got the fires burning in the tree top and you're watching out for falling embers.

06:30 But it's just part of the job really. We were there and that's what we had to do. So you done it.

**And then where did you go next after Creswell?**



I went down to Cerberus, HMAS Cerberus and done a leading seaman quartermaster guns course.

**What did that course involve?**

07:00 Gunnery. Forty-sixties.

**Can you describe what they're like?**

Forty-sixty, that's an anti-aircraft gun used for defence against low flying aircraft. It fires a single – the forty-sixty fires 120 rounds a minute, you've got a joy-stick that elevates and swings the gun, and you've got a gyro-sight

07:30 which is a little red light in a little circle and you put the little dot on the target and they aim at the target. And then you had your directors, they're the ones that direct the guns on to the main target. Well, that was my job as a leading seaman quartermaster job, to learn how to operate the directors and operate and fly the forty-sixties.

08:00 And that was a course that went from July to November.

**And what was it like being back at Flinders?**

It's like going home and being with me wicked step-mother again. Flinders, it was cold, you had the old chief GIs [Gunery Instructor] running around, like you know,

08:30 playing silly buggers. You had – it was back to the parade ground doing drill again. It was like being back in recruit school but at least you could go to the wets [bar areas] and have a beer. You were a qualified able seaman.

**Were you treated any differently?**

Oh yeah, we were treated differently. We weren't treated as recruits. You got a chief so, you had some old chiefs who were a bit grumpy and that,

09:00 but the majority I found, the majority were all right. I never had any trouble, it just ticked me off being back at Flinders again. I don't think I've ever heard anybody say they really loved the place and it was.

**Did you like the course there? Did you like what you were learning?**

Yeah, I enjoyed it, although I only got a pass mark of 65. And I had to do a seamanship,

09:30 do me seamanship course over again, the seamanship exam.

**When had you done that the first time?**

I'd done that when I was in recruit school but when you do the able seaman's course, the leading seaman's course, you also do your seamanship course, leading seamanship course at the same time. I'd done most of the course on the Supply. Except for one subject, rules of the road, and I had to do that,

10:00 redo that at Flinders, when I was at Flinders doing the gunnery course. The gunnery course was great. At West Head, of course at West Head we had

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

10:18 He took over the West Head Gunnery School and Adrian had incorporated security. Adrian's idea of security was razor wire around

10:30 the perimeter of the gunnery course, with watch towers all around with search lights. So he had to opt, he had to settle for an Alsatian. So he got this Alsatian from the dog pound, well he brought it and he said, "This was a killer dog, it was trained to attack." So the first weekend the dog was there,

11:00 the boys taught it to catch the stick, to roll over and to beg. Well, the old poor fellow had never been, the poor dog had never been there when we fired the guns, and we used to have the gunnery, the actual gunnery training firing the forty-sixties on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Well we were in a classroom learning about the missiles, old Porky Dowling was telling us about firing the missiles.

11:30 Next minute the old forty-sixties and 4.5s and quarter inch are going, and in comes this poor old dog. Comes running into the classroom and just cringing in the corner. Well the poor thing died. So Adrian got another dog. The first thing the dog did was bite Adrian. Just about then it came through that the skipper of the Teal, Murray, had been awarded the Distinguished Service

12:00 Cross, because Murray had a fire fight with some Indonesian infiltrators up in the straits. Was Adrian ticked off about that. You couldn't speak to him for a couple of days, he was as sour as anything, as far as he was concerned that should've been his medal. So Adrian had West Head and he was going to make it a fortified fort and we used to spend, sometimes we had to do duty over at West Head on a weekend. It was a bloody good,

12:30 it was a bloody good weekend. What he done was the sentry duty and then after that you just packed it in for the day. And all we done was play cards, or just go up on - down to the beach and sunbake. That was how we spent our duty over there on the weekend. I graduated and then I left Flinders about

13:00 the 7th or 8th of November and joined the Gull.

**And what was the decision to join? Or were you posted there?**

No, I volunteered.

**Who had asked you, where had you volunteered?**

Technically that was where the fighting was at the moment. I joined the navy and I was bloody definite and I definitely wanted to go be in it. So when I was

13:30 at Creswell I put a request in to volunteer for active service on a mine sweeper stationed in Malaysia. And the skipper, Zackery Smythe, said to me, he said, "Do you want to go?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "All right, I've got a few friends in the navy I'll see what I can do." Next minute I know I've got a draft to the Gull. If I hadn't have put in for it I wouldn't have got it.

**And tell me what the Gull was like?**

14:00 460 ton wooden mine sweeper, forty-sixty forward, forty-sixty aft, crew of 36, three officers, two midshipmen, chief coxswain, a chief ERA [Engine Room Artificer], a PO electrician, a PO ERA and a PO - two PO stoker. That was the crew.

14:30 It was all wood with plastic and aluminium. A bloody good crew.

**Tell me about the crew, why they were such a good crew.**

We had old Marbuck, he was the chef. Old Marbuck, we were in Singapore at night, he come back, walked down the stairs, blind drunk, you'd hear, "Uncle Marbuck's back. Who wants to fight Uncle Marbuck?"

15:00 Then he'd come in the room, he'd come into the cabin, he'd come into our mess, "Harold, Harold, Uncle Marbuck's back. Come on, take Uncle Marbuck's clothes off now. Uncle Marbuck wants -" he'd get me out of bed, I had to strip him down so he could go to bed. We'd take his clothes off and that. Or another time, the ship was rolling, it was really bad, I'm walking by the galley,

15:30 he said, "Hey Harry, come here I want to show you something. You don't look too good." I said, "I'm a bit wheezy mate, but I think I'll get over it." He said, "Look I want to show you something, come here." I said, "What do you want to show me Marbuck?" He said, "Come here." With that he grabbed me trousers and he grabbed me head, he tipped me bodily into the rubbish bin. And here's all the rubbish, all there, dried - tea leaves, broken egg shells. That was it, wrap up, finish. He lifts me up, giving this hearty laugh, killing himself laughing and I'm

16:00 I'm running down to hang me head over the side to throw up.

**Why would he do that?**

He was just a mongrel. That was Marbuck's idea of a joke. But he was a good bloke.

**Did you ever get back at him for that?**

No. No he was too big. You didn't get back at Marbuck. But the crew, everybody pulled in together, there was no - you know, if stores had to come on board, everybody would jump in.

16:30 Now there was a case, we were over in Borneo and Darby Munro was shore patrol with Tony Guy. Anyway he come back on board, there was MacDonald the navigating officer, he was on the upper deck too, and Farmer Little come back and Farmer was a big drunk. Farmer was a bit aggravated.

17:00 And Darby said, "Come on Farmer, settle down mate, everything's okay, you're back on board." And old Farmer said, "Leave me alone." And Darby's still persisting and with that Farmer went 'thump', hit Darby right on the chin, jaw, Darby went down like a bag of spuds, Farmer got run in for striking a patrolman. I shot up to the far end of the quarter deck because I didn't want to get involved. So Farmer was going to get run in.

17:30 And the next morning, 'cause Farmer was really sorry for what happened, Darby said, "Why worry, you were a bit drunk, it didn't worry me." So we all get together down in the mess and compose this bloody story what happened. So Farmer goes up before the skipper, gets run in striking Able Seaman Monro while he was performing his duties shore patrol, "What happened Able Seaman Monro?"

