



TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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Interviewer	Connell, Daniel
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Description	Edward Alfred (Eddie) Keating as a private, Volunteer Defence Corps, interviewed by Daniel Connell for The Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War of 1939-45

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Identification: This is Tape 1, Side 1, of the interview with Mr Eddie Keating. And I'm Daniel Connell, and the date, I think, is the 4th September 1989. End of identification.

Right. What was, could you tell me a little bit about your family before the war? Where did your family come from?

Well, we're been here for, since the mother was born and went to West Plain Creek School. She was born here. Father come from St Lawrence when he was about nineteen or twenty. Him and his brother humped his swag up here, and he went working for a while out. Then he got a crane from the mill, lease cane from the mill on a mountain. He had to clear the scrub, burn it off and plant mollabark cane they called it then. He'd wire it down like you see bananas from the mountain, and sticks of cane, he told me, was thirty-two foot long, thirty-three foot, but thirty-three pound weight. And then later, he bought a farm just over on Lang Creek. 1928 he sold that and he had this ground just as bushland, and this house you're sittin' in now was built in 1928, Brown and Broad, Brisbane firm.

When were you born Mr Keating?

Mm?

When were you born?

8th of March 1917.

Was your father in the first world war?

No. Uncle was. He was, he lost a leg in the first world war.

And you developed an interest in rifle shooting, I think, as a boy?

Yes. I joined the rifle club about 1939.

Were you a good shot?

No. Dad used to say, 'I don't know why you do better, why you can't do better', but that first time after he died - he died in 1940, buried on my birthday - and I brought home the spoon. And, he was a good shot. And he was a good runner - he won a medal for 440.

You said you were born, I think you said, 1928. Is that right?

No.

Sorry, 1917 you said.

1917.

That's right, yes. So, at the beginning of the war, what were you doing? What sort of work were you doing?

Oh, we was on the cane farm. As I said, we been here in this house in the same place since 1928. Always been cane farming.

(5.00) Big farm? Did you have a big farm or a small farm?

No. It was only a small farm. When dad died, it was about 450 tonnes peak. You go on peaks, those ... oh, you still go on peaks in assignments, and now we're up to about three and a half thousand. We just bought another 500 tonne, 600 tonne peak and more assignment. Through the years I been expandin'. The Sugar Board 'd allot out more sugar and peaks like ....

Going back to that period at the beginning of the war, when did the war first begin to affect you? I mean, did it make much difference to you, say, in that early period 1940?

Well, we had clothes rationin', tea rationin' and petrol rationin' and the distillery up here made alcohol that was, by government say, it was put in shellcohol and plimcol. That was mixed and that's what they called it, shellcohol and plimcol.

The, um, going back to that early period, when did you first hear of the VDC?

Oh, from right pretty well from when it started. The rifle club was then and as I said, the rifle club went as one body. They were separate and used to train with them and then they decided all the rifle members that didn't join up went and joined the VDC as a unit. Went there one Sunday and then later on we were just part of the VDC just put into the different sections. Different section leaders and used to train every Tuesday night, Thursday night and Sunday mornin's. And then different times weekend bivouacs go out.

Was everybody in the rifle club happy to have the club, sort of, disbanded and joined into the VDC?

Yes that's right.

There was no dissenters? No-one who didn't like the idea?

No. Well, the ammunition come scarce. That was knocked off. So we thought we'd do somethin' there and most of them was old returned diggers that was in it. It was just as I said, I'm one of the younger ones that was in it. There's a lot of the first world war diggers that was in the club, in the VDC.

Who ran the VDC? Who set the VDC up in this area?

Well I don't know for sure, but I know like it got goin' and then they formed different platoons in different areas see. I think there was about five around Mackay district. We were D Company in Sarina, and that was Captain Tony Scougall, manager of the Plain Creek Mill. Do you want to know this?

So, he was the manager of the mill. He was running your company, or your platoon. What sort of man was he?

Well he's one of the best we had here, the mill manager. You just go and talk to him. He was a good bloke, that's how I'd describe him.

How old?

Oh, he'd be around the fifties I'd say.

First world war veteran?

I think he was, I'm not sure of that. And the second in command was Jack Langdon. He was a world war veteran. He went to school at West Plain Creek, where my mother went to school.

And what was he like? What sort of person was he?

