TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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Title	(Not Applicable) Burnside, Dr Colin Campbell (Lieutenant)
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Description	Dr Colin Campbell Burnside as a lieutenant Radar Officer, HMAS *Hobart*, interviewed by Daniel Connell for the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War of 1939–45 Discussing pre-war employment; enlistment; acceptance into ASDIC; transfer to England and studying radar at Portsmouth; radar appointment to *Adelaide*; description of sinking of *Rameses*; intelligence reports on enemy radar sets; task of outfitting *Hobart* with radar equipment; involvement in selection and purchase of radar equipment for *Hobart*; installation of radar on *Hobart*; crew morale; shipboard life; post-war Japan; demobilisation; post-war employment opportunities.

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Identification: This is the first side, side 1, of the interview with Doctor Colin Campbell Burnside. The subject is HMAS *Hobart*.

Doctor Burnside, let's just start out by talking a bit about your family background.

I was the eldest of five sons. I went to Knox Grammar School till I was sixteen. We lived at Gordon, at 58 St Johns Avenue. I went to work in my father's business; to take over whilst he suffered an illness.

What sort of business was that?

Heliography, in the reproduction of plans by light. Um, this covers such prints as: blue prints, helios, photostats, dyelines ... and commonly used in buildings, survey work, engineering and all plan projects.

Was it a fairly large business?

Employed about thirty people and occupied the full basement of the original building 8A Castlereagh Street, Sydney – since demolished and replaced by a larger building.

And so at the age of ... what, was that that you ...

Sixteen. Um, I stayed there and worked full hours and went to the Sydney Technical College at night to get my Leaving Certificate.

If you could just describe your work for me at the ... while your father was away. What were you doing on a day-to-day basis?

Well, I must tell you I also learnt ... at the Sydney School of Mechanical Drawing whilst I was at school – two nights a week ... in Pitt Street – and that tuition gave me a very good grounding in drafting for engineering, for architectural work and for patent work. Um, so I did a lot of work in there which we placed ... or as a substitute for that which was previously all done by my father – also an engineer and qualified in those aspects.

And in the office – you said your father was away – were you actually running the office?

Yes, I ran the office because all the people in there knew me; I'd been in and out of the place like a rabbit since I was a little boy and ... at that stage of the game I had enough in me for them to respect me; they were very co-operative people. They knew I knew what I was doing.

And then you did know what you were doing?

Oh yes. Mmm. Um, you see, I had the authority for everything. I had to put in the returns; the sales tax; the ... fill the contract applications which were made for ... various government bodies used to require contracts to be made. I used to ... I had the authority for signing of all cheques, the payment of wages, the calculation, the hiring and the firing; I did all that. And I continued to do that, of course, up till the time I left Australia ... just in ... it was only a short while after the war started. Um, I ... having been qualified with the Leaving Certificate, I then got what I wanted, and that was entrance into the course of chemical engineering at the Sydney Technical College under the ... Dr R. K. O. Murphy, and I did first and second year, and then Dr Murphy said, `Your work with heliography is not sufficient and adequate to fulfil the requirements of a chemical engineer and you've got to do something else – at least for a

while'. So, at that time a man walked in and asked me to reproduce a bag full of ... make some photos of a bag full of gold, which I did. I laid it all out on a photostat table – all in its various gradations – and ... um ... I said I was very interested in all that and he said, `Well, what about coming to Guadalcanal with me and ... you'd be a good engineer up there. You could do the assay work'. And that's how it happened. So I – almost immediately – left and went into Guadalcanal jungle; which was a place not heard of in those days, really. There were only a few coconut plantations and a ... two missionary stations.

(5.00) This is what – '38, '37?

That was early '39. Um, I stayed in the jungle for one year – lived in leaf houses – and ... actually, not on the coast but up in the [Sudekiki?] River at a 3,200 foot level. Um, during that time I had a very interesting experiences because I came to know a fellow named Paul Neen; he was a captain ... um ... you see, it was a British protectorate but it was a British army captain who was the district officer for the whole of Guadalcanal under the ... now what did they call him, the administrator of the Solomon Islands – senior – was Mr Marchant. Now he happened to be in the ship that took me up – that was the [*Malaita*?] – that took me up to Guadalcanal. And so he gave me a good introduction to Paul Neen, and Paul Neen said to me, `You know, you're healthy' – 'cause I had been there for a little while and I was very fit – and he said, `I'm fit. The two of us should tackle Mount Popomanaseu and see if we can be the first white people to reach the top of it'.

How high was that?

Eight thousand one hundred and fifty feet. So, we did, and ... the reason I'm telling you about this is because I met Paul Neen again later – if you wish to hear – when I was being prepared to go overseas by the navy as an anti-submarine officer. I met him in Flinders Naval College – long since extinct as a college – um, he was being trained as a ... in all the aspects of coast watching, and I should mention that I nearly got caught in all that too, but anyway, Paul Neen did go back, and unfortunately the Japanese got him and they tied him to a post and disembowelled him. But that man meant a lot to me because it was his initiative ... that led us to go to the top of Mount Popomanaseu. Anyway, going on from there ... having been there a year and I had a lot of malaria and I ... had all sorts of ulcers and quite a lot of the crowd that went up had to come back and didn't return because they were too ill and it was very hard living. Um ...

What do you mean, they went back to Australia and didn't return?

Yes. Well, they weren't fit any more. And, um, so I actually survived a year quite well and then, when I went out – I wanted to come home and get my teeth done properly and I'd have a rest and one thing and another – and ... the commissioner – that was Mr Marchant – said, `Oh, you've got to return because this is now a war and you're in a reserved occupation. We need the work done, that's retrieving the gold that's here and ... and I hope you understand that'. And I said, `Yes', and he said, `Well, I'm giving you a letter saying that's what you're to do'. Well, he's British, you see, and I was Australian, so he didn't really have much control over me and I recognised that point, so when I came back – I actually was very sick with malaria for, oh, about five weeks – and then when I got better, I put my suit on one day and I went into Rushcutter and I said, `I want to be a sailor', and the fellow said, `Well, you've got to go and put your application in front of the ... the lieutenant commander and you have to fill the form in', so I went to see the lieutenant commander and he says, `Oh, hello Burnside, what are you doing here?'. And I said, `I've just come back from Guadalcanal, Mr Quince'. Mr Quince

was my schoolmaster at school and he was ex ... seagoing lieutenant commander ... reserve. He said, `Well, it's no place for you to be enlisting here with this 'cause you've done a lot of things since you've left. We could use you in other aspects'. He said, `Wouldn't you consider ... um ... coming in and doing a bit of anti-submarine work?', and I said, `Oh, that's good because I'm very well qualified in physics and ...', so I said, `Certainly', you know, ` I'd like to', I ... in fact, I said it would delight me because my brother joined the navy at – my third brother, that was – joined the navy at the age of thirteen – little boy, went in Flinders. I said, `He's going to ... um, always be able to downgrade me if I go in as an OD but it wouldn't matter to me, and he said, `Oh, we'll fix that, Burnside'. He said, `You come and we'll have a board meeting – there are two other fellows coming in – and you can meet Commander Newcomb'.

(10.00) Why the navy, by the way?

Well, because my brother was in it. You know, reinforces ... I was in the artillery before the war, but I didn't tell you about that. That was just a ... I was a surveyor in artillery. I've got the papers there for that, but that was only short ...

I will ask you about that in a minute ...

... that was a short thing. I only went into that 'cause I knew the fellow that was in charge of that unit. But, getting on with this, I, um ... I went to this board meeting and Commander Newcomb said, `Oh', he said, `There's no problem about this' ... he had some other commanders and people around and he said, `There's no problem about this. We know this fellow's family and his brother's in Flinders and his brother was at this table when he went in – he came to this table to be examined', and he said, `But what you've got to remember, gentlemen, is that we might be using him for the wrong thing'. And so, this sounded bad to me and the ... he said, `For instance' and he said to a commander, `You listen to this. Do you speak pidgin?'. And I said, `Yes'. And he said, `Did you only learn pidgin without learning any native?', and I said, `Oh, no, I know some native'. And ... um ... so he said, `Now, give me an example of how you speak'. And I said, `Well, um, if I wanted a native to go and pick up that stone and put it in the dish and' – which is the sort of thing you'd ask them to do – `then it would go ... Mai, mai' – that means to come – `Go catchim ', um `Go catchim' ... oh, I'm trying to think of the first word, `Go catchim makara , fittim long middle disha', see. And then he said, `Right, now how do you say it in native?'. And I said, `Oh, [kaubak tohoe mekaya tala lalona?] disha'. See disha is still a dish; you don't ... you haven't got a word for it, right. And then he turned to the other blokes and he said, `Well, we'll have to tell Captain Parker'. Because ... here's the signal from Captain Parker to look for people who've been in the Solomons, see.
I couldn't get out of the place quick enough then. I went off and I started the course and ... I did quite well in the course. I got all my results there ...

What course was that?

Anti-submarine course. Um, Asdic, you know. You know what an Asdic officer is? They call ... I don't know what they call them in the ... sonar in the American navy, right? Um, so, we did all that and then I set out for England to go and ...

What happened to that notion that you were going to go to the Solomons? How did you ...

Oh, that turned up later. Oh, that was a dreadful disaster, that. I'll tell you – but it didn't happen then. And so I went off to England and I ... I was supposed to join a ship and I ... I had two weeks' leave. It was the most magnificent two weeks in my life. I went ... the first thing I did ... do you know Denzil Macarthur-Onslow, the man that um ...

I know who he is.

... army fellow; tank bloke. Oh, real whiz, he was. But I knew that family indirectly and I went and stayed with his ... his wife in [Kettlehome?] in Scotland, and I also went back and stayed with a ...

Sorry, you've got to England somehow. We started off ...

Yeah. I shot over to England to ... join a destroyer. And I went to the ... to Australia House where Commander White – who was the NLO [Naval Liaison Officer], or whatever it was, in charge – said, `Right, well you're allowed two weeks' leave before you make your' ... `take up your appointment in a destroyer'.

So before we go there ... See, we were just talking about ... you were in this office in Rushcutters Bay just after you'd joined and then you went off to do that course. Where was that ...

Flinders. Flinders and then back to Rushcutter where we had a fellow named Petty Officer Beer who did all the technical stuff for us. It was quite a long course, it was five months or something, and ...

How were you finding the navy as an organisation?

Oh, no trouble at all. I mean, I lived with discipline all my life. It wasn't a problem at all. Like a duck to water when it comes to that kind of thing.

And you thought it was a practically orientated not, you know, not a lot of silly conventions. It was very practical in its organisation and approach?