- 18:00 "Well Sir, it was like this, Farmer was on the deck and he moved towards me and he slipped, as he slipped his hand went out but unfortunately I was in the way and he accidentally hit me." And everyone said the same bloody thing, so it got wiped. So old MacDonald, he was really ticked off about it and I walked down to the aft deck, he said, "I didn't call you but you were there, what happened?" I said, "I wouldn't know sir, I didn't see a thing." He said,
- 18:30 "I bloody knew you'd say that!" And slammed the fridge door and walked inside. See that was the kind of crew, we never held any grudges. Well, another time there, we'd been on patrol for 13 days, we'd come into port, I hadn't got any mail, I was really ticked off, I was really up here. And old Darby Munro comes in, and of course we gave him the name the bantam rooster, he had a big clump of red hair and his chest stuck out here, used to strut around like this.
- 19:00 He said, "What's wrong Harry, you not happy?" I said, "Bugger off Darby." "Why you not happy?" Then of course push shove, push, shove, Darby grabs me tears me shirt. I said, "You tore me shirt you bastard, you tore me shirt." So I sling him up against the fridge. I break his watch. He said, "You broke my watch." And I had me knife handy so I flung me knife, I said, "Right Munro get your knife, we'll have it out here and now." And all of a sudden Darby realises this isn't a joke any more. Here's a
- 19:30 bloke going to kill me and he's fair dinkum he's going to kill me. I was standing between the door, Darby and the door. Darby can't get out, I've got me knife, I want to kill Darby. Just then Ken Trail walks in, comes through the door. He said, "What's going on here?" I said, "Stay out of this Ken, I'm going to kill him, I'm going to kill him." He said, "You're not going to kill him." I said, "Yes I am, I'm going to kill him, I'm going to kill him." He said, "Darby, get out." And of course all of a sudden Darby gets real brave again and says stuff to turn me on. And I've got Ken holding on to me back, I say, "Munro, no matter
- 20:00 where you go, you can run but you can't hide from me." I said, "I'm going to kill you, I'm going to kill you." Well by about two - about an hour later I cooled down, realised how stupid I was. And me and Darby, we were in the same watch together and I was steering the ship and Darby comes out, "Harry, would you like a cup of tea, Harry? Or would you like a cup of coffee Harry?" I said, "I'd like a cup of coffee Darby." "How much milk Harry?" I said, "Just a little bit of milk, two sugars Darby." He was going around me, he was feeling me out, seeing how
- 20:30 I was. But that was the kind of - you'd crack a whip with somebody and three hours, two hours later you'd forgotten all about it.

#### **What had made you so angry with Darby to...?**

Oh no, it was just that, to put it frankly I was pissed off. We'd been on patrol for 14 days and we'd come into harbour and there was no letters for me and you just come back and it was just sort of like, and I was just

- 21:00 ticked, you know how you get when you're really ticked off, and he just started to push a bit further, bit further and I sort of like snapped like that. And that was it. And I'll always remember old Darby running down the passageway, and I'm there, "You can run mate but you can't hide, you can't hide." But that was the kind of crew and we had, of course we had a stupid bloody, we had a mid-shipman on board and one of them was,
- 21:30 you could tell him anything. We had a case prior to sailing to Malaya, the last weekend in, we done our exercise up in Broken Bay and everybody thought we'd sail down to Sydney early Saturday morning, store the ship and then everybody could go on leave. But old Big Jim had what we called divisions, that was a parade where the officer goes around and inspects you. So me and Marbuck,
- 22:00 we're down in the galley, that was me second home, I was talking to Marbuck. I said, "Remember on the bloody Zac, the Anzac, they pulled something like that." I said, "Remember the crew mutinied." Well this Harley the mid-shipman came down and he says, "What's this about mutiny?" I said, "Oh we're just talking about a mutiny they had on the Anzac once." I said, "They really jacked up." So anyway I'm out - about an hour away, I'm out on the quarter deck
- 22:30 and if there's a gathering of three or four men in the navy, it can be classed as a mutiny. You know, three or four men muttering together it can be classed, in the old days of the British navy, that could be construed as planning a mutiny. So, oh we were just talking generally, and I seen here's old Harley, walking up trying to listen. And I said, "Well look, I've got the keys to the ammunition lock and the keys to the
- 23:00 guns," I says, "what we can do," I said, "we'll take," I said, "we'll get the guns and the ammunition and we'll take over the ship." I said, "We'll sail it up to the reef." I said, "Those who don't want to go, we'll toss them off, we'll get ourselves a few women, grog and we'll sail to Indonesia." And old Harley, he's listening to this, he's really thinking we're going to take over the ship. So, we had a lot of paperback books and we formed it into a library, well old Kenny Trail heard about this
- 23:30 having a go at Harley. Anyway Harley says, "The library is now open." So Kenny walks in and to put the icing on the cake he had 'The Cane Mutiny'. Now if you know anything about that it's about when the officer took over the Cane from the captain and it was classed as a mutiny. Anyway old Ken walks in and he says he's got a book and Harley said, "What have you got?" And he says, "I've got the book 'The Cane Mutiny'." He says, "Funny thing

24:00 it's about a mutiny," he said, "I think Harold Goodall wants it, he wants some ideas." Well Ken reckoned Harley slammed the door to the library where the books were, rushes straight up to the bridge to the captain and first lieutenant and he says, "Sir, sir, able seaman's planning a mutiny, he's going to take over the ship." And the skipper looks at him and he says, "Bugger off, he's only having a go at you." That was the kind of bloke old Harley was, you could tell him anything and he'd believe it. But we

24:30 I joined the Gull in November and we started our training and we went down the coast to Sydney exercising. Well me and Darbs, as I said, we were in the same watch together and we went for afternoon tea. Next minute everybody comes running in, I said to Darby, I said, "Gee mate this is a good exercise,"

25:00 I said, "let's go down and have a look at it." So we looked at it and here's all the smoke coming out of the engine room, the bloody engine room had blown up.

**How did that happen?**

Something went wrong down there and they had an explosion, all the smoke was pooling out and everybody's running around trying to put it right. It took us, that happened at four o'clock in the afternoon, we didn't get into Sydney until seven o'clock the next morning.

**What did you do for the...?**

When they put the fire out, but we had to be towed back.

25:30 And every time the tow line, the Hawk was trying to tow us back and every time they towed us back the tow line kept on breaking. So they, but you know the crew really responded pretty well to it. That was the kind of crew we had there.

**What did the crew do?**

What they were trained to do, they went down there, extinguished the fire then they checked the engine room out, that it was safe and we prepared to be towed,

26:00 towed into the harbour. Over all it was one of the, actually the two crews that served on the Gull were really good crews. And we done that exercise then in January we sailed for Malaysia, towards the confrontation. We stopped off at Townsville,

26:30 going up there, I couldn't step ashore at that time because I was growing a beard. You had two weeks to grow a beard and in that period of time you couldn't go off.

**Why did you want to grow a beard?**

Save me shaving in the morning. A couple of minutes extra in bed.

**And why weren't you allowed to go to shore with a beard?**

You never had a full growth of beard. It was sort of like unshaven, you were classed as unshaven for that two weeks.

**So at the end of two weeks.**

27:00 The end of two weeks you could go off, so I couldn't go off in Townsville but we got to Madang and I was allowed to go off there. And that's where I got the infamous Malacca Fred.

**Tell me about Malacca Fred.**

Well Fred was a monkey they found on the, the Teal found on one of the infiltrator's boats in Malaysia, so they kept it as a mascot. Well it couldn't come into Australia because of the quarantine regulations. So when we go to

27:30 Manus - ah Madang, we got Fred. Well we had this little mascot, little monkey you know, we thought it was really great.