Oh, he was good. You could get on with them all. They was all good blokes in it there. I knew 'em all then.

(10.00) And the - Langdon, what was his background? Was he a cane farmer?

Yes, he was a cane farmer. He was also Chairman of Directors of the mill, and him and his brother farmed up Middle Creek way, up on the banks of Plain Creek on the Range Road, Sarina.

You mentioned that you'd have, each week you'd have Tuesday, Thursday and I think Sundays, and then you'd have bivouacs on the weekend. Um, what would you, talking about those weeknights, first of all, what would you do on the weeknights?

Well, sometimes we'd take a march right out to Mount Shalona[?]. Had to have a paint, mark on a big rock there. That was a tank we'd have to take. Other nights we'd be in ...

How did you go about taking a tank under those circumstances? What would you do?

Well we're supposed to get around. That was supposed to represent a tank, the big rock. And we was supposed to get around with our make believe grenades and such forth. We didn't have any grenades, but we always carried our bayonets and rifles and we was issued with a - what you have your feed in ....

Dixies?

Dixies, yeah. And we had the old issue like boots and uniform, the hats and everything, and different weekends we'd go out. We went right up Middle Creek way, camped in a saw mill one night, and one of our members fell down the pit and - I didn't know at the time - but after, he never recovered from it. He passed away from his injuries. That was a Private Ray.

So, just going back a little bit to that weekly routine, so you'd quite often do route marches and go out?

Yeah.

But you wouldn't do route marches sort of every night, would you?

What?

You wouldn't go marching, you know, you met on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Sundays. I was just trying to, sort of, ask you what you'd do on the days when you didn't do marching?

Oh, that's what I was sayin'. We'd go to the mill sugar shed and just have lectures there, set up. Different ones 'd come and give lectures like and they'd draw, tactics, how we're supposed to be. We was lead to believe the VDC was the delayin' action. If the Japs had of landed, say at Sarina Beach, we were supposed to rush there and delay 'em, take a few pot shots at 'em, get back to another position till the regular troops arrived there. But we had some old diggers - they were full time - and they had a place set up at Sarina Beach on a hill, and they manned that twenty-four hours a day. But I'm sorry to say they're all dead now. They lived in the CWA hut just opposite Sarina Beach door.

What sort of uniforms did you have? You mentioned getting an issue of various parts of clothing and equipment. What did your uniform look like?

Oh we just had the shirts mostly, those tags put on and we had the coat, and a jumper ...

This is army stuff?

Yeah. Army issue, and had army overcoats and blankets. Was issued with one blanket - I'm nearly sure it was one blanket we had, but I know we had army overcoats and sort of a khaki coat like a suit coat, and we had the shirts and khaki trousers and then the army hat, and that's had the VDC on it.

(15.00) What about weapons? Rifles?

Yes, we was issued with a .303, and the bayonet. And we always carried them.

What happened to your own rifle that you had at the rifle club?

Well they ended up, I ended up sellin' that. It had the heavy barrel and after the war a bloke wanted it for kangaroo shootin'. I still have me VDC rifle.

Did you, how much shooting would you do during that war time period in the VDC?

Oh we used to go out to the rifle club now and again and we had a week we put in at the Mill Barracks, we had a whole week there, and go to the rifle club range and put in a couple of shoots in that time. We had to qualify there, get your group. Mine was four and a half inch group.

Four and a half inch what? Four and a half inch gun?

Four and a half inch group, that put in four and a half inch on the card. All the bullets were in the four and a half inch circumference around. Another time we went to, well some of us - Stan Olsen and I - we formed a crew went to Slade Point, had the camp the following week. And we bein' younger, we went into the Slade Point to the Mackay VDC one. And that's where we had more shootin'. I happened to be the best shot that time. Nine, nine, nine hits out o' ten with two seconds up, or three seconds up and three seconds down, nine out o' ten and twenty-four out of twenty-five.

So, sorry ...

Don't want to put this on record ... [Break in recording].

Just tell me that story you were just talking about then. That's fine, that's good.

What, from Slade Point?

Yes.