Oh, look it was thoroughly like that. I mean, without it ... this is the way our navies better than so many other navy's, you know that? Without it, it couldn't be what it is; it's so much built on all this tradition. And they ... in those days more than ever it all carried through from England, you know.
I'm sorry if I misled you in any of that there, but I ...

(15.00) No, no. That's all right, that's okay. So, then ...

Anyway, I stayed on ... I stayed up there in [Kettlehome?] but I wanted to just put in a little note here. I went to stay with the mother and ... father of ... of Denzil's wife who lived at ... the place where the aircraft fell down? I'd actually been in that village – it's the boundary of Scotland and England – Dumfrieshire, um ...

Yeah, Lockerbie?

Lockerbie. That's it; that's where ... that's where I went in this beautiful little train and got out there and was met by them and stayed with them there for, oh, a day-and-a-half, I think it was. Anyway, on with that. So, I go off to ... make my debut in the Royal Naval ships and be an anti-submarine officer and ... Then this fellow White said, `I've got a signal for you, Burnside,

and it's a direction that you go to attend a meeting with the assistant director of Admiralty Scientific Research at Whitehall with regard to doing RDF [Radio Direction Finding], and ...

What's RDF?

That's radar. I mean it was called RDF then ... something radio distance finding or something they called it in the early days. Anyway, so I went there and he was a most pleasant man and he asked me all the things I'd ever done. You see, I did a lot of chemistry and a lot of physics and a lot of electrical stuff too, and he ... he said, `Well, you've certainly got all the background there'. And he said, `If you take this on – and this is what we want you to do – you've got to forget all you ever learnt and believe that what we tell you is the Bible now, and to do this, I'll give you my books'. And he took these books out of his bookcase and he said, `Now I've arranged for you to go and stay for three weeks with a very fine family at Putney Bridge. And now you can go there and they know all about this; you don't have to explain anything when you go there; you can go into that place and you're not to go anywhere else. They'll supply you with everything and you're not to tell anyone that you are doing it and then when after three weeks you come and see me again and I'll tell you what else to do. All you do is learn these books'. See, and I did. Actually, I've got a very good memory and a lot of people don't realise that but ... see, I can remember fifty digits in a line and tell them all to you backwards and forwards ... I've got no trouble, see, if I want to, you see. So I didn't have a trouble – any trouble at all getting all that lined up – and, um ...

This is a very informal star though. I mean, it's not um ...

Oh, terribly informal. See, I was the only Australian in this picture, anyway. And there were ... I went back to see him and said, `Right, it's all in the hands of your director, now' – that's Commander White – `and I've given all the instructions and I know you'll be happy with it, see. So off I went to Portsmouth and I met six Americans, ten Englishmen and myself, right, and we stayed there for six months and we lived radar – or RDF – see. And we did a lot of mathematics and all this stuff and I look back and a lot of the mathematics was a headache and not needed but the other stuff was terribly important.

What was all that about?

Oh all the structure of the sets; the engineering to make a radar set is a lot of known entities put together and engineered together so they do the job. That's the whole sequence of it you see. Well, in the course of this the commander – the future commander – of the *Hobart* – Freddie Cook did that raid into France and brought back a radar set ...

What raid is that?

Oh, I'm trying to think of it ... it's um ... [St.] Nazaire ... no, it's another place. He brought back a radar set and I saw the radar set. It was brought ... we were all told we could see this radar set which had been taken out of the German's place on the coast there. I went to listen to Freddie – just before he died – telling ... giving the first account of that raid and I was with Scrivener too. Did you ask him about any of that?

Well, I didn't ask him about that; I didn't know about that. But I only met him a couple of weeks ago.

Anyway, well, the think was ... I just mentioned that because I saw what Freddie Cook brought back. There's a man that should have been in this, oh boy, he was wonderful – a pity he died. ... So then I had to come back to Australia and I ...

(20.00) Just before that happens tell me about what you saw and how you felt about it. The radar set that you were looking at, I mean, what was it telling you? Were the Germans more advanced or not?

No. We considered that we were probably a good bit ahead of them just by this set and the man who was instructing us went over the set with us and pointed out – it wasn't a whole set, you couldn't have a whole [set], they were all in bits and pieces but they took the guts out of this – this commando raid took the guts out of the place – of course, you had to carry these things and they were being fired upon and people were dying all around the place. So, you know, they really had some spunk in them, those fellows that went on those raids. I tell you ... anyway, this set, and I stood up and described this thing which I had seen was Freddie Cook's winnings which was about that long and that wide and that high and heavy as lead and had all the knobs in the world on it and that when they took the plates off that the instructor, who was teaching us there, pointed out after their own investigation of it where the circuits were similar but lacked certain aspects which we did have, right. And I thought that was something very interesting there but much more interesting when I came to know Freddie Cook later.

So, I mean, you must have been very fired up about radar by this time?

I was; I thought, you know, it's got such tremendous potential and ...

Tell me how you felt about it, as a young naval officer, you know, the official accounts are in the records?

I thought I'd been given a gift. I was so privileged to be able to go and get stuck into this. See, they weren't even making enough sets to put in their own ships at this stage and everyone who could do anything to organise something to get sets was doing it. See, they set up a Directorate of Radar in the Navy Board and that was ...

That's the British Navy Board?

No, no. The Australian Naval Board and that was Tom Cree who's still alive – a wonderful bloke – and they got one RN bloke called Benbow – Lieutenant Commander Benbow – an electrical fellow, he was pretty good. And then they had Bill Boswell who finished up after the war as a head of the atomic energy thing and Woomera bit – all that stuff – and so he was a brilliant man and he was so qualified and so capable, he organised the preparing of AWA for the making of the sets for our small ships. Now that was an enormous task and I got tangled up in that later as I will explain 'cause I had to ... when I went over to, as the admiral had directed me, I went to Canada, I assessed the Canadian set to see if it was going to be better than our set and I gave it the thumbs down because I knew what made it tick and what made ours tick and we stuck to ours and it was the right one. And that was a nasty business in as much as I didn't recommend the Canadian set, see, so I – that was in Quebec. I didn't go back there any more in case I was shot or something. Anyway all the rest of the place was terrific.

That's at the ... you are talking now about the later trip? We'll come to that but just when ... you've just been sent back to Australia. What's about the date?

Ah, the date was ...

We'll just switch on again. You just say the date again.

The 21st August 1942 I landed in Australia and this is where the Guadalcanal bit caught up with me 'cause I landed in Melbourne. I expected to be able to have a couple of days up in Sydney before anything happened but I was told that we urgently needed a set to be fitted, or which was being fitted, in the *Adelaide* in Melbourne and the *Adelaide* was all ready to go to sea, to the Indian Ocean, and that I could complete the finishing touch of this fitting and I had a mechanic too – an English RN mechanic who they brought out – and so this was all teed up and I was told that I could probably have some leave – this is Lieutenant Commander Cree – and almost at the same instant all this, in one hour when this is going on, the phone rang and Captain Parker's secretary – Captain Parker was the father of Parker the friend of the Duke of Edinburgh, the aide to the Duke, remember ... you don't – anyway he was captain – personnel, all personnel of the Australian Navy came under his control. See, he could push you anywhere. And the secretary said that Captain Parker wanted to see Burnside who was listed as having arrived this afternoon and, so, I went down to see Captain Parker. And he said, `Oh' he said, `We need you. You'll have to go up to Guadalcanal again', and he said, `I'm quite sure of this because Commander Newcomb said you'd be ideal, he knows all about you and that you know the area. You've travelled in two or three of the valleys on the north-east side' – and indeed I had too – but that ... oh, that was a dreadful shock. And I ...

(25.00) What were they suggesting that you do up there?

A coast-watcher. Have you ever read *The Coastwatchers*? Well, it's ...

Mmm. Commander Eric Feldt; I just read it a couple of weeks ago.

Yes, milky faced Feldt – that was him. Yeh ... he's a fine man. Forgive the name that I gave but that's what he was called. He did have a face like a ... sort of a baboonish face, you know. You couldn't help but think of it quite like that. That was what we used to call him. Anyway, I said to the captain, `Captain Parker, well sir, it seems that there's been a great waste of effort with regard to my education in as much as I've done ... I've become an anti-submarine officer; I've been now made one of the only – at the present moment – radar officers and we haven't got another one here to go and do the job which is required in the *Adelaide*' and he said, `Oh, well I'll think about that. But you can see why I called you down?', and I said, `Yes'. So I went off and I told Tom Cree this and he said, `Where are your bags?' – luggage, see – and I said, `Oh, they're down on the wharf', they came in a ship called the *Umgeni* – it wasn't the *Umgeni*, was it? ... yes ... *Umgeni* – a river in Africa – anyway ... So I ...

You don't know how to spell that?

Umgeni. There's the *Umgeni* and the *Umtali* and the *Umgeni* it was. Anyway, ... he said, `Right', he said, `Well, I'll just arrange about all this to be completed and you join this ship at midnight tonight and they'll be departing at dawn' and that's what I did. All my baggage went into the *Adelaide* and I went there at midnight – I never got to Sydney – I was shoved in this ship that I knew nothing about and we were halfway across the Bight, I reckon, before old Captain Parker woke up and then it was too late. And he's never caught up with me again. I stayed in the Indian Ocean for six months and we sank a ship there called the *Rameses* and to this day I've got the binnacle ... the binnacle of the *Rameses* which we sank and the binnacle came out of the captain's pinnace, it was the captain's pinnace lifeboat, right – beautiful boat and it was a beautiful binnacle and ...

How do you spell binnacle?

Binnacle. ...

Could you describe the sinking of that ship?

Yes. This is where we first used the radar. We ... actually I've got the logbook saying how we started to fire at this ship and the – 'cause we were all scared to death that something would happen like those others with the torpedoes – and it was all dressed up ...

Were you thinking of the *Sydney*?

Yep. It had a thing on the back; it looked like an eight inch gun but, in fact, it was a telegraph pole mounted into a box, you know. But they didn't get any chance ... anyway, `cause Captain Esdaile, a very fine sea captain, said that we would sink the ship and we steered ...

Could we just go back to the beginning of the story, I mean, ... I'll just turn the tape over because we are about to run out on this side.

END OF TAPE 1 – SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1 – SIDE B

Identification: This is side 2 of the interview with Doctor Burnside. End of identification.

Right. Perhaps if we could just start that story at the beginning. I mean, what, you were sailing along on a stormy day, a calm day, or whatever ...?

Oh, it was a calm day and we picked up a ...

What time?