**How big was Fred?**

About that high. Anyway, sailors being sailors, we found out Fred's foibles. Get Fred drunk, he done dirty things, and the boys used to get him drunk, give him some beer,

28:00 get him drunk and old Fred used to sit in front of everybody masturbating himself, because the more he done it the more beer he got. And then he had another bloody habit, if he wasn't blind drunk, he'd jump on you and try to bite you on the legs. And you had to watch when he was running around the ship, not have any paint pots down because he knocked those all over. We tolerated

28:30 Old Fred.

**Who did Fred belong to exactly?**

He belonged to some Malay native or Indonesian native, who was trying to transport goods from

Indonesia to Malaya. At that time they had the patrols on the stop anybody going from one side to the other. And they got him off one of those boats.

**And who did he belong to on the ship?**

Well he was sort of like,

29:00 the whole, the mascot. The mascot and that. We got to Singapore and somebody threw him over the side but he climbed up the rope. Well we were sailing in company with the Gull – with the Hawk. And Big Jim decided that it'd be nice for the Hawk to have Malacca Fred. But the only way they could get him across was by jack-stay transfer. That's two

29:30 ropes, a rope joining both ships with a block and tackle and you're pulling on either rope with a block and tackle there's a rope hanging down that a sailor hangs on and they put him across. So old Fred would only go with C..... He's the only one Fred would go with.

**Why was that?**

I don't know, he just liked C..... He hated everybody else on board the ship. Anyway, C..... got him,

30:00 holding him with one hand and holding the rope with the other. But unfortunately C....., C..... got his shirt on mind you. So anyway, unfortunately half way over Fred gets frightened and because Fred gets frightened his bowels work. Well C..... come back, he was covered in monkey excreta, he's swearing, rips the shirt off, throws it overboard.

30:30 So I said, "Hey C....., that's a waste isn't it? Aren't you going to clean the shirt?" He said, "Bloody monkey." Well old Fred went on the Hawk but Fred learnt a new trick. See on the bridge you've got a voice pipe that goes down to the wheel house and the officer gives the order through the voice pipe. So Fred used to sit on the voice pipe upstairs and pee in the voice pipe and it used to come straight down to the quartermaster.

31:00 He's learning all these beautiful tricks. So old Fred's in the (UNCLEAR) Flat one day. And the old Stewart Tool sees him. Of course old MacDonald, the navigator is fast asleep on his bunk and he's got his hand, he's fast asleep and he's got his arm hanging over like that. So old Tooley throws Freddy into MacDonald's cabin.

31:30 Mind you, Fred hasn't been ashore for two years, he's never had female company, he's got these sexual urges and here's this naked arm. It was too much for Fred, Fred jumps on this naked arm, wraps the arms and legs around and starts humping away. He's going hammer and tong on the arm, humping away on the arm. And this wakes old MacDonald up. MacDonald looks down, half asleep, monkey humping the arm.

32:00 So old Mac gives a shakes and shakes him off and as Fred's going off, Fred bites him on the finger. Mac walks out of the cabin, ash-white, shaking like hell with a bleeding finger, says to Tooley, "Get that bloody monkey out of the cabin." And Tooley's killing himself laughing. Well old Fred was really starting to tick everybody off by this time. He was biting everybody and being a general nuisance, well we had a bloke, Mal Smith, he owned a,

32:30 he was a photographer and he had all his camera gear down in the Tiller Flat. He walked down there one day and here was Fred, he'd got into his camera gear and all his camera gear was scattered all over. Well that was it

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32:53 Well that night, we were in

33:00 in mess decks and this pipe comes over, "This is the captain speaking, Malacca Fred is missing, we have a monkey murderer on board." And everybody gave this big bloody cheer, they'd finally got rid of Fred. Well that was our first mascot. That crew left and we got a new crew on board. Well Ken Henny was coming back on board one night, he found this little kitten

33:30 about this high. Little thing, it was lost. So he brings it on board and sees the captain and says, "Can we have it as a mascot?" The skipper said, "Right-e-o," he said, "yeah." So they made a little hammock for him and they got the kitty litter, got the kitty litter and trained him for the kitty litter. So being sailors we had to think of a name for him. Was it Spot? Was it Puss? No, being true sailors

34:00 we thought of an original name. We called him Dildo. Dildo the cat, that was it.

**Why?**

Seemed like a good name. And everybody knew our cat Dildo. Every time we came to harbour here'd be old Dildo standing at the gangway, the gangway would go over, the old little Dildo would walk across, go up and down the wharf, have a look around then come back on board. He missed the boat once, but

34:30 when we come back, there he is, waiting at the gangway for us, to come back on board.

**Did he have a better fate than Malacca Fred?**

Yeah. He got, she got pregnant. We gave him a - we couldn't bring him back to Australia so we gave him to one of the local Chinese bar owners. A lot of Brits, they all have their mascots and one of the British ships had this bloody dog. And he was a vicious bugger.

35:00 He'd attack you. Some Chinese women were on board painting the ship and it went for their heels. Anyway this pommy said to us, he said, "I wouldn't have your cat come on board our ship, our dog will kill it." So old Dildo decides it wants to go ashore, so it walks across the gangway onto the pommy mine sweeper. Well this bloody dog chased it, and old Dildo goes running back on board our ship,

35:30 down the gangway and jumps on the ammunition box. Well this stupid dog never had enough sense to stay on its own ship. It crossed the gangway onto our ship. Bad mistake. Dildo sprung and Dildo was straight onto its back, claws out. And here's this dog yelping around the upper deck, we're cheering it and these pommy sailors, they're going to come on board and throw our cat over the side. And we're waiting for them and of course we said, "You come on board and we'll throw your cat - we'll throw your dog over the side and we'll throw you over the side too.

36:00 Get your dog off our ship and keep it away from our ship." That dog never came near our ship again.

**What was the dog called?**

Buggered if I know, but I'll tell you what, she wouldn't face Dildo any more. Old Dildo just leapt on it. We had a magazine up there to do with the flotilla and Jeff Talk wrote an article about it but instead of calling - he called it - he wouldn't call it Dildo in the magazine. He called it Dido, that was

36:30 the name of a British warship. Just to be on the safe side. Yeah, so we had our fair share of mascots.

**Any other mascots or just those two?**

Just those two. Getting back to the ship, we sailed from Madang and we went to Manus and then from Manus, we sailed from Manus, which was about ten

37:00 days to Singapore. We got into Singapore and that's when we started our training. What we were up there for, for trials. And the British POs and a couple of their officers come on board, showed us their boarding parties, warned us about, to be wary of ships, that when we go on board because there was a good chance that they may be mined. And how to,

37:30 what to do when we get these infiltrators on board, how to handle them. So we learnt all that, then about three weeks later we went on our first patrol. And usually, how the patrols worked, you sailed from Singapore, did a 24 hour patrol in Singapore Straits, and then you sailed from there up the Malacca Straits to the point where you were supposed to patrol.

38:00 Well you had point A and point B, and what you'd do, you'd sail up the point from point A to point B turned around and then back. That's all we done. Just up and down. Up and down all day and we done that for - sometimes we might just stop and drift for a while...

**What was the purpose of this exactly?**

We were looking for Indonesian infiltrators who may try to sail from Sumatra over to Indonesia, over to

38:30 Malaysia and that. Some of them were just ordinary traders wanting to make, sell their goods, things like that. Then other times they had their commandos sailing across to raid Malaysia. So that was to prevent anybody getting to Malaysia. Sometimes we'd be sailing up and on the other side, in Indonesian territory, would be an Indonesian destroyer or one of their patrol boats.