Where the commander come up to me when I was gonna shoot. He said, 'You can't shoot like that'. He got hold of me legs, and I was layin' down, and nearly put the splits on me. So I, when he went, I just got back the way I was used to shootin', and I got the twenty-four out of twenty-five, which is the top score, and for the dist... so many seconds up, three seconds up and three down I think it was, I got nine hits out of the ten. And later on he, he was congratulatin' another chap for it - Number 3 and Number 4 detail - and I happened to be that, so I thought, 'Well I better stick up for meself', so I said, 'Sir, I'm Number 3 and Number 4 detail'. And he said, 'Oh, this is the man that done the good shootin', so that got me, happened to be the top shot for the day.

Well on those days, what was the atmosphere like? I mean, how, as a group, how did you all get on together?

Oh, we was all, all good. Shoal Point we had a Robin Pitch. He was a black man but he was educated. He's on the Torres Strait boats, Torres Strait fisherman. And, well I've met him since there. He's a real good bloke. We got on of all of 'em there. We was all, all one gang.

And what, you'd have a drink afterwards? Or what would you do?

Well Shoal Point, they had on a drink, but it was that rainy and cold, no-one drunk much, but Stan Olsen and I, we filled our water bottles up (laughs) and brought 'em, and we had 'em at the wife's people's place at Bakers Creek on our way home.

(20.00) What was in the water bottles?

We filled 'em with beer. And as I said, we had 'em on the way home at the wife-to-be's place. I wasn't married then.

> The .... On the bivouacs, what would you do when you went out on the bivouacs? You mentioned one incident where a man fell down a pit, but apart from that, what would normally happen when you'd do a bivouac away from, you know, away from town?

Well, another time we went to, from walked from Orcost[?] into Eton, and another section was, come from the other way, and we had to get through them without bein' captured, that sort of thing. That night we camped in the Eton hall there. Some ...

> How do you spell Eton?

E-T-O-N. That's just out from Mackay there. Well I call in MackAY still.

> I heard about that this morning, the difference. Different people and why different people pronounce it differently.

I don't know how they get M-A-C-K-A-Y for KIE. M-A-C-K, M-A-C is MAC, K-A-Y KAY. So, I don't know how they get that. But me grandfather, years ago when we was kids goin' to Mackay, he'd say, 'Oh, do you goin' to Mackay?' (pronouncing it MackI). We'd say, 'No, we're goin' to MackAY'. And since then, there was a lot of goin' over it and now the official name's Mackay (pronouncing it MackI).

> Going back to those bivouacs, what would you do on a bivouac, sort of, out in the bush?

Well as I just said there, we'd try and spot, one half 'd go from another direction and we'd, they'd be the emeny [sic] like, to us. We'd be the emeny [sic] to them, and we'd try to get through.

> Yes, I'm sorry, you did say that. But what I was wondering, was whether or not you learned bushcraft and sort of guerilla war, um, you know, other aspects of guerilla warfare, as well as the ambush that you described earlier.

Yeah. Well the section leaders, they knew how to read the compass and that. They learnt the, we relied on the section leaders. On our Eton trip, some of 'em - I think I may have repeat meself - they had to fall out. Was about ten mile trip. We used to have different VDC ones had farmers' trucks and they used to be our transport, about three trucks. Just sit on the side of the truck like, and take us around. Another chap that was in it was Charlie Fadden. He was secretary of Plain Creek Mill and that was Artie Fadden's brother. Remember Sir Arthur Fadden?

> Prime Minister of Australia at one stage, yes.

That's right.

> And so when you'd go out, would you get new people outside coming in to do this training? Or would it be people within the unit who'd be doing the training?

Oh no, it was only the ones in the unit, the VDC. We had no ones from outside like there.

Would you have any connection at all with, you know, the larger organisation? Or did you feel that you were basically just a unit off by yourselves?

No, we was just by ourselves, the VDC. We're just one here, and the whole Mackay district was just VDC like. But different army ones 'd come in and give lectures and that. I remember one time, Andrew Cameron, he'd just come back from overseas. I knew him from school and they invited him up for his experience and he picked me out - he knew me - he picked me out to demonstrate unarmed combatin'. I was the guinea pig.

(25.00) What happened?