Oh, about the middle of the day, I've got the sheets out of the log here. Do you want to see 'em?

We'll see them later.

Right. Well, it was in the middle of the day and it was a clear day and like that in the Indian Ocean you think about the Cocos Islands and all that sort of stuff. You can see for miles, you know, and we saw this ship in the distance and it wasn't listed. You know what to expect with ships that are moving when you are in a naval ship – you must know all that before you can see whether it's worthwhile investigating something – so Captain Esdaile was on ball in no time and said, `We'll find out about it'. So we went up and we then got the silhouette of the ship, then sent off the signal – international signal for identification – and, of course, they didn't answer and then we looked up – you've got silhouettes that you can look up – and so we knew it wasn't one of ours and it was probably a German ship. So, we gave the signal that we were going to fire or would they surrender or some such thing – it's all in the log – anyway, we just blew it to bits ... Not to bits; we hit the bridge and knocked it all out of commission and we realised it was probably – had hoped they'd opened the sea-cocks because then we saw boats coming over the side. We took eighty-eight survivors, one pig and one dog and they were all Germans and they were covered with iron crosses and pearls and every other damn thing.

What were they doing there?

They were coming back from somewhere up in the islands somewhere and we just simply accommodated ...

But ... August ... we're talking about what time of year? What's the date of this?

They were associated with probably supplying submarines of this, that and the other.

And could you spell the name of the ship for me?

Rameses – *Rameses*, I think that's Egyptian. Anyway, we got ...

You said radar was used in that ...

Oh yes, yeh, that's right. And when we'd fired about six shots it shook something up in the air and it stopped registering the distance but it didn't matter 'cause we still hit it. But that's in the log too. Oh dear, some very disappointing things can happen with radar. The first time I went to sea in the *Hobart* on trials on 20th of whatever it was – I gave you the date there – well, on that day the captain who later was Admiral Dowling, but he's Captain Dowling then, called me down and berated me for the fire control set had failed and there had been a very expensive exercise we'd carried out and, oh, it was a terrible thing this because I had twenty-three sets in the ship and you wouldn't want the fire control set to fail too.

What's the fire control set?

That goes ... it interlocks with the director and the TS, where they calculate ship's course and where the other one's course is and all that information comes out. You've got to have the range to do this, you see, and that's better than having one of these big range finders up on the mast. They tore that thing up and ... turn it off for a second ... `45 that was ...

Sorry, could you just give me the date?

That was on Wednesday, 7th February 1945 and Captain Dowling wrote this to me:

> `To Lieutenant Burnside from the Captain. Fault in the FC radar – fire control radar – today has partly ruined the tracking exercise. When fault is found I require a verbal report from you stating cause of fault.'

Right. But that's jumping ahead a bit.

Yes, but I couldn't resist it.

(5.00) Right. You were just talking about funny things that happen with radar and you are back on the *Adelaide* and you're looking at HMS ... oh, not HMS ...

Oh, no, prisoners of war. Prisoners of war. Oh, that was quite entertaining. We found them quite pleasant people and they all had iron crosses on 'em and this was very impressive 'cause we didn't have any decorations at all – none of us. And we looked after their dog and the pig and I believe they had the pig on board with a view to having some roast pork at some stage but I don't know what eventually happened to that. But I'll tell you there was a problem about the pearls. They all had large amounts of pearls, you know, the ones you put ... the whole necklace of pearls and bags of pearls and I couldn't tell you whether they were cultured pearls – I would suspect they were.

It's fairly early for cultured pearls.

Well anyway, I know this, that when they finally reached Western Australia to be conducted to the place of care that a lot of them claimed that they'd lost a lot of their pearls and I have good reason to believe that that's so and I just don't understand how 'cause they were all stripped naked when they were put on board and to this day ... I suppose I can think of some of the blokes that might have done that but there wouldn't be any proof anywhere ever. You couldn't even follow it up. But I thought that was rather funny.

How were they looked after on the ship?

Very well. I was very friendly with a fellow who suffered an eczema and I used to get eczema in the heat, you know, and that's what he had and I used to use calamine lotion which is an old fashioned thing – it was very effective. See, mark you, I wasn't a doctor then. So ... I used to take him down some calamine lotion and I've actually forgotten all the things he told me about himself. He didn't have any inhibitions about anything that fellow. He was very pleased to get the calamine lotion. And they were fed well; fed very well. And they're, oh, given some freedom, you know, they were always under supervision on the ... when the weather was fine they were out on the quarterdeck but we always had people watching them so they couldn't do any sabotage work. Not ... we didn't have a signal that they would but you had to be careful. And, oh, that's just a little episode.
Anyway, after six months I came back and Tom Cree said, `You've got to be an operations bloke and you have to analyse all the information we get from all ...

Why did you come back?

Because that was ... they only wanted me to fit the set and come back again. They didn't have any radar officers for other ships you see and they had – if you look at the date you can see by that time they had the first being put out from AWA under the care of Bill Boswell, Lieutenant Bill Boswell.

The first radar sets?

The first radar sets, yeh, and they were for small ships but they were very good as they went in those ... by ratings in those days. Anyway, and I had to start correlating all the sets that were coming from Britain, because they were sending out big aircraft sets and whatever we wanted, but we had to have a ship specifically requiring the set and so to put orders you needed to have all the ships mentioned, the date of commissioning to come, and everything had to be fitted in. There was so much other gear and war stuff being sent out that you had to fight for a place to get any equipment brought out. It isn't as if you could just fly it out or something. It had to come out in a ship. So that's ... I spent a lot of time doing that and also I got concerned with other things about the intelligence reports and I had to analyse them as to what might have been radar sets that were being used by the enemy and ...

By the Japanese?

Yes. And any other ship that – a civilian ship – that had any kind of aerials that someone had noted and these intelligence reports always puzzled me 'cause I didn't know where they all came from. ... It is something I never did find out about. Anyway ...

(10.00) What sort of information did they contain?

Oh, people picking up signals, see. And we had evidently stations that tried to pick up signals of ... from the enemy especially on the Japanese area and the ... they also tried to explain certain awareness that the enemy had of vessels' movements as being due to radar and also they were interested in reports about aircraft being detected at long distances. And, of course, that was one of the capabilities of the 281 set which is what we fitted in the *Hobart*. In fact, we outstripped the Americans time and time again. You know, a hundred miles you would pick up aircraft which is pretty good in those days. But this sort of stuff, it was helpful to me because it made me aware of all the things you could think of which would be going on with radar in other places and on the other side. And it was ...

What sort of capacity did the Japanese have?

Oh ... It wasn't as good as ours. Our ... the surface radar is the one that was really the important one. Like the battle of the Coral Sea and these places, they didn't have the equivalent of ours. We had some beautiful sets: the 271, the 273 – one thing and another – the centimetre sets, wave guides, dishes instead of Yagi arrays because they ... Yagi is a Japanese word and that's the origin of the first fire control sets was Yagi, Yagi arrays to magnify the ... or intensify the signal and intensify the receipt of the signal, too, I mean the return signal.

Fire control; you explained it a bit before but if you could just tell me a bit more ...

Well, the captain says, you know, which guns are going to be ready and the TS is the transmitting station down in the holds of the ship with all the tables and everything. They say what the angle is to be set, what the elevation is to be set, what the charge is to be fired and the gunnery officer would explain to you very well all these things which are a drill – it is just a whole drill – so that all that the people in the turrets do is follow the signals they're given and they never see anything and ... well, they can in desperation if everything else is broken and blasted they can start shooting at liberty any gun they like. But this controlled fire is a thing that matters so much 'cause you can send four shells out and ... or have a spread and that kind of shooting does a lot of damage as a rule. Something's got to hit something it just amounts to there and all that matters is the range – it's over or under. And when you get into a rough sea it just amazes ... always amazed me that we were able to keep on a target when we were literally yawing in the sea, you know, this sort of business. It's incredible. And a source of great pride to a gunnery officer when he hits something too like that.

So, you were analysing all these reports coming in and ...

Oh yes, that was part of what I was doing and ... I had a lot of information I had brought back from overseas and I started to put it together and I'd brought back ... See, everything I picked up in Britain was sent back in that bag that comes back ...

Diplomatic bag?

Diplomatic bag and all microfilm and that was well organised and the Admiralty, you know, very cooperative about it all. And then when it came here and it was here before me then we had to start using this stuff and it was everything. It was: What kind of drill goes into a radar hut when they're tracking someone? That's the right drill, you see. And all the sets are different so ... and you've got to teach all these fellows this and we had a radar training school at South Head and that was the first place and the fellow that used to run that was a fellow named Strange – Strange I think it was, yes.

You were fairly junior in rank but you were having a lot of influence, weren't you?

Oh yes, well you see, the thing ... the Admiral Sir Guy Royle said to me, `You're not going to be a lieutenant commander Burnside and you can't be unless you're an officer in a submarine, see.

(15.00) Why not?

Well, the navy doesn't do that. The only bloke can be a lieutenant commander, he's got to be over twenty-seven to be a lieutenant commander, or, if he's under twenty-seven he's got to be an officer in a submarine ... he's got to be the commanding officer in a submarine. They are all young in the submarines – they used to be as a rule. But I thought that was ... you know, he's putting me in my place. `You're not going to be a lieutenant commander Burnside', he said, `Not at your age and you're not going to a submarine'. See, he was a humorous bloke; he was a very fine fellow that Sir Guy Royle. I always admired the way he knew exactly what he wanted to do the day they said they could get the *Hobart* back to Sydney from Espiritu Santo and he started it and that's when he ... that's probably the day after when he came up and `Where's this Burnside?' and then started it for me and I was packed off in no time.

Let's talk about that episode systematically. Let's start ... you'd been ... well, is there any other major things that you think you should say about the work that you were doing? Where were you based, Sydney?

No, I was based in Naval Board.

And where's that, Melbourne?

Yeh, that big stone building in St Kilda Road there; big establishment.

Right. So you're downs there in Melbourne plugging away at the job of looking at all these things, getting the information together and, could you describe the day when *Hobart* first of all came into your life?

Oh well, that was the day when Guy Royal said, `You go over and take ...' and that's the instruction orders without mentioning the *Hobart* but that's what it was for and I've got all the sets for the *Hobart* on that trip.

Well, could you ... I mean, what, you're just working there. Could you describe the day? What actually happened? You're working in your office?