39:00 And they'd just sail, they'd just keep - we'd sail up and they'd sail up, and we'd turn, they'd turn. Sometimes they had, some of their patrol boats would just sail into our territory or waters and we'd chase them out. But we were always mainly worried that when we done boarding parties on a boat, there could always be a chance that they may be mined. Because there was an incident where one of the British mine sweepers got,

39:30 had part of its side blown out by a boat that was booby-trapped. It was the Horton, they come along side and one of the midshipmen went on board and they had a body on it, there was a body on board the ship, and he turned it over and as it turned it over, the body exploded. The whole ship was booby-trapped and a hole was put in the side of the Horton. They had to put a ten degree list on it to keep the hull out of the water. And that was what

40:00 we were always worried about and it was - we took it seriously because we had a case where we got a trader who was sneaking, trying to sneak across from Sumatra to Malaysia and he had a stack of rubber on board his boat.

## Tape 8

- 00:35 They took the bloke away and the boat off and they had this stack of rubber. Well the Malay police said, "We don't want it." So Big Jim thought well good we'll have it, sell it in Singapore or Malaya and we'll throw a party. So three blokes had to go over
- 01:00 the side and pass it back on board. Well when they found out that it was going to be used for a party, they really got ticked off. They said, "Look, why should youse get it, we were the ones who went on board, that could've been booby-trapped." And see it was always in the back of our minds that a boat could be booby-trapped. Although we never run across any that were booby-trapped but it was always that present danger that we always thought could happen.
- 01:30 **What did you think of those kind of tactics?**
- Technically we were fighting up there and put it this way, anything really, went. When we'd get the prisoners on board, we never handled them with kid gloves and that. We'd get them on board, slam them up against the wall, strip them, that was the idea, you'd strip them
- 02:00 naked, put their clothes in a bag, put a number on a bag and put a corresponding number on - you'd have sort of like a felt tipped pen, put a corresponding number on them, hand-cuff their backs - hand-cuff their hands behind their backs. And then tie a rope around their legs, one leg would be inside the other, tie it then around their neck then around their arms so they're sort of like in a cradle position, that if they move their,
- 02:30 anyway they move, they could sort of like nearly choke themselves. And - well as the chief said, he said, "Look," he said, "if they get you they'll do the same to you." So we had no compunction but we never done it to any women or anything like that. It was only the men and then we handed them over to the Malay police.
- What did you do with the women?**
- 03:00 They'd be handed over too, but we never searched them, done any body search of them, they would be body searched by female police women and that.
- What would happen to them once they were with the Malays, do you know?**
- Don't know. I heard stories but you know, urban legends and that. Basically that was the idea, and all the patrols was involved was just sailing. You always looked just,
- 03:30 to break the monotony, just to find somebody who was in our waters so you could just sort of like break the monotony and that. But the monotony got broken for us about March, late part of March in '66. We were doing a patrol in the Singapore Straits, two weeks prior to that the Hawk had been fired on in Singapore Straits. Shells had landed around her. Well we were
- 04:00 on, I was on the radar, Jeff was the port lookout. And old Ken Dresson was the officer of the watch. And there was nothing, just the usual shipping on the radar, nothing unusual. And Jeff comes up and says, "Bridge," that's how you used to make the report, you used to go, "Bridge, look out," and the old Skip - the old (UNCLEAR) said,
- 04:30 "Bridge." Jeff comes, "Aircraft bearing, shit, we're being fired on." And he said it looked like red traces coming towards us. So Ken Dresson got the skipper up. Skipper come up, conferred with Jeff, come in to me, asked me if there was anything on the radar? I said, "No." Then it all quietened down. So we went off watch at ten to eight, and we're sitting down at
- 05:00 in me bunk, twenty past eight the alarm went. Big Jim yelled out, "Hands to action stations." And I went rushing up and as I was rushing up I passed one of the crew who was watching on deck, I said, "What's happening?" He said, "There are shells landing all around us." I thought bloody great, this is it. So we close up at our action station and you're sitting there and you're looking at Singapore, here's
- 05:30 Singapore Harbour all lit up, you've got somebody over the other side who we think was on the island, firing shells on us and I thought this is bloody great, we're a sitting bloody target. Then I looked where I was, I'm over the engine room. I thought hell, if a shell lands here I'm dead, because it'll go straight in the engine room, hit the fuel, bang, up we go and that. So we were closed up for about forty minutes.
- 06:00 And then we just closed down, that was it. But it affected me in this respect that I'd go to bed at night and I wouldn't sleep, I'd be waiting for that action alarm to go. And a mate of mine reckoned that, he always reckoned that I never slept, I always slept with one eye open. That he'd go on watch and here I'd be with one eye open looking around the mess decks to see what was happening and that.
- 06:30 We were sort of like a bit concerned about it.

**Did you respond to the shelling?**

No. You had rules of engagement up there. You had to send a signal to fleet headquarters to get the permission to open fire. Well we never, we didn't know where the shelling was coming from so we couldn't open fire.

07:00 The story going around, circulating around was that they weren't firing at us, they were firing at an aircraft in the air. But lot of us don't believe that, I reckon, they reckon they were firing at us.

**And what was the procedure for facing an attack, what would you do?**

Well everyone had their action stations, mine was loader, the aft Bofors. You close up there and you just wait for the orders from the skipper to find out

07:30 what response we give.

**So describe for us what you do when you go to action stations.**

Basically you close up. I take the cover off the magazine shoot on the forty-sixty, get two clips of ammunition, slam them down, tap Darby on the head, say "gun loaded." And we just wait. Darby might just sort of like swing the gun around, left and right, and then we just wait for orders to find out

08:00 what we do next. And if we had to open fire we'd open fire. But we never actually opened fire on, oh we did open fire with some small arms on a couple of boats that tried to get away from us and that, but we never ever opened fire with the main armament.

**How could you tell that the people you were capturing were...?**

You couldn't.

**Who would you capture, how would you know to capture them?**

If they were in our, if they were in

08:30 the area. They weren't supposed to be. If they were coming say from Indonesia to Malaysia, you'd say, "Well what's he doing there? Take him." Or if he's coming from say Malaysia going toward Indonesia, you'd say, "Well we'll check him out." You see there was a lot of fishing boats in the Malacca Straits fishing and that. We'd sometimes flash the search light on them, check

09:00 them out, go along side, get their particulars, if they had a reason for being there, we'd sail on, if not we'd bring them on board, get the Malay police and the Malay police used to come and take them in. See there was, it had none of the glory of Vietnam. It was just basically, we were patrolling there as a safety measure. And over in

09:30 Borneo, we'd do the patrols in the Malacca Straits and we spent 30 days in Borneo doing the same thing, but we were in more of a precarious position because there was this place called Wallace Bay and a place called Nanukan Island and that was Indonesian and they had a battery of guns on the island. Now what we done was,

10:00 we'd anchor in our side of the border and just sit there and watch what was going on. The Hawk was there one night and she got fired on and she sent a signal to whoever was in charge of the area to get permission to open fire, and he opened fire and they slipped the anchor and got away from there. But when we were there we were pretty lucky, we had a quiet time.

10:30 But what happened was, they slipped the anchor and when we sailed in the bay, they anchored and they broke the anchor cable. The anchor cable was attached to the ship by a rope and if we had to get away, we'd just cut the rope, the anchor'd fall down. It had a dam buoy tied to it so that we could come back later on and retrieve the anchor.