I was sitting at my desk. There was ... Commander Cree had a little cubby hole office and I was sitting at my desk and there was a fellow named Lieutenant Hannon and a fellow named Warn who was ... Hannon was an electrical officer, Warn was a sub-lieutenant and he was a pay master and there was – we had a girl who was a naval officer who was the sister of a famous physician – anyway, Edna Goulston – they were a Jewish family, lived in Melbourne – Edna Goulston was a very wonderful secretary to that Lieutenant Commander Cree and she died just at the end of the war too. Anyway, that day I can remember I was just sitting at my desk writing some guff or other and this admiral, it was his want to walk around the place and see everyone was doing anything, you know, he's no dead-head and he came in and everyone, you know, you could almost feel everyone shake when he walks into the place, and he said, `Oh, Cree' – he knew Cree; he had a great respect for Cree with his DSC and all that and wonderful story about him – and he said, `Where's this Burnside? I've got to get something

going and I think if you send him down and I'll have a word with him', you see. And off he goes again and Cree says, `Well, you go and see the secretary to the admiral and find out what time to go and see him'. I said, `Right'. So that was the next day actually that I actually went down to see him and what is on there is what he said practically.

Right. And could you just summarise what's on the orders that he gave you there to summarise generally?

To go and get all ... To establish liaison with Britain for the passage of all information to do with radar to Australia. I was the first liaison officer and I would be followed by others. The one who followed me is Lieutenant Champion whom I handed over to in London when I left. So I flew over ... but that was not the only thing, that was the first thing to establish this liaison for radar in Australia with Britain and I was to go out at the same time and find all the equipment required to fit the ship because I knew operationally what the cruiser *Hobart* would be able to take.

Because it's similar to *Adelaide*?

No. It's much bigger than the *Adelaide* – oh, yes, a different kettle of fish, *Adelaide* – and poor old three-funnelled submarine. It was always wet and that – this little ship. Have you seen the picture of the *Hobart*?

Yeah, mmm.

Do you want to really see what it looked like? Switch it off and I'll get it.

Right. So you were in there with the admiral, you were getting your orders to establish these connections with Britain and ...

Get all the sets necessary to fit the ship and I and Cree ...

Is this the *Hobart*?

Yep. And he left it to me and to Cree to say what sets we could put on that ship and that's what we did and then we gave it to the planners to ... what we considered it ought to be. And, of course, as soon as you do that, oh, the ...

What, this is after you came back from being overseas?

Yes, this is after ...

(20.00) Let's talk about ... Let's talk about ... it's not every lieutenant who gets a job of spending six months going around the United States and Canada.

No, you're right.

Let's talk about that.

All right. Well, I got into a PB 2Y3 and flew to Noumea and then onto Espiritu Santo where the *Hobart* had been torpedoed. Do you know the *Hobart* was torpedoed by a submarine ten miles away. Now, how often would that happen – a magnificent shot. Anyway, I went into Espiritu Santo in this PB 2Y3 which is, what do they call those great big ... oh, they had another name for them. Not Sunderlands, some other thing ... Anyway, there'd been enormous floods there and we landed well but when we went to take off they'd had these launchers that'd go along this muddy water and pick out all the logs and things that tell them where the

pilot goes, so we're screaming along – and they're big lumbering ducks, you know, these things, four engines and two floats out on the wing – and the pilot spots a great big log in front of us, it would have ripped the bottom out of it you know. Oh gee, and he's a very smart bloke 'cause he really nearly tipped the plane over but he saved the plane from being destroyed. He tipped it over; he put one float in the water and tore the plane round at an angle, you know, and we didn't hit the log. And eventually someone came and took the log away and we had another go but this time we sent them along the track first and back again to make sure we didn't hit another log.
So then we went from Espiritu Santo to ... oh, an island that I find hard to remember at the moment but it's south of Hawaii and it was a twelve hour trip and that was a little atoll and we landed there – that was quite interesting – and then we went straight up into ...

Why was it interesting?

Because it was just a little spot in the middle of the ocean with coral all around it. It wasn't bigger than a couple of football fields and it had this coral around it made it a safe landing for one of these things – a seaplane, right. Anyway, it was a rather tiresome trip then to Hawaii straight up north from there.

Could you describe Hawaii?

Oh yes, you wouldn't want to go wrong when you were landing at that place 'cause all of those peaks that stand up everywhere – it's all volcanic sort of thing – and Hawaii itself is ... I talk about Pearl Harbour really, Hawaii is, you know, is a name that goes to a beach and all the development that went on there, so I was in Pearl Harbour actually, and ... course I saw all the things that there were to see. It was a very earthy sort of place.

How do you mean?

Well, it's not decorated and beautiful or anything. It was all very rough and full of army stuff and navy stuff and air force stuff and there's ships everywhere. They had great stores and everything was guarded and you had to ... Just being in an English uniform suspecting that I might be an Englishman made me a very, you know, not exactly welcome.

Why, what was wrong ... what did they think was wrong with Englishmen?

A great deal of difference to an Australian and I ...

Could you elaborate on that?

Oh, I didn't ... actually the elaboration of it only comes from my observation then and what happened the first night I was there. The first night I was there – I had to go and find some kind of Royal Navy or Royal Australian Navy connection, see – so I went to the club that was the naval officers' club and do you know the president of the club was an English commander named Myers – VC – submarine commander and all the rest of 'em were Americans. He was the president, he was the president at the table and he was the most reckless ... oh, God, he loved fighting and he challenged a couple of other blokes while I was there to have a – what do they call 'em – a stair wrestle. And you go up the top of these stairs – this is a very fine building that we're in – and you have this, see who can make the other one fall down the stairs and who can roll the furthest and all this. I got tangled up with this. Boy, he was strong that bloke. Anyway, it was a wonderful thing – we weren't drunk – and anyway ...

Is it a case of VC winners tend to be a bit mad?

I think you have to say that, mmm. You read about Myers, he is an extraordinary bloke. He went straight through a net in the Mediterranean somewhere – extraordinary bloke. Anyway, Myers was of great value to me because, maybe it was that fight I had with him, that roll, but anyway he said `Where are you going?' ...

(25.00) How does an Australian lieutenant get involved in a fight with a British captain or whatever?

Oh, this was this club and I tell his's mad – mad. He challenged some other bloke to these stair rolls and I wasn't going to be out of it. I thought, `Oh well, I'll be in that one'. And I had to bring back a parcel for Myers, not that I ever met the girl, but I had to, when I got to Australia, I had to post it and it didn't get to Australia till I came back I tell you. I had to post it to this girl in Western Australia. That's just in passing. Anyway, this is where Commander Myers – Vic Myers I think it was – they used to call him Vic, I suppose that's VC or something or other. Anyway, he said, `Well, this is a formal mess dinner tonight' so ...

What mess is this that you ...

In Hawaii, in this officers' mess in Hawaii ... officers' club in Hawaii and it was a formal dinner anyway. And so, oh look it was just amazing, he says, `Now I have someone I'm going to make you sit opposite them' and he said, `It's going to intrigue me and it's going to intrigue you till you know why'. See, so I said, `Oh yes, well, that sounds good'. I couldn't have cared less what it was going to do, see, so I sat down and there in front of me is this bloke – directly placed opposite me – a very stern faced bloke, darkish hair and an aquiline sort of nose, you know, and a twinkle in his eyes, you know. And I said, `My name is Colin Burnside. I'm a Scot that lives in Australia. I'm not RN; I'm RAN'. And he said, `Well' he said, `My name's Burnstein. I'm a Jew. I'm in the Bureau of Ships, Washington. I'm a commander'. And I never ... from there on till I left America that bloke looked after me, in the Bureau of Ships in the Pentagon.

How did he look after you?

Everywhere I wanted to go. I went into all the secret establishments to see them making magnetrons. I went in and saw the latest developments with P-cube dyes – they call it PPPI – that's where you have a ... PPI [Plan and Position Indicator] is a picture in radar and the PPPI is a cubed one where you pick out a spot by putting something on it and turn it into another one till it's about this big, you see, and that was not heard of in Australia and that was ... oh, that was very good. And they took me to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston and I saw all the background boys working on their, oh, thousands of different things. They're developing new ideas and approaches and inventing things, you know. They're all professors and, you know, plain clothes people.

So you basically had a licence to just roam around and find out ...

Exactly. Burnstein saw to it and everywhere we'd go, he said, `Not the Royal Navy, this is an Australian' and by that time I had my gold kangaroo on my lapel all the time. With due respect, you see, it's just that anyone of us had anything against the Royal Navy, it's the Americans who have this feeling. There's some ...

Why did they dislike the Royal Navy?

Oh look, I said to Burnstein, `What's the reason for all that?' and he said, `Oh, they're cunning bastards' he said. He said, `You know those liberty ships, when we put up the proposition they really took it under their wings and said, "Yes, that's wonderful. We'll help you every way with the liberty ships. You've got all the establishment that can made these and roll them out quickly and we'll do all the fitting for you wherever they ... as soon as you've gone to sea get 'em over and we'll do them with all the other fitting. We've got plenty up in the docks in Scotland and one place and another to do it"' and this went on and they had thousands of liberty ships you see but the ruddy things could only do nine knots and the British kept on making all these ships that did fifteen, see. When the war ended, no-one wanted a liberty ship, it wouldn't go anywhere fast enough and so the Americans could see it was going to happen and they reckon they should have been making fifteen knot ships in the beginning. This is what Burnstein, this Jew, told me. He said, `Oh, they're cunning bastards' he said ...

I'll just turn off the tape ...

END OF TAPE 1 – SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2 – SIDE A

Identification: Side 3, Doctor Burnside.

Right. You were saying you worked out of the Australian Embassy. Could you describe how that went?

Not the Embassy, it wasn't an embassy there, it was a legation which was a step before an embassy. It became an embassy later.

Right. Well, first of all, what was the legation? Who was there? What sort of people?

Commander ... oh, Captain Rosenthal, DSO, and Bar ran the legation – Australian – another magnificent man. And they had ...

They were happy to have this young lieutenant wandering around checking all these factories?

Oh God, they looked after me like a baby. I've got letters from Tom Cree to Rosenthal under whom Tom Cree was a lieutenant commander when Rosenthal was a commander. So, it was a big family you see. There was no trouble. I was looked after beautifully. And I went there – I must tell you, this establishment is like when you go to Canberra they've got a house and a nice looking place and that's ... and you call an embassy there well this was a legation and it was really a station for receipt of signals, secret things to be handed on or to be given out by the direction of either the US Navy or the Naval Board Australia or the ... in Britain or Canada. It was linked in the whole interchange of information, letters, bags – confidential bags – documents and photographs and things and a terrific influence when you want to do something fast. They ... they only had to say, `Oh you have to get a passport. You go to Mr Kerfoops now and you get a passport' and you go, you know, anywhere. You could make any communication you like if it was directed by the ... and approved by Rosenthal. And I must say Rosenthal did a lot to bring the standing of our navy to the notice of the Bureau of Ships, see, and he had a lot of influence there. And, for instance, when I arrived there the first thing he tells me is, `Now, we've got all the connections made for you for the things which Tom Cree haa indicated might, if we're fortunate, be given to us', you see. And that was

magnetrons and all sorts of other things and the first man you go to see is a man called Commander Burnstein in the Pentagon. And I said, `Oh yes, I'm great friends with him'. And before old Rosenthal said, `Oh' he said, `Now how would that happen?' and I said, `Well, it's like this: I was having a good wrestle with Commander Myers, VC, in the mess in Hawaii and he said he wanted to introduce me to someone whom he thought I would be ... who would be useful to me when I came over here. And he wagged his head like this but he didn't have to look after me any more then 'cause I just ... He said, `Well, if you know him all you've got to do is ask this that and the other'. And he had a great sense of humour this Commander Burnstein. He presented me with a book, a very confidential book. Do you want to see it?

Just describe it for me ... Just looking at it, tell me about the book.

Well, this is a book that is just the result of a practical joke attitude, you see, to the whole business of doing this work of seeking information and getting equipment and so forth.

What's the title of the book?

It says, `It's a confidential report, Serial No. 7, Technical Report on Radar, Visit United Kingdom 1943–44 by Lieutenant Colin C. Burnside, RAN VR'.

Right, and what's in it?

Absolutely nothing. It's beautiful paper but there's nothing printed on any of it.

(5.00) It's quite an expensive practical joke. I mean, it takes quite a bit of organisation to get something like that made.

This man had the key to everything in the Pentagon. He could turn to any branch, anywhere, get anything and as fast as lightning and he used to have on his desk this great big piece of oak with great big gold letters on it saying, `We can do everything very quickly but it takes a little longer when it's impossible'. It was on this big piece of oak.

Right. Okay, so you were obviously well launched on this trip and you have described some of the visits that you made. What were some of the most important visits that you made when you were going around looking at all these radar ... I mean, you must have had fairly specific ideas in mind. You weren't just looking at radar factories, you were looking with the *Hobart* in mind, weren't you? So how were you going ...

I didn't have ... I didn't have any kind of thing I could thing of as a room or a radar cabin or something that I could put anything into because it wasn't there. They took the ship to pieces before they made all those things that are on there. So what we worked on – and Tom Cree was such a tremendous director in this regard – you know what the specifications of a set were, how much it weighed and you could guess what you could manage with it and whether there were spaces in which you could fit some of these things, especially on masts – you see, that's one of the keys to it – and especially on director towers so that I was always looking for the thing that had the ... was possibly just as effective but smaller. That was the first approach to it but there is one thing you couldn't make small and that's a big array for a long distance aircraft detecting set like the 281 and so that's all British gear.
Now I didn't tell you that whilst I was in America I ... Myers sent all this out – it was supposed to be lend lease, you know, and I'll swear that I never signed for any one bit of it nor

did anyone else ever sign for it and I signed for million of dollars of stuff when we were fitting the *Hobart* but these things just turned up and I think that they were ...

Myers or Burnside ... Burnstein?

No, that was Myers that got this stuff out of Hawaii for me – not Burnstein, he was there to look after his own ships and so forth – but how this came about I don't know. But there was a lot of American equipment that I, you know, asked for and got and it arrived long before I ever got back from Britain.

Myers' position, I still don't quite understand. He's a British naval commander.

Yeh, yep.

And what's he doing in Hawaii with all this stuff.

Everyone loved him as a nut, you know. That's about it. And he was a ... The ...

What was his official function?

The way I saw it he was the president of the mess. I honestly couldn't tell you much more than that. I only spent, I think, three days there and ... but it was quite an experience. You know, you've got to remember that it's hard to remember. I'm talking about a long time ago. See, it pays me to confirm some of the things I said with the documents I've got because, you know, it could all be fairy stories and they damn near were some of them. ... But people in a war, there's a certain kind of ... a different attitude. It's not a business; they're not trying to make money out of something, they're trying to prove how good they are at whatever job it is they're doing and keep their standing. I think that's about what it is that makes them full of vigour. I mean, this fellow Burnstein, he was once – what do they call it when you put down a peg somewhere in your service life?

Demoted?

Something like that. He made some boo-boo somewhere or other. But he built his own establishment and he was under Captain Redman who was the big wig in the Pentagon but he was very well respected at this stage of the game. But he often told me – I spent a lot of time with Burnstein; this Jew and this Scot, you know.

He often told you what?

About how he was – somewhere he'd made a big mistake in the navy. He'd been in it since he was a little boy, or whenever they go to those academy things and he was older than I was.

(10.00) And ... So you were travelling around. When did that trip to Canada fit into the story?

Oh, I had to leave off then ... I had to go to England but I was going to go to Canada first then go to England, see. Oh, this is an interesting story. I went up in the middle of winter from Washington straight up to Quebec and I got hold of our equivalent ranks in their board up there and saw their set there. They had the whole set laid out and viewable and had all its specifications and it was to go into little ships and one thing and another and I, as I said, I didn't think so much of that but I then had no more to do there. I didn't want anything else and I had to give that report to Boswell and Cree because they wanted to really put the cap on the next ordering batch for AWA here. They didn't want to be sidetracked any more once ... if

they wiped out the Canadian set. They didn't say they wanted it wiped out. If it was better they wanted to know for the little ships.
Well, I took my life in my hands there and said, `No, I don't think it's good enough', right. So that was that and then I – travelling light all the time – I didn't fly from Quebec, I got in the train and went across to Halifax where I was to join an aircraft there because this was not a one of these seaplane things, I was going over in a bomber, see.

Just before you go over, wasn't there some controversy or didn't you feel that you were under some pressure when you were in Canada about that radar set?

I've ... I am aware that ... I was aware then that they were hoping that I would say that this was, you know, really worthwhile so that they could have a bigger contract to make these things which made a lot of difference to them one way and another and gave them Kudos 'cause they are a new radar branch there. ... Oh, yes, I knew that but honestly, I was capable of deciding what was the best of them for small ships and the one that we've got, and it's hung on right up ... oh, for years after the war.

How did they try and exert the pressure?

They didn't do anything which I felt very much, it was just the innuendo of, you know, `Well you can see what it does and why we're so proud of it'. See, that sort of thing. Well, that's right, I suppose if you didn't have another one you would be. And ...

You didn't say that?

No. Oh, no, no, dreadful. Anyway, I'm just pointing out that that's how they would be placed. If they didn't have another one they wouldn't ... Anyway, that was that, and I then went ... I happened to get on my way back to England and to do this I had it all arranged and I got in the train and I had this trip over to Halifax, it was quite an interesting trip.

Could you describe that journey?

Well, it was damn cold and what fascinated me, all the cockeyed big buildings there were on the way – all wooden of course – and all the signs for chewing tobacco. Everything was up with this tobacco that you could chew and, of course, the French influence comes into this country so greatly and the further over I got the more the French influence became apparent. And, not that it was so grim then, but of course in later years there's a lot of feeling developed between the French speaking and the English speaking Canadians and you would be well aware of that. But, of course, I'd been to Halifax before – see, that's the thing – I went to Halifax when I was on my way to Britain the first time. I went in a ship and that was a Starline – the Blue Starline. Anyway, when I got there, this second time, I had to go to this air force place and I'm trying to think of the name of it – is it Goose [Goose Bay]... oh, it's strange how these things leave you ... it had a funny name that airfield – anyway, I had to get into this bomber and this was being ferried across to Britain, this bomber, and it wasn't a place with seats and cabins like you ordinarily have. I, actually, was in the bomb bay of the bomber and I don't know where all the other people were, they were all over the place. It was like hitching a ride I suppose. It was as cold as charity and we all had these oxygen masks with us and tubes and I had my great coat – and that was a godsend – and when we got to 1,500 feet we had to put the masks on because it was ... you went off if you didn't do that and ... so I had this bloke beside me who was all the time telling me what a big wheeler and dealer he was in the Prestonwich [probably Prestwick] airport, see ...

(15.00) Which airport?

[Prestonwich?] in Scotland and that's where we were going to land. And he started offering me all sorts of facilities when we got there and I could stay the night there and I could go and have showers and all this sort of ... he was a bloody poofter, see, and that's what was happening, see, and I didn't know it. It was only when I'd landed that a bloke came up to me, he said, `Don't let him get his hands on you'. That was it and I took off like a frightened chook and went over and got a lift in an American army plane and I could have done better, I tell you. We took off from [Prestonwich?] and I was going to come to London and land. Oh, it was a disaster. We ... all the way down and we didn't know whether we were over the land or the sea and a bloke – there was a sergeant in this aircraft – who kept saying, `Don life jackets; don life jackets', see, so everyone'd put their life jackets on and he'd look out the window and if he could see through the fog and he said, `It's hard land down there' and he'd say, `Oh, you can take off the life jackets now', so you'd take 'em all off and then you're looking out there and we were all over the sea again right. Oh, it was incredible and then we got into this frightful fog and then we got a signal that we couldn't land in London that we had to go somewhere else. So we went somewhere else. It took me two and a half hours to get back to London after I got dumped from that craft and I was very glad to get into Australia House. I tell you, it was a crazy trip – a crazy trip over the Atlantic anyway.

So, that's a welcome to Britain.

Oh yes, there's no fanfare there.

So what did you do? Once you got to Britain what was the trip there; what were you going to do?

Oh, that's ... from there on I just was in and out of the Admiralty and Whitehall and getting things all approved to automatically transmit the latest developments in radar and to ... the lists of the spare parts available, because you had to have a lot of spare parts for all these sets, 'cause in those days you had valves, you know, and that's very different to the kind of electronic equipment that you're familiar with. Some of the big valves, you know, all these things – a tremendous amount of work just to make one of these things. God knows how much they cost. You would never know. So this was all very important. We had to have spares and we had to have, not just one base, but several bases for spares. Up in the islands we had to have spares accessible from, say, Cairns and Townsville for quick service to small sets for ships up there. We had Hollandia, we later put in stores there, they were very useful. But then that applied to every kind of accoutrement of war. So we were only just a little bit. I mean, there's all the gunnery items and new barrels for guns. You just never realise how much till you see what the logistics of maintenance of these ships are in remote places and that, as I said, is nothing about food. That in itself was really an astonishing feat because we didn't suffer at all. It was done ... I think we all well fed, all the ships I ever met were well fed and given, not just good food, but a good variety of food, you know. And also the things that made life comfortable. I'm not talking about cigarettes, I'm talking about the little asides that you can make a place where people sleep comfortable. People in a ship often have to sleep in hammocks with so much equipment in the ship and a lot of trouble was given ... a lot of effort was given to trying to find better places for people to sleep in ships, especially in the latter part of the war.