11:00 And the radar screen had a pencil mark on it with lines and that, how to get out of the bay and that. So we were all prepared to make a quick getaway. But we never had any trouble in Wallace Bay, we had more trouble over in Malaya than in Wallace Bay. But, how they worked it was,

11:30 when you had to go to search these ships, you had phase one, phase two and phase three. Phase one was the watch on deck would sort of like go and investigate a ship that was a - a boat that was in the area. And phase two was that if the situation become more dangerous, you went to phase two. Well what that was, the crew would close up, it wouldn't close up at action stations, we'd close up at a vicinity close to

12:00 action stations. And we, the aft-deck gun crew, they closed up in the wardroom flat, because you'd just open the door, you went outside to the deck and you'd run to your gun. Now phase three was you'd close up at your action station. So those were the three phases they used. And we caught a few of them sneaking

12:30 across, and the armament we had on board, we had a two twin Vickers K machine guns. They were right up forward in the ship. They were sort of like drum fed. Like you seen those old World War 1 movies, the machine guns they had on the British planes, they were the same as those. Then we had the forty-sixty forward, then we had two Bren guns either side of the bridge, then down aft we had the other forty-sixty and two Bren guns either side



- 13:00 of the waste deck and the quarter deck and that. That was our armaments. But our best speed, see we were no, we never had, if they really got serious, Indonesians really got serious and sent patrol boats against us, we really had Buckley's chance and that because a lot of the boats were sort of like missiles and they had a speed of about 36 knots. We had a speed of 15 knots with the tide behind us. So you know,
- 13:30 we always reckoned, we always knew that if we ever come up against them we wouldn't have much of a chance, but we didn't really worry about it. The youngest bloke on board was 17 and the average age was 25 and most of us were all bloody gung ho anyway. I know the officers were because we gave the skipper the name, we called him Big Jim or the other name we called him was Two Gun. Two Gun Dixon. That was
- 14:00 his nickname and he was sort of like, he was a hero in his own mind and that, like somebody said to me one day, "What do you think of him?" I said, "I would follow that man anywhere, just to see where he was going." And we gave, we used to call the old first lieutenant, Gentle Jesus. So they all had their little nicknames.

**How did they develop nicknames like that?**

- 14:30 The skipper was virtually god on board the ship. He had power of command so he was known as God, and of course Lieutenant Desson was the second in command, so he was under...

**What was your nickname on board?**

Who pardon? Mine? I was just Harry. We did have a few nicknames for a few blokes, Dipso Dan was one of them. He was sort of like addicted to drink, he come back on board one night drunk and he got run in for being drunk while coming on board and he got a lecture from the skipper and also got a book 'Day of Wine and Roses' to read, so he could see what drink could do to you.

- 15:30 And we had old Farmer Little, don't know how he got the farmer name. And we had a bloke by the name of Craven, we called him Raven Craven. So a few of the blokes had nicknames. That's the trouble, when you go to find them, when you try to find them for - when you want to put a claim in for Vet Affairs, you know them by their nickname, you don't know what their first name is. Half the time you never used their first name. One bloke,

- 16:00 we had a bloke by the name Wilson, he was Tug. A bloke Rosenbloom, we used to call him the Little Thrush because he was always whistling. We had a bloke by the name Fraser, we used to call him Surfie. So you know, they all had their nicknames, you knew them all.

**And what affect did having a nickname do for you?**

Nothing, they just took the nickname and never worried about it.

- 16:30 They were Surfie, Sodamn, the Bantam Rooster, that's what they were called and that's what they always stuck with.

**With the confrontation, were you aware of the political context that was going on?**

I had a rough idea of it. It was mainly Sukarno he wanted to pan Indonesia and that and he seen Malaysia as a stumbling block to pan Indonesia and then he wanted to destroy Malaysia.

- 17:00 That was basically what it was about.

**And so tell us what went on after where you left us after Wallace Bay.**

Well, we went to Wallace Bay and done our trip there and then we, the last time we'd done a tour over there and we went to Hong Kong for a refit. Well I'll tell you what, that's the greatest bloody time, that's the greatest holiday I'd ever

- 17:30 had. What happened was. We went over to the mainland at Kowloon, to Wongpu Docks and we had to live ashore. So because we lived ashore we had to get food vouchers, so you got a breakfast voucher, a lunch voucher and a supper voucher. Well one watch in three had to stay on board ship for the night. So what
- 18:00 happened was, the watch that was going off, got the gift, the food vouchers of the watch that was staying on board because they were being fed on board. So you got two breakfast vouchers, two lunch vouchers and two tea vouchers. Well the other watch, which was an off duty watch, because they were having lunch at Wongpu, the watch that was going off
- 18:30 also got their lunch voucher, so they had three lunch vouchers, two tea vouchers and two dinner vouchers, which you could use at any time. So you could go, so you go ashore - so you come off watch, go into a China Fleet Club, have a shower and go down and get your breakfast. You might use your two lunch - two breakfast vouchers and your lunch voucher, have a big meal for breakfast, use your one lunch voucher for tea and use your
- 19:00 remainder for supper. Well, the eating arrangements on board for us, because there's no electricity on board, we had no power, everything was off, the first day there the skipper said, "Right you're having

your meals in the Wongpu dry dock." And there's this old tin shack down the far end

- 19:30 and everybody looks at this tin shack and says, "Oh yeah, that's where we're going to have lunch." So half past eleven the skipper said, "Right, go and clean up." Put a clean - have a wash, make yourself tidy and get in a clean work dress. The crew was all saying, "What the bloody hell's this for? We're only going to that bloody tin shed." So we all walk off, instead of going to the tin shed we go into the main building. We go up the flight of stairs and we walk into this room,
- 20:00 and here's this table laid out, starched table cloth, cups - china cups, cutlery all lined up the way you eat, serviettes rolled up with the serviette the band around them, iced water on the table and we thought wow, this is really living. Everyone goes in, sitting down there, you don't know what's happening.
- 20:30 Next minute these Chinese waiters come out, serving you soup and it's not like the mess deck where you're eating like a slob, everyone's trying to be dainty trying to eat. I tell you what, that was really bloody great, the way we lived there for about two weeks. We were living like bloody kings. The meals there were bloody good, you had your coffee and - the watch that was duty that night had their
- 21:00 meals there. But what we used to do when we were on watch, on board, you had no electricity on board so you couldn't, you had no air conditioning so you couldn't sleep on - down below. So we rigged an awning on the focsle and we all brought our blankets and bedding up and slept on the upper deck. And that was really great, even when it rained, I mean we sloped the awnings and moved further into
- 21:30 the deck and used to sleep on the upper deck. And there was this little Chinese bloke used to come around, used to come around every night and we used to get him, ask for him to go and buy our soft drinks and we give him about \$100 something like that, and the drinks would cost about \$80 and we'd say, "Here change, keep the change John, don't worry about the change, you keep it and that."
- 22:00 This was the first time, the second time he come around again, he reckoned it was real great, he used to get \$20 every night from us, going around and getting the soft drinks for us. So that was like our time over at Wongpu and that. The rest of us all lived ashore at the China Fleet Club. We'd have breakfast at China Fleet Club then walk over to the navy base, and a boat would take us across to Wongpu docks for the day then we'd get a boat back to
- 22:30 Hong Kong that night, then if you had money you'd go ashore to the bars and that, have a few drinks and meet the local talent.

#### **What was the local talent like there?**

Great. Great. She loved me, she told me she did. Until she said to me one day she said, "You come ashore tonight?" I said, "No I can't come ashore." She said, "I don't love you any more." I said, "That's okay." But what happened was, when we went up to Malaysia,

- 23:00 we were paying tax and the government decreed that because we were in a war zone, we didn't have to pay tax. So this was in July, they announced they were going to pay us back all our back tax, so we got this big lump payment of tax. Did I spend it. Did I have a big night in Wongpu that night. I was the payday baron that night.

#### **What did you spend the money on?**

Booze and women.

- 23:30 And enjoyed every moment of it too.