> Just going back to London; you get there, you've made all these recommendations, presumably you've worked out what you want for the *Hobart*. Well, if you could just wrap up that London story.

Oh, right. So, the arrangements. You get immediate despatch of what else we wanted for the *Hobart*. We'd ordered it even by cable, you know, and signal before we ... before I even left Australia. But there was always something else had to be added to it and that had to go out and be there the same time as anything they had already s nt. Right. So you wouldn't believe how much paperwork I had to do. It meant going through hundreds and hundreds of things that had to be sent out. And, of course, we couldn't make any of 'em, we were already up to our eyes trying to make what we can already. So the British really had a good supply line once they got going. They were incredible.

I met a lot of those British people, or ships, with their sets especially in the last part, in the last few months before the end of the war, and they only had one dreadful problem; the ships were not made to withstand heat or were made so the people in them couldn't withstand the heat. And I must give credit to the wonderful man named John Bull. It's not meant to mean Englishmen, it's meant ... that's the name of the engineer commander in the *Hobart* – John Bull – who died only a little while after the war ended. He said the ship had to be cooled and the doctor, Eric Sussman, said, `If you don't you're going to have a lot of sick people with dermatitis'. He told Captain Dowling this and he said, `If we don't do something to get some cooling we are going to have health problems in the ship'. You know, it really is terribly severe up in the tropics in the full blaze of the sun there in iron ships. So Johnny Bull bought from some place – I never found out where it was, it was one of the islands – hundreds and hundreds of yards of steel water pipe he got and he had blokes drilling holes in this water pipe and he had these big pumps set up and he set out great racks of these water pipes all over the ship. And they were well put down so that they were not in the road – you might have to step over them as, you know, a water pipe that thick on the deck you might have to step over – but they didn't interfere with action stations, or anything like that. It was all on the surface, on top and where they could they ran it along the junction of a bulkhead with another outfit like something standing up on there. And the whole ship, bar the wooden quarterdeck, was covered with these pipes with the holes in it and these pumps would work and pump sea water all over the ship and the ship's temperature dropped or was maintained at a lower level from there on and it was ...

> The water was kept in the pipes, it wasn't pumped out or ...

Yeh, there were big pumps for pumping it. It was spurting all over the place, see. No worse than rain and that's all it was, see, and it cooled the ship. It was a most successful thing and quite a few ships emulated us.

> Right. Well, we haven't yet got you into the *Hobart* yet, but you're in Britain and you come back. Can you describe your return to Australia and installation of the radar?

There is nothing to describe about the return; I just returned, like I flew out here.

> Did installation take very long?

It took from the ... I have the dates over there. [short break] Now, that's right, what happened. On 6th April I arrived in Australia and the ship was still being torn apart and you couldn't do anything. It wasn't in the reconstruction phase, it was in the destruction phase. It was 6th

April, that's a long time after 20th July '43 but it was a ruddy great hole of course. Now, so I spent one month on the staff of the radar director again and one month on the staff of the flag officer in charge *Sydney* in order to pass the information coordinated arrangements made overseas. Now a lot of that related to training people and those drills I spoke about, the drill for operating a set was the thing that the seamen were trained in and it had to be a really automatic routine if you are going to rely on it and they had learnt in Britain how long the watches ought to be actually on the set operating as an operator.

(25.00) It can become very tiresome staring at these damn lights and you have to have great respect for the fellows who spent so many hours at that business. I was always amazed at the self-discipline of some of these young sailors who did this and that's ... but the idea was to find out what didn't ... how long was long enough and not ruin any of them, see, because they became off hand. And that Captain Dowling called me in one day and said, `I have a compliment from the admiral of the fleet' – that ... the admiral of the fleet was the American fleet we were with in ... oh, somewhere up in the Philippines – and he said he complimented us on our detection of the aircraft. We are the only ship that reported the aircraft at 100 miles distance and we ... when notified that it was there couldn't find it – this is the American saying this – and therefore we'll be glad to feel something nice about ... secure when your sets are operating. And old Dowling said, `Don't you think that the lads that did that deserve some kind of decoration?' and I said, `Well, I have to say this sir, they're taught to do the job and that's all they did'. And he said, `That's all right. You don't get a decoration then, do you?'. I think that's pretty good. Oh well. Anyway, that's what happened there. Then I went straight into the cruiser on 19th June, that's eleven months after it was torpedoed.

> Right. And so can you describe your new ship? I mean, what it felt like to be on a ship, you'd been doing all the traipsing around on shore and ...

Yeh, I'd been in a lot of ships but not one that I felt I was going to stay in for a long time and the way old Sir Guy put it, he said, `Well, you've gone and made your bed, now you've got to go and sleep in it'. That was his parting shot when I walked down to the ... he was actually ... you know, I didn't tell you this, he never gave me a piece of paper that said it but he said that I had been effective and efficient and some kind of boon or something – a blessing or something. Switch it off.

> Sorry, what have you got there?

These are just what they call a chit. They are written as a formality; they're numbered and they come out of a book which the captain of the vessel holds and every officer who passes through the ship – or any other person for that matter whom he wished to have an official record – writes this ... fills in this chit. It's all printed. This is to certify that so-and-so has served as [–] under my command from [19th of this and so forth] and then during that period he has conducted himself [and he writes what he thinks about it – well or indifferently and so forth] then he signs it and gives his rank. And these are just two of the chits I had. There's another one from the *Adelaide* too. This one was from Freddie Cook, now dead, but ... and this one from Dowling, now dead of course. But this reads:

> `*Hobart*, November 1944 [I suppose it is] This is to certify that Lieutenant C.C. Burnside, RAN VR has served as a radar officer in HMAS *Hobart* under my command from the 19th day of June '44 to the 7th day of November 1944. [Now he says] During this period he has conducted himself to my entire satisfaction; a zealous, capable and successful radar officer who shows much promise'. [Oh, good on him]

Now, the following day Captain Dowling took over and he, from that day on, refers to the same kind of chit dated November '45 which was a year later and says:

> `During this period has conducted himself to my entire satisfaction; an excellent officer and an outstanding radar officer, most intelligent and diligent'.

Well, I never got one of those from the admiral. He just said his peace and that was it.

> Right. So when you took off with *Hobart* you'd been on lots of ships but you were returning to active service up in northern waters now, weren't you?

Yeah, that's right, and there the story in that ...

END OF TAPE 2 – SIDE A

START OF TAPE 2 – SIDE B

Oh, it was grim. I actually ... I had a feeling that every day was interesting and that every day we were doing some of the things we did from that time on starting to win. That's 'cause all of the reports that were coming in it was all fairly good, weighing it all up. There'd be tragedies here, there and everywhere but they'd still seem to be a little bit better than they had been all the time before this and that was actually somewhat of the spirit of the ship although we couldn't see how it could end suddenly, which it did of course, but then we weren't to know that there was one of those bombs hovering around there ready for that moment. So there was some ... especially the fellows in the ship that were married and had children and so forth, they ... I think a lot of them were taxed to the limit and I can remember some of the fellows in my division being quite depressed – not because we weren't succeeding in all we were doing but because of their long ... sort of ... long time, no see for the family and they ... a bit like being in prison I suppose. But they got mail and I know that Captain Dowling was an exemplary person in considering the troops in that ship. He was a – the more I look back the more I see – that he was a kind man, he could feel for them. He was very strict but he was a kind man and he ... I don't think he could have done better for the men in his ship's crew and ...

> What sort of things did he do?

Well, he ... he didn't lean on them when times were a bit relaxed. If he could save exercises, when he knew they'd done all their drills previously and the weather was hot, he'd announce it on the air that they should use the opportunity to relax. That things ... he was all for providing some entertainment for people. He'd ... once he ... Scrivener was a very good fellow as an organiser for some of the entertainment in the ship and we ...

> That's Ray Scrivener?

Yeh, Roy. And he was the captain's writer ... he was the commander's writer – that was Freddie Cook's writer – and ... if we hadn't gone to that trouble – not we – if the captain hadn't directed that to happen, it's very hard for those things to spontaneously happened in a disciplined ship. But if the captains says, you know, `It's a good idea if we have some entertainment' then make ourselves have a concert then you get all sorts of ... people do things that they wouldn't have done otherwise. A lot of people are very shy about doing anything, like I am, see. Yeh. Oh, don't worry, you can laugh, I had to perform but I didn't like it very much but I ...

What did you do? Could you describe the ship's concert?

Oh well, there were blokes with instruments that used to play and we had a band, you see, and there were people who could recite. Some of 'em, some of the sailors knew some good dits and some were not exactly clean but then that didn't matter either. And some could tell jokes and some reckoned they were comedians and acted like clowns, you know. Everyone recognised the fact they weren't professional, see. And, oh dear, that's the way it went.

What's the memory you're chuckling about particularly?

What's that?

Are you chuckling about a particular memory?

Yeh, I'm chuckling about my own.

(5.00) Tell us about your own.

Well, I didn't know what the hell this bloke was going to do and I got up there and I said now – old Roy did this, I think, with me, he was the one that had to organise what I wanted and I'm just trying to think. I've done this a few times and I don't know whether ... which one I did there – I think I said that what it was was this memory bit you see. So I told them they each had to think of a thing or a single digit number and I think I had fifty people doing it. Like I said to you earlier: This is one thing I can do. Then I had them in five rows of ten, see, and each one got up and said, `Six', and the other one would say, `Pig', and the other one would say, `Basket', and another one would say, `Nine' and you go all up and down these rows of this fifty, see. And then I told them now you all know what you've said to me and you all know where you are in those rows and you're in five rows of ten, now you can all go and get mixed up. And then all you've got to do is any voice from the crowd can yell out what was number three in row four and I'd say, `Refrigerator'. `Jesus!', this went on and on and I don't think I missed one. If I did it was of no significance.

A good party trick?

Oh yeh. It's not a trick. That was the thing, see. So, oh dear, I didn't lose anything over that performance. I reckon that they ... they reckoned they liked that one.

What was ... I mean, your position, you were an officer on the ship, could you describe the officers' mess? How did the officers live?