#### **How many women?**

Just the one. Cost me about \$150 to buy her at the bar, \$20 for the hotel, and about \$10 for the taxi. But first of all she wanted to go to the pictures. I mean to say, three, four weeks I've been on patrol and that and she wanted to go to the pictures. I couldn't talk her out of it. I said, "We'll go to the pictures tomorrow night."

- 24:00 "No, we go pictures now." That's the big thing with them up there, they love going to the pictures. But this one, she said, "You go in first, I go in later on." I thought, she's going to do me for my bloody money. Next minute she comes in with a pair of sunglasses, she didn't want to - she said, "I don't want my brother to see me here." I said, "What, doesn't your brother know you work in a bar?" She said, "Yes, but I don't want him to see me here." I couldn't figure that logic out.

#### **How did you meet her?**

She just come down and sat down beside me. I bought her a drink. You know, this instant conversation and that.

- 24:30 "You buy me a drink Aussie?" "Yeah, right-e-o." But a funny thing was, you buy them a drink and it costs you about an Australian dollar, and all it was was just bloody grapefruit. And they - because up in Hong Kong they have what they call the happy hour from five o'clock to seven o'clock at night, drinks were half price and we used to go in there and - well a lot of us used to go in there and just drink ourselves

25:00 silly until seven o'clock and then say, "Right-e-o, bring the girls over now." And then what happened later on, they wouldn't let the Australian sailors be in the happy hours, only for the Americans. But Hong Kong was an experience and that, that's where I got me tattoo.

**What did you get?**

An eagle between crossed rifles, and on each rifle is a flag, a white ensign and the Australian flag and I had 'Australia' written underneath. Well actually I was drunk when I got it.

25:30 I walked in the China Fleet Club and my mate Shorty was with me and we run into, made the mistake of running into Marbuck. And Marbuck talks us into the idea of getting a tattoo. We come back on board and we've got this bit of paper over the tattoo and old Lofty the coxswain said, "Let me guess, you run into Marbuck ashore didn't you?" I said, "Why?" He said, "You've bloody well got a tattoo." He said, "Everybody he meets gets a tattoo." Next day he comes up to Marbuck and says, "I see you got Harry to get a tattoo." He said, "Yeah, I talked him into getting a tattoo."

26:00 So I got this bloody big tattoo. You can't see it, it's not too bad.

**What's some of the most interesting tattoos you ever saw on board?**

Well, not on board but in the tattoo parlour, there was a fox hunt, it starts off, starts off around the groin here, the riders on their horses, it goes all the way up to the shoulder,

26:30 and then down the back are the dogs, and then in the buttock area there's a bunny tail. That's the biggest one I've seen, it takes hours to get it done.

**Did you see this on someone?**

Yeah. Seen it in Pinky's tattoo parlour, he was getting it finished.

**Who was he?**

He was a Pom - a British serviceman.

27:00 **Did you ask him about it?**

No, I was too interested in seeing the old sick berth attendant, old Doc Wilson, Tug Wilson spread over a seat there, bare buttocks sticking up in the air, getting a pair of lips tattooed on his buttocks. That was the old Doc getting those tattooed on his buttocks.

**Why?**

Just something to get done. I've seen him with propellers tattooed on him, and underneath each propeller was port, starboard.

27:30 **How did it compare to the kind of a life in Singapore on leave?**

Well mainly I was... you had, Aggy Westons, that was a place where the sailors could go but they didn't sell any alcohol, it was a temperance club. You had the Armada Club up the top, that was a wet

28:00 canteen and then you go outside to Sembawang and you had your bars there, the Blue Peter Bar, the Melbourne Bar and you had all coffee stalls outside. See the big thing was, you buy yourself a egg roll and what they done was, it was a bread roll, a long bread roll with scrambled egg

28:30 cut in the bread roll then they'd wrap it up in a banana leaf. Or you'd get a fried mali or nasi goreng and you'd get that and just put it in a banana leaf and wrap it up or put it in a paper bag. So when you got it you just ate it with your fingers out of the banana leaf.

**The Melbourne Bar, was that set up for Australians?**

Yeah. They set up for all the Brits and Aussies, all drank in the same

29:00 bar.

**And would you go out shopping?**

Yeah, they had a stack of shops outside. You'd sort of like barter with them. You'd throw the first price in and they'd say no, you'd go down, they'd come up, you'd go down, they'd come up till you met, till you got to a price you agreed on and then you'd buy the...

29:30 But they never, the Chinese and that, they never lost on it. They'd still make a profit, because I bought a 84 piece, Noritake dinner service when I was over there. Now I got it, I ordered it and I didn't barter. I bartered for it, I forget how much it cost now, and I brought it back to Australia here for Mum. And the toys were bloody good, toys you couldn't buy here in Australia. Because I had me

30:00 young nephew. I used to send him home, I used to send him, once a month I'd send him a new toy home and of course, his sisters were getting really ticked off with it. He was getting all the toys and they weren't getting anything, so I got a letter from Mum she was saying, the girls are getting really upset

because you're giving Paul everything, so I sent them down a stack of stuff. But at that time Singapore was very cheap

30:30 to buy stuff. One Australian dollar got three Singapore dollars.

**Did you buy any clothes?**

Yeah, I bought myself two suits, Italian silk with marine blue lining. They lasted me, I had them for about... I bought them in '66 and I still had them till about '75.

31:00 **Why did you buy the suits?**

Cheap. I needed a suit for when I was home on leave. And I bought the two suits and when I was up in Singapore I got a shirt tailor made and a pair of trousers tailor made.

**After all this, where did you go to next?**

After we done the brief bit of Singapore, Hong Kong,

31:30 we come back to Singapore and they changed the crew over. A new crew come on board and then we went on patrol again, and while we was out on patrol the confrontation ended with the Treaty of Bangkok. And we were up the Straits the night it was, the confrontation ended. We got a signal from the flag officer commanding Far East Fleet to return to base and when we were sailing up there,

32:00 there wasn't a ship in the Straits. When we turned back the place was choc-a-block full of fishing boats, it all lit up. That was the first time they'd carried lights in the Malacca Strait since '64. And we sailed back and returned to Singapore and then went on to peace time duties. But what happened was,

32:30 two of our ships the Ibis - the Curlew and the Snipe, they returned to Australia, well we, us four ships formed the 16th Australian Mine Sweeper Squadron. Well there was only two of us left and we never really made up a squadron so we went over to the RN [Royal Navy] Squadron, the Blackfoot Squadron. Well we weren't too happy about that and to make matters worse, they

33:00 wanted us, the Blackfoot Squadron had, their symbol was a triangle in a background, I think a red background with a black foot on it. And it come through that we - on ours, our symbol was a green circle with a gold kangaroo in, and the story was

33:30 that we had to paint that out and put a black foot. Well we weren't going to, there was no way in the world we were going to do that, we still had national pride. So they settled for, a little plaque came over with the Blackfoot Squadron on, and we pinned it up on board the ship. But what some, what one of the blokes done, he superimposed the kangaroo over the black foot, stating that this was an Australian ship in a British squadron area.

**Were there any other rivalries which developed?**

34:00 There was a mine sweeper called the Huntington and on top of the bridge, they had this hunting horn, and everybody used to pinch the bloody thing from them. And they'd be coming back, going around, they come on our ship one day, one of our blokes pinched their hunting horn and they come back and they wanted their hunting horn back. We gave it back to them and that. But it wasn't so much rivalry. We used to get

34:30 a British seaman come on board our ship to do training with us and a few of them were real, they weren't happy on board, and we got this young bloke called Higgin, he come on board. And he loved it, he loved being in the Australian navy. If he had his way he would've transferred out the British navy and come in the Australian navy. And to show how much he loved Australia, he went ashore, he got this bloody kangaroo tattooed

35:00 on his arm. It looked more like a dead water rat than a kangaroo. And he went back to the British navy and the first thing they said to him, "Don't think you're in the Australian navy mate, you're back in the British navy." He said, "No, but I'd rather be in the Australian navy." So we got, we used to carry a lot of, while we were doing the patrols, we used to carry an interpreter on board, Malaysian interpreter, and they done the interpreting for us with their ships and that.

35:30 And they enjoyed it. Of course we had to be careful, a couple of them were Moslems. So we had to be careful what, when we served the food, that there was no pork in the food. So we were pretty careful. One of them one day, he had rissoles, he said, "Is there any pork in this?" We said, "No mate, it's just meat, no pork." We said, "we know that you're not allowed to eat pork."

36:00 Rivalry, everyone considered their ship was the best ship and things like that. That was the main rivalry. And you'd come back after you do a patrol and you'd want to know how many interceptions you made and things like that.

**Were there any competitive exercises?**

Yeah, they had a big mine sweeping exercise up in the Straits

36:30 in about January of '67. What it was, you had to do 18 hours straight, you had to do 18 hours straight,

no no 36 hours straight before you could be relieved or have a rest. The trouble was we used to start having engine trouble or mechanical failure and that and we had to start our 36 hours all over again. And I tell you what, by the time we got to Singapore, we sailed into Singapore at

- 37:00 eight o'clock in the morning and everybody just went to the bunk, turned the lights off and collapsed. We had very little sleep, but the other rivalry you talk about, when we were in Singapore Harold Holt come to visit the ship, the squadron. So they get us out, out in the open, Holt's coming at
- 37:30 say three o'clock. Two o'clock in the afternoon you had the tropical downpour, they're trying to get us out, two o'clock, so here we are standing out in the rain, rain pouring down, and three o'clock this little, little bloke comes trotting along, he's got some flunky holding an umbrella, and this is Harold Holt. Walks straight past the crew, doesn't talk to anybody, walks straight past, and to make it worse for our skipper, he goes on board the Hawk,
- 38:00 to inspect the Hawk. Well old Big Jim was really ticked off. He wanted Harold Holt to come on board his ship. And while Holt was on there, we were about to sail to go on patrol, well usually before we, when we sailed, I used to take the, bring guns up and put them up on the bridge after we sailed past Changi Point, which was a couple of miles from the navy base. Anyway I'm down in the
- 38:30 mess deck, I hear this pipe, "Able Seaman Goodall bridge, immediately." I walks up there and here's Big Jim, he says, "Why aren't the guns up now?" I said, "We don't put the guns up till we get up to Changi point." He said, "I want the guns up now, I want to show we are a war ship." Because bloody Holt was on the other side, he wanted to give an impression to bloody Holt. Me mate come down, I'm talking to Marbuck, I'm telling Marbuck, he said, "You've got a good chance there, you want to be famous don't you?"
- 39:00 I said, "Yeah." He said, "Why don't you go and shoot at Harold Holt, you'll be famous then." I said, "Yeah, that'd be a good idea." I said, "We'll get Big Jim in, get Big Jim's name in the books and that." So I had to put the bloody guns up, make a big impression for old Harold Holt. But poor old Jim, he was really upset because Holt never come on board his ship, he reckoned we were the better ship.

#### **What did you think of Harold Holt?**

Didn't worry me, we were going out on patrol. It just ticked me off going out there, hanging around for a bloody hour in

- 39:30 the tropical downpour. That's the only thing that ticked me off, and then like, he could've said, spoken to somebody and asked them a question. Just walked straight down the line, didn't say a word.

## **Tape 9**

#### **00:35 How would you celebrate Anzac Day on the ship?**

The Anzac Day we had when I was on the Supply, we had a service on board, we were in Pacific Bay, that was a big American base. We had a service on board, spoke about Anzac

- 01:00 Day, lowered the flag, we didn't have any bugles or anything like that, done a short service and then that was it. In Singapore in '65, '66 they had it on board the Teal I think was, the Anzac Day service, but I don't think anybody went to it. Because it was five o'clock in the morning and everybody was still in bed. We weren't, it wasn't that

- 01:30 we were disrespectful, it was just that nobody really thought about it. It was really, I don't think we had a holiday that day, it was just another day.

#### **It was just curiosity.**

These days now, I think you find, I know blokes who were in the navy with me, with a feeling for Anzac Day. When they were in, they didn't go for these traditions, you know, heap of garbage.

- 02:00 They're the biggest ones of all now, on Anzac Day.

#### **Do you march on Anzac Day?**

Yeah, I march all the time.

#### **And what does it mean to you?**

Well it means me uncles, 1st World War they served in the - one was in the 49th Battery, 13th Field Regiment, 5th Australian Division; the other was in the 25th Machine Gun Company, 5th Machine Gun Battalion, 5th Australian Division, France, Belgium. Me cousin Leslie was in the commandos, Kokoda,

- 02:30 Buna, it means something to me.

#### **What does it mean from your personal service?**

It's the same like, I done me service, I was proud of it. I've never been ashamed to say I was a serviceman and I'm always proud of Anzac Day. It's that one day of the year for me; you really feel it's a serviceman's day. It always will be for me.

03:00 **I guess a bit later, you sort of finished up in '69, but I guess in the couple of years leading up to that, the cold war was under way, did you have anything to do with that aside from the confrontation? Anything to do with the Russians or the Chinese?**

Well in '68, there was a Russian prawner, the

03:30 Van Gogh, sailed into the Gulf of Carpentaria. Now Australian territory waters ends 12 miles from the high water mark. 12 miles from the high water mark, that's Australian territory waters. Well he was in international waters, but this Craig Mostein kicked up a big stink because this Russian had a really big thing, they had,

04:00 they were sucking the sea and sucking in the prawns, and this Mostein had a prawning business in the Gulf and it was affecting his business. So they, we sailed down to the Gulf, we sailed at midnight and we got there and they had a RAAF Neptune bomber flying over it and we were sailing, watching it and we stayed there the whole time it was there.

04:30 For the full six weeks, there was nothing we could do and the funny part about it was, the Russian, we had the Minister, a bloke from the Fisheries Department went on board the Russian ship just to check it out, and the Russian skipper said, "Have they got a doctor on board?" He said, "No." He said, "Well if any of the crew get crook, bring them over here." "Do you want any food?" This Russian, he was supplying us with bloody food and everything. But there's always that thing,

05:00 you didn't know whether they're a spy ship or anything like that. And we just sailed up, we just kept an eye on it the whole time it was in the Gulf and when it came into Darwin, we escorted it into Darwin.

**Do you know what their reaction was, having this escort?**

His quote was, the Russian skipper was quoted, "He felt very safe with an Australian navy escort beside him."

**Did you think there was any sarcasm behind that?**

We weren't any threat to anybody because never had a bloody gun on board.

05:30 **Where were the guns?**

We had taken the guns off for maintenance and the forty-sixty had the barrel taken off. We had this forty-sixty with no barrel on it, they didn't know that, it was all covered up. We had no firearms on board the ship. So if we had to go on board, I think we had one 38, if we had to board it, we had one 38, then we had to go aboard with knives and forks.

**How did you**

06:00 **feel about being the escort for a Russian trawler.**

To be honest, by that time I was really pissed off with the whole lot. The Attack wasn't a happy ship. It wasn't, if I used the Gull as a yardstick, everybody mucked in on the Gull, on the Attack there was sort of like a clash of personalities. The coxswain didn't get on with the skipper. The chief ERA didn't get on with the coxswain.