Very well, oh yes. We had a piano; I was a pianist. We had ... 'cause all the officers were on shifts. See, I used to do watches, dog watches, all the watches. In the harbour I used to do all the quarterdeck, a lot of quarterdeck watches, see, and you have to control the ship all the time. You know that, fine. But the engineers, they have shifts all the time on the ... so they all come in for different meal times, you know. And the people on the bridge. I was an officer of the bridge, I don't know whether you believe it but I got my radar – not just qualified in radar in the [?], but I had my watch-keeping certificate on the bridge of a cruiser. I got that and that's a, really, the best feather I had in my cap I reckon. Anyway, all these officers have to do watches – you might think they don't do anything – actually they work like damn demons and all the signals have all got to be looked after; all the organisation. The commanders flat out laying down all the rules ... all the day in orders for the next day and all these things which ... it just works like a machine when you get all these things going. Therefore the wardroom has this traffic through it all the time and about meal times there was a ... there would probably be

all the watches would overlap so that you get half an hour for one watch and half an hour for the other, so there'd be two sittings for the engineers and two sittings for the seagoing people and so forth and two sittings for the gunnery people. And, of course, the wardroom which is below the quarterdeck was a big place, it took about four or five tables, it had a bar – you see, that's another thing, the privilege of having a bar is not appreciated by people who like to drink and who aren't given access, that was all the non-commissioned people didn't access, see.

They weren't too keen on that piece of privilege?

Well, if you were at sea for twelve months and you can't go ashore it means something, right. So the captain used to issue beer to the troops and that was another thing he looked after. I think that was wonderful. So, you know, God knows how many cases of beer would come into the ship to be distributed to the troops and the captain would say, `These are for you to enjoy; and wisely'. And ... the wardroom was a place for learning about the other division in the ship. Everyone's got their woes and so forth and you could always talk about them and it actually allows a lot of quiet sorting out to go on.

(10.00) How many officers on the ship?

Oh, I've got a picture of them somewhere. Didn't Roy show you all the pictures. It must be something in the vicinity of about fifty, something like that.

Did you get to know them all fairly well?

Oh yes, I mean, you couldn't help but know them well. A lot of different personalities.

See, one of the things I'm thinking of is, one of the younger men that I interviewed who was just an ordinary rating said that he didn't get to know people outside of his particular group – his particular watch ...

Division.

... division very much at all.

That would be right. They don't ... oh, see, it has a lot to do with the individual. If you get a gregarious bloke, everyone on the ship knows him, see. You get a fellow who's a bit of an introvert and he doesn't sort of go out of his way to get to know other people so much.

But he was suggesting there wasn't actually opportunity, for example, to meet firemen ... that was a case in point in his case but as ...

To meet what?

For example, for him to meet people who are working down in the engine–room; they just didn't cross paths.

That's right, yep, in a big ship it happens.

But officers were mixing much more with their opposite numbers in different sections?

Oh yes, oh yes. There's no doubt about that but that's what the wardroom does and it does it well. I mean, there's a place where a lot of things are sorted out without any fuss and bother. You can actually have a drill for your own division to do something that interferes with

someone else's division. You know, and it's quite important. It's something off the captain's back if he doesn't have to worry about it. But we had some bad people in the ship as well as good people, you know.
I must tell you I had a lot of secret books – that's one of the problems of being a radar officer – you just sleep with the damn things and I had two safes. Well, of course, I also have a lot of pistol licences in my day and I used to have a few pistols, you know. I'm a very good shot with a pistol. Any excuse I'd, you know, use them. They gave me one in the navy, see, and so I had this pistol which was highly illegal pistol. It was ... I didn't have a licence for this one and I had a writer, his name was Sellers – and we used to call him Salty Sellers, obviously – and he used to come into my cabin and I had a typewriter and he'd type out orders for the things. You had to work out the orders for the watches and all this sort of stuff and he had a bit of a funny side to him. We were ashore in some harbour or other – in Australia it was, I don't know whether it was Brisbane or somewhere – whatever it was, Salty took off – he had the key to the safe – and took off with my unlicensed pistol. He got himself into a restaurant and got a bit shot, not by the pistol, and started firing into the roof with this pistol. I don't know on what pretence he would have done that. But the next thing Salty is brought alongside in the police van and the captain is confronted by the police and they tell him they want to put him in gaol, you see. It doesn't matter whether he comes out of the ship or what and the captain finally won over and said, `Well, look, we'll discipline the chap but we've got to sail tomorrow and as far as we're concerned, every man is essential', you see. So Salty stayed on the ship and I had to attend, caps off, with the captain on the quarterdeck to ... he is going to discipline this man and the regulating petty officer – the master of arms – brings up the thing and he's holding my pistol, see, and so the captain said, `Oh well...'

Did people know whose pistol it was?

Oh yeh, the captain did. He wanted to know where ... I think they asked him, I don't know, but the thing was I told him I had that one and several others and he said, `Oh' he said, `The best thing is over the side Burnside'. So Salty really got me into a bit of trouble. The captain thought it was rather humorous himself. No, the discipline carried out wasn't very much. Salt ...

(15.00) And your pistols went over the side?

No, they didn't. They didn't; I kept them. But I didn't let anyone have a key to the safe other than myself from there on. That fellow in the Solomon Islands gave me a licence for a German Sauer pistol and a 22-automatic pistol. I gave one away to a fellow who left when I did and he went to another island instead of coming to Australia and he ...

What, the licence or the pistol?

The pistol, see. And this Sauer pistol which I have the licence written out there, that one I kept as an antique pistol ...

What sort of pistol?

... and then I finally when all these things came out about pistols I put that into concrete and sank it but I still kept the licence. And, actually, I was given other licences too but I thought, old Salty, he was a gem that fellow and to have him disappoint me like that, I really was disappointed.

Were there other problem people? I mean, you're all cooped up in a ship for months and months and months.

Oh yeh. Some blokes used to fight a bit but you'd always have these fellows that fight and, actually, what happens is they don't have to be very strongly disciplined at all because the people who are near them discipline them and they learn not to fight – when you've got a big ship. You know, if you get in a really big ship like the KG-5 ...

Sorry, just wait for the plane [plane flying over]. You mentioned a KG-5, what's a KG-5?

Oh, a KG-5 is a hospital adjacent to Prince Alfred Hospital or its the battleship KG-5, *King George V*, which was in Britain, I was really referring to that and I was comparing how people talk of not having an opportunity to meet other people in a ship. In a cruiser it's bad enough but you get into the KG-5 you'd be lucky to even see all the people in the KG-5 in three months because of the great divisions in size and the difficulties of moving about the ... the right to move about, you see. And did you go aboard this American big ship, the *Missouri*? Well that's a comparable sort of picture and you can imagine when you get aboard that one how long it would take to know everyone in the ship just in the course of your duties.

How much was radar involved in those various landings that ...

All the time.

Can you describe that?

Yep. When you're in the tropics you can't see clearly like you would if you were fifteen miles off Sydney you can see all the beaches and you can pick all the landmarks out. When you get into the tropics it isn't like that at all. There's always a haze; it's the humidity, the ... and you're actually looking through what is no more or less than thin cloud, you know, so it is not a clear picture. People would have false ideas about that until they've been on the coasts of these islands frequently and they know. You can see its land but that's all you can say. And picking out landmarks most difficult. Now, with radar – on surface radar – within what you'd call the bombardment range you can actually get a picture of the shore and the picture of the shore with its protruding little peninsulars and little isolated islands and so forth is an absolute identification when you refer to the chart. And, indeed, it is a chart in itself. So the navigator of the ship in this case was Clive Hudson who was with the ship all the time and a very ... you know, he's a very, very constant kind of person. He never let anything slip past him. He was working all the time in preparation for all the bombards. He had every chart he could think of and every identification and he used come and rub shoulders with me and say, `Is all that radar going?' because he really depended mainly on the radar because of the clarity of the pictures compared to what he could see through binoculars. Indeed, John Bull, after the war, said, `Do you know that Clive was decorated?' and I said `No'. And he said, `Oh, he got mentioned in despatches' and he said, `I reckon he should have torn off one of the leaves and given it to you for the PPI picture'. That's how valuable it was to him, you know.
And the ... when you're going along and you're looking for safe water and you expect safe water, it's a great security if you can say that we've got on watch surface observation for seven miles around us. So that if a periscope was within seven miles and the sea wasn't too bad, you'd pick it.

(20.00) You'd pick a periscope?

Mmm.

Gosh.

See, that's the thing. It's a radiating bar. The ... that wouldn't be complete cover of course, would it, when you think that the *Hobart* was in fact torpedoed from ten miles, as I said, at Espiritu Santo. It's a know fact, that's a real sniper's shot that one, isn't it? But still it did ... it always offered security for people and you could always see where you were in relation to other ships that were moving and that station – it's called, when you are in station – that's a godsend to the officer of the watch and all the people on the ship because they reckon that no-one's going to cut across your bows. Now it happens, and it happened after the war as we well know with the aircraft carrier and all the rest ...

The *Voyager* and the airbase.

Well, you see there's lax discipline somewhere and that's what they try to prove and you don't know who's really at fault. But tremendous value. And don't underestimate the value of the sonar. We had a fellow in the ship who was a very fine anti-submarine officer – his name was Tassicker and I've tried and tried to find that man again and I've never could – but Tassicker, when we were in Wewak – we're just occupying a place more or less then – eighty yards off the ship he picked up a submarine echo, in harbour, and moving, see, going flat out. And he immediately signalled all around and it was picked up by someone. It was confirmed signal submarine and moving out, right. If they'd wanted to blow up ships they could have done it but they were escaping – high ranking officers, probably, of the Japanese force. But he was always on watch with his ... it didn't matter what was going on, everyone's in harbour, you don't have your radar on in harbour unless you're looking for aircraft and Tassicker picked up that submarine and no-one else did – it was the old *Hobart* – see, so ...

Do you remember any of those landings in particular?

Oh yes. If you want to have detailed descriptions they are all written but if you want to just know funny sides of it ... I mean, there are some sad sides to it as well but the funny sides of it. We're steaming along and suddenly someone spots a mine right in front of us. And, you know the old picture you see in theatres: Swing her over and get out of the way of this mine. Well, it's not as easy as all that when a mine is in front of you because which ever side you swing you're going to rub something on it. Well, this damn mine just went down this side of the ship – the big `if', you know about that. And the other things, that's one of those silly things which is dangerous but it is ridiculous, you know. And God knows how many other mines he went past but that one was very visible to everybody.
And the sad thing. Somewhere near Tawi Tawi, that's an island ... a pair of islands. One island there ...

How do you spell it?

Tawi Tawi. Tawi Tawi – oh, I've got some other stories about Tawi Tawi – but anyway we spotted in the distance a raft, you see, and it had two men in it and we got our binoculars on and have a look and they're Japanese. And so before anyone can decide what to really do something about them, we are actually approaching them, and they're relatively not moving at all and they just took hand grenades and pulled the pin out and held them to their stomach and, boomp, they destroyed themselves. There was no real threat to them at all. I mean, that was after ... and I think Commander Freddie Cook said, `Oh well that's about the last we'll see of the Japanese navy'. But it wasn't so because it happened quite a few times with other ships.

There was a lot of Japanese on rafts and every time anyone approached them they killed themselves.
Now that's an interesting thing because when you think of your disciplines in life and what people could do to indoctrinate you so as to make you do that, that would have to be pretty powerful thing, wouldn't it? For them to be able to think like that that they will not give in; they will not be killed by someone else, see, that's ... and you wonder how much that's lying dormant for the future.

(25.00) Remember going ... excuse me. Remember going into Manila?

Oh yes; oh yes. That's half ships sticking up out of the water – funnels, masts – you're steering all, you know, in between all these things. And that was an interesting place. I got lots of photographs of that and it was a dangerous place – a cesspool really – because you had all the scum of the place that would come out to loot. And, of course, all the buildings were cockeyed, blown up, and great bullet holes – shell holes – in 'em all. It was really fascinating to see and, you know, it was a ten year job to pull it back into shape, obviously. And, of course, the American navy went in; oh, the English navy came in; we went in; and troops were going ashore in droves – you know, a good excuse to let them get ashore. And we had big problems 'cause they used to go out and get drunk and the city was full of brews made by Philippines – you know, potent, poisonous wines and things that you wouldn't know what was in 'em. We had a party formed to go and find our men. We did find quite a few of 'em and they were so drunk that we brought them aboard in a net. No, that's right.

How did you get them into the net? What did ...

Well, they went out with ... The shore going party – the armed party – went out with a big barge and they were all put in the barge and brought back and the net was laid on the floor of the barge and they were all put into the net and hooked onto our giant crane and brought on board. Right. So that's what happened with that one. But the ... Um, people forget that the Filipinos have a great graduation from educated people down to very primitive people and I was in Subic Bay which is south of Manila Harbour and I went to an American PX club – or whatever it is, a club where they're allowed to drink – they don't have drink in their ship by the way so that's why they have these places ashore – you can buy peanuts and potato chips and ice-cream and all the grog in the world and they had poker machines too, by crikey. And while we were all there enjoying the beer and one thing we hear a couple of shots. You know, in the war – I mean more than now – you hear a couple of shots, they mean something, see. And so everyone pricks their ears up – you know, just the same as you hear a big gun somewhere, it's the beginning of something – so everyone pricked their ears up and we didn't hear any more. Then time came for the barges to ... and the pinnaces to come and collect all the officers to take 'em home and we're walking out of the PX hut along there and we meet two Filipinos with a bamboo pole, I suppose it would be about fifteen feet long – thick bamboo like this on his shoulder – and in the middle is this poor Japanese – emaciated Japanese – with his hands tied so that they are tied above the pole and his feet tied above the pole and he's as dead as mutton but he'd been shot twice and stabbed to death and disembowelled and they were walking along and his guts – his small intestines – were dragging along and every now and then a fellow would put his foot on it and it would drag it out further, you know. And they were delighted with themselves, right, this ghastly sight, you know, like this. And I stopped with a fellow named Pony someone–or–other who was a warrant officer and he said, `What'cha do that for?', see. And then they started waving their hands and saying that this Japanese had been left over from something or other and he'd killed

– they have a village – and he killed relatives in his village and raped one of the women. And, of course, in the jungle there you can actually live off a lot of things for a while but you can't live there indefinitely and that's why he was emaciated. But they got him and that's a sad sort of thing that people ... well, I suppose they have some excuse as a retribution but ...
One of the delightful things was when we ...

Could I just put another tape in?

END OF TAPE 2 – SIDE B

START OF TAPE 3 – SIDE A

Identification: Tape 5. The interview with Doctor Burnside.

You were mentioning – perhaps if you could come a little bit closer – you were mentioning a pleasant episode or a memorable one.

Oh a very delightful event. When we went to Tokyo for this signing of the peace – actually Osaka was near where we were, I forget whether it was the middle of the day or something – a Royal Navy aircraft carrier, the name of which I just can't remember started to come up from a distance and we could see all these people on the flight deck and obviously it was not some normal passage they were making and when they came up closer we recognised what representative ... it was actually, and we proved it by signal to the ship immediately asking about this, that they were the survivors of the *Perth* which was the sister ship to the *Hobart* which ... and these survivors – they were fairly emaciated people; they hadn't been looked after that well – but still they were very happy people and so Captain Dowling called out to stand-to everyone for three cheers. And we had this, oh it was terrific, absolutely magnificent – didn't Roy tell you about that?

No, I didn't ask him about that, no.

Oh it was very ... you know it made you feel that whatever MacArthur figured out as the peace thing, he'd rub it in because these are the people that we, you know, just a part of what we'd lost. And the rousing cheers; oh, it was tremendous and they carried on in the water, you know, it was not a fiddly little thing.

Remember the signing of the peace?

Oh yes. I wasn't there. I was only in a ship near it but Roy Dowling went aboard and, oh, it was really something. I remember writing letters to everyone I could think of to send home and I ... because we were putting the stamp of Osaka on this in the Tokyo Bay on these letters and on every letter the stamp was going to be on where it usually is but I spent all night drawing – I'm quite a good draughtsman for weeping Japanese – and I got it right and when I got it right I did all of them with this same coloured drawing – carefully done, it took me all night – and now they are some of the most valued envelopes going around in philatelists' collections. Oh dear.

Did you go ashore at all?

Oh yes. Oh my word, yes. I went ashore with Commander McNicoll. See, this other commander, Freddie Cook, had left earlier to take on another job and Commander McNicoll took over. He's David McNicoll's brother and there are a lot of McNicolls. The father before was in New Guinea and all that stuff. They are very well known people and he was a fine man

and an interesting man; a wonderful commander. And he went ashore and I went with him and a fellow named Marshall – Jock Marshall – engineer. And we went into the tunnels. The tunnels with the great stores and research laboratories and they were right into the mountains, they go for, oh, tremendous distances. And I came out with a lot of things. Now, mark you, this was probably the first or second day after we had arrived there. The scene changed entirely by the end of the week. You'd get shot for doing what we did but the commander came out with a magnificent microscope and ... oh, and the ship's doctor came out with a magnificent microscope – which I later bought from him by the way.

This is out of the tunnel?

Oh yes. And I ... you know, I ...

(5.00) Did you go into the tunnel?

Oh yes. I went into the tunnel and collected all sorts of sundry things but nothing big. I suppose one could've but you wouldn't know where the hell to put it anyway because the Americans saw to it that they had people with machine guns standing around everywhere anyway 'cause we were in the little bay where all the midget submarines were. But ... so I did collect quite a lot of sundry things which I gave to my children in latter years just as mementoes but the microscope which was an Olympus one, a very good one, I bought that from that doctor and I just can't remember his name because he was a fresh doctor there. The original doctor with us all the time was Frank Fay – did you have Frank Fay's name? – he's in Tasmania.

No.

And he's the son of a famous surgeon that used to be in ... well, he is a surgeon but his father was a surgeon before him in Tasmania and Frank was a delightful bloke, you couldn't find anyone nicer to speak with and he's got a dry sense of humour and I think Frank had to go home because his ... I think he had some trouble about his wife – I'm not sure now, I didn't follow those things up much.

How long were you there?

I forget.

Yes. When did you leave Tokyo?

We left on 11th September '45, that was a Tuesday, to come home and everyone was in a new spirit and cheering and very contented with having survived the war. We ran into rough weather on the 13th, two days later, and we passed a typhoon to the starboard side. The seas were like mountains and we could only do ten knots and I remember the tail shaft of the cruiser was out of the water and started to – they vibrate when they're out of the water – oh, a shocking noise, you think it's going to fall to pieces. The terrific force of wind in the evening but starting to get less rough – become less rough – and then the 15th to the 20th is the south run and we arrived in Sydney on 21st September 1945.

When did you leave the navy?

Oh, I didn't leave the navy till ... till I'd done that job. There's 25th November, that's the 26th, appointed to the staff of the director of navy ward which appointment is held at this date and during that time I had to make trips to Sydney to the signal school and give some lectures and

I have forgotten why that was. 'Cause after all the war was over but it has to do ... something to do with the performance of the sets and I don't know what happened to those lectures. It's just beyond me. I think some of ... I know one of the reasons was that the navy would still be alive and it still had to have naval personnel who were versed in all this stuff and I think it must have been the important aspect of it because I know I also delivered some technical stuff in my address to these people. That was something to do with the use of sets. So they were people who were going to be using sets and someone had to man the ship. The *Hobart* didn't perish straightaway. So ...

So could you describe your demobilisation? First of all, how did you feel? The end of the war, it had been an enormous experience; what was your feeling?

Oh, it didn't represent just that. What it represented to me was the beginning of what I wanted to do which I had arranged when we sank the *Rameses*. I wrote the letter to the naval education officer arranging for me to come home. That was the first signal that reached our ship at the signing of the peace that Burnside is allowed to be demobilised to commence the first year medicine.

(10.00) And you'd sent that telegram in '42: you'd sent that request in '42?

Mmm. And so it came home to roost and the captain called me to the cabin and gave me that signal. Also congratulated me. He said, `Good thinking'.

Why did he say that?

Oh that's the sort of bloke he was. I met him many years after when I was a doctor – he was dying in Concord Hospital. I was a senior eye surgeon at Concord Hospital and I went up to visit him. I was told by another doctor who knew him that he'd asked after me and was very pleased to think I was in the hospital there at present, could I go and see him, which I did. He was an admiral then, so I was still saying, `Sir'. I liked him. I thought he was a very fair man; I really did.

Did you ... I mean, you found the war gave you an opportunity to do things that you wouldn't have done? I mean, that's an obvious thing in one sense but in terms of the long-term aims you had in your life?

Oh, I was blessed with having some wonderful experiences, now that's the point. I've been very, very fortunate. A lot of people would never have experienced all these things that I have and I think they were given to me, see, that's the thing. I just have that ... I didn't actually go and make them; they literally fell in my lap. You just think of all the things I've told you. How did I make any of those? See, they fell into my lap and so I've got to be thankful to someone. I haven't got tickets on myself much but I liked what I had. So, what else is there to say.

END OF TAPE 3 – SIDE A