06:30 The two EMs [Electrician's Mate] on board thought they were above everybody else. When I first joined the ship I was told the skipper didn't want me.

**Why?**

He wanted another bloke for his buffer and that.

**What's his buffer?**

That's the bloke, that's the other able, other leading seaman in charge of lower deck. He wanted somebody else and he couldn't get him and that, so he got me. And so, you know, I was just ticked off and I was suffering,

07:00 started to develop stuff, me chronic anxiety was starting to get a bit worse.

**What was that a result of?**

I reckon it was caused through, on the Gull like, being tensed up all the time. Worrying, waiting for something to happen. It developed into a... because you might have noticed I've a bit of a nervous twitch. I got the nervous twitch and this chronic anxiety. And it was getting worse while I was on board the Attack.

**What was making it worse?**

07:30 The pressure, being the bloke in between everybody else and the skipper not, generally just the crew

and the attitudes of everybody. So I just thought well bugger this, I've got a year to go. No, I had about say eleven months to go, I said I'll just mark time. So I just threw the towel in.

**Did you have any thoughts about or was**

08:00 **there an option for you to continue on with the navy?**

I could have re-enlisted but I just, I was just cheesed off with the whole lot. Maybe if I'd been on another ship I might've decided to stay on, but, I was quite happy to get out. I had a job - I never had a job or anything like that because I didn't know what was going to happen to me after I got out of the navy because it's a big change. You're nine

08:30 years in the service, you've got sort of like, you've got that security then all of a sudden you're going out in the big cold world. It's an entirely different culture altogether. You're going into a different culture. And I didn't know whether I'd be able to, how well I'd face this new culture.

**And how did it work?**

Pretty good. I come home here, well actually when I was in,

09:00 down in Cerberus where I was paid off, I went to the Commonwealth Employment Office to get a job, apply for a job. They said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to be a postman." They said, "Right-e-o." Then I come home here and Mum said, "You've got a job as a postman, you've got to go to Coorparoo and ring them up and that." I rang them up, went up there, they said, "Right, you start - how do you feel starting work next Wednesday?" I said, "Yeah." Then I went to the post office. First three months it was a bit hard,

09:30 adjusting to a new culture and everything like that. You know, when I was in the navy, if you were sick, you just carried on. And here I was going into work and blokes were ringing up, they've got a bit of a headache, they can't come in, and I just I couldn't figure out, I thought what's wrong with these blokes? And as soon as I walked in the post office this bloke said, "Are you a member of the union?" I said, "No." He said, "Well if you want to work, you've got to be a member of the union." I thought well thanks a lot mate,

10:00 I said, "You don't get much choice do I?" He said, "No." And I had to join the union. I just, because, I had never forgiven the Australian Workers Postal Union for when they, when we were up in Malaysia, they stopped all mail to all servicemen in the Far East for about two weeks.

**Why was that?**

They were protesting against the government's policy over the Vietnam war. So instead of taking it out on the government, they took it out on the servicemen, and we never got mail for two weeks.

**And yet**

10:30 **you wanted to work as a postman.**

Yeah well, see the thing was, I wanted to get a government job. Because my time would carry on, my nine years would carry on. So I thought well I'll get a government job and the post office come up so I thought I'll take the post office. And I went into the post office, the first three months were hard trying to adjust, then after that I really grew to like it.

11:00 And the last eight years I was in the post office, it was a lolly. I had the best job in the post office. I'd start work, I mean the hours I started were lousy, two o'clock in the morning I'd start work, but I was me own boss. I'd set the mail up and then go up to the shopping centre and deliver the mail and then go home. Nobody ever worried about me. The boss didn't worry about me because he knew I was doing me job.

11:30 When I rung up sick, he knew I was crook. He never worried about me. But what I did find was that with the navy, you make a friend in civvy street [civilian life], you've got a civvy friend - you go away, it's gone you know. But with the navy I find you make a mate in civvy street, you've got one for life because I had this chronic anxiety, I was trying

12:00 to get in contact with blokes on the Gull, who served in the Gull and that. I put an ad in all the papers, RSL [Returned and Services League] papers, the New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, everywhere. Well one night, about eight o'clock at night, I was sitting home here, I had nothing to do, bit bored and the phone rings. And I picked it up, I heard the beep beep beep, I said, "Hello." He said, "Is that Harry Goodall?" I said, "Yeah."

12:30 Real stern voice, he said, "Is that Harry Goodall?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You don't remember me you bastard, do you?" And I thought, no. He said, "Remember you bastard, you put Spanish Fly in me coffee one night." I thought Shorty Bloody Edwards. I said, "How you going mate?" Thirty-four about 34 years, 33 years just passed like that. We never had that distance of 33 years. We were on that phone for

13:00 four hours talking about the old times and what we were doing and everything like that. And ever since then, every week we're on the phone. He rings me up one week, I ring him up the other week. And I got another phone call from another friend I had in the navy, so it's that friendship you form that I think is always lasting. Of course, he never forgave me because I put the Spanish Fly in his coffee. He said,

"Why'd you do it?" I said, "Well I just wanted to see you leap off the steering wheel and rape the steering wheel." He said, "Your bloody lucky"

13:30 it didn't work mate because I would've leapt up on top of you." That was sort of like a sex drug. And I wanted to see, I wanted to prove once and for all that it didn't exist, so I dropped it in his coffee one night. He never took another cup of coffee off me. But that was the navy and if you go to any reunion, you run into somebody you know. You haven't seen them for bloody years, well

14:00 I went down to a reunion in Sydney this year, June, the Supply reunion, run into blokes I hadn't seen in bloody 40 years. But you know they're different, not the young blokes that you knew. But you had something in common, you could talk there and it's not like you go to some party and you don't know anybody and you've got nothing in common. With a bloody sailor

14:30 you mightn't know him but you can say, "Hey, did you ever know such and such and such and such a ship?" "Oh yeah." And you've got a common bond.

**So in light of that, what would you say is the best experience that you take away having been in the navy?**

I reckon the time I served on the Gull. The mates we had on there, the fun you had and that. You can't replace, you sort of like you can't replace that

15:00 in civvy street. A lot of people don't understand it, the comradeship that you had. Like, old Marbuck grabbed me throat and throwing me in the rubbish bin and things like that. Old Malacca Fred trying to rape the old MacDonald's arm. You think of those things and you laugh. You laugh about it and old Chalkie, the monkey crapping on old Chalkie. Things like that, and the seriousness, like standing at - the night we got fired on standing at the action stations, we weren't

15:30 dressed. I mean to say we closed up as we were, I just had a pair of shorts on, no wallet and nothing. Just standing there waiting and that and you know, that the mate next to you, you can depend on him. Whereas in civvy street, how do you know the bloke next to you, you can depend on him and that? Whereas with the navy, you knew that if you got into a fire-fight at sea, you knew that the bloke next to you was going to be with you right to the end and that.

16:00 And that's what the navy was. That was trained into you the first day you walked onto the parade ground at Flinders. Those first steps, marching steps, the discipline that was put into you and the loyalty and the trust. I know these things sound silly now, in this time and age but it's just something we were taught.

16:30 **Is there anything that you'd like to add to this I guess?**

Oh no, I suppose you're looking at the old - like you look at the navy today, you look at them and say, "They're not sailors." And you look at my generation when we were in, the old World War II veterans saying, "You're not sailors." And most likely those blokes, who were in there,

17:00 we all say that to every generation of sailors, "They're not the sailors we were." But when you look at it, they are. They've got that tradition that's instilled in them. It's something that, like someone said, "You can take the person out of the navy, but the navy's still in that person." That's about, that's the way I look at it and that.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**