Oh, well he just demonstrated like. He didn't throw me or anything. He just, had to take the rifle off you and that sort of goin'. Andrew's still goin'. That's ah, who, Andrew put you on to me through Randall like. Randall rung up Andrew and Andrew said the only one he knew who was, was me. He probably remembered from when he come to the school demonstratin', when he come back, I think it was Alamein, when he went over to the desert there. He was one of the first to go. But a lot of the rifle club members joined. They went, like, away. Joined the army. The brother, he went. He joined up in 1940 I think it was, or '41. Got his settlement here. He had to wear... I got word he was wounded. Helmet's got a dint on where it hit his helmet and part of it made his ear, pierced his ear and all the blood come down and I got a telegram to say he was wounded, but luckily it was only done the lobe of his ear. They sent him back as wounded like, but he was right. But he lived till seventy... '78, buried in '79, 1979. He died in Melbourne and he's buried in Sarina.

So, what, how much would you have to do with the other elements of the Mackay VDC? Um, you know, the company that you were in down around Sarina, OK, you're dealing with them most of the time, but how often would you meet sections from other parts of this area?

Oh it'd be occasionally the whole lot would meet. It was like that shoot, all of them was in that, but different times the whole section 'd get together and have a bivouac around. But mostly the D Company used to go around Sarina like on their own. But as I said, the whole sections got together on parade and that.

How big would the whole Mackay section be?

Oh I'd say, just don't know for sure, but I'd say there'd be three or four hundred in Mackay VDC, and I'm not sure. I think we had about fifty or sixty in Sarina D Company.

And how often would you meet? Once every six months?

What do you mean? The whole sections?

Yeah, all of the, the whole area, the three or four hundred you're talking about.

Yeah, about that. Only occasionally the whole lot 'd come together. It'd be something special.

Do you remember that period in early '42 when everybody thought the Japanese were going to invade? Do you remember that period?

Yeah, when we used to have the blackouts and different time be at a dance Saturday night, and siren 'd go and we'd have the .... Lights had to be painted on the cars that didn't show any light much. Went one night I remember. The pictures were cleared out, dances were closed down and everyone made for their home.

Why was that? What had they been told?

Well the siren's went and then we knew there could be trouble, there could be a raid.

It wasn't practice?

No, it was the real thing, that we thought, and they thought like, the authorities, thought was goin' to be a raid. They'd hit up at Townsville. You might recall in the readin' where they bombed Darwin and Townsville ...

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1.

START SIDE 2, TAPE 1.

Identification: Side 2, Tape 1, Mr Eddie Keating. End of Identification.

Right, and so, people went home expecting, what, this is, what, before Pearl Harbour - not Pearl Harbour - before Coral Sea battle, or after?

Which do you mean?

This time when everybody had to leave the picture theatre and go home.

Oh that was after. Was up in New Guinea there.

You were in New Guinea?

No, the brother was. When the Japs were in New Guinea, what I meant.

Right. Oh right, yeah. Remember that period, that Christmas '41-'42 when a lot of people panicked. Very panicky feeling, a lot of people have told me, in different parts of Australia then.

No. I don't know of anyone panickin' but we was all thought the worst might happen when they got so close and when they bombed Darwin and was over Townsville and got into Sydney Harbour, it wasn't too good. And my own opinion, it's a wonder they didn't land somewhere on the coast and blow up a few bridges. It would have put the troops' trains out - they went up and down - and that. Mackay was a base for the American troops, for their leave, and a lot used to come out to Sarina, used to be more Yanks here than Australians at times.

How did you get on with the Yanks?

Yeah, well, what we seen of them there they were all right like.

There were a lot of them about, and quite a few people had conflicts with them, but you didn't? You got on well with the Americans?

Yeah, well I never had that much to do with them like, there, but they were just American soldiers to us here. Those on leave, they used to go horseridin' and hire bikes and that from Mackay and well they had - the Grand Hotel was goin' then - and that was one of their main bases for leave.

What about things like beer? Was it hard to get beer with the Americans here?

What did you say?

Was it hard to get beer with the Americans here?

Well they always got it. They had the right money. They didn't care what it cost and they always could get it where we couldn't. But it was sort of rationed then. One publican in at Sarina 'd say, 'All right, two and on your way'. That was his, that's what he got to be known as, 'Two and on your way'. That's how short the beer was.

(5.00) He didn't say that to Americans though?

Well it was a limited supply in Sarina. They only got so many kegs each week and they sort of had to ration it, but I suppose if the Yanks had the money, they'd get it, which they did have. They could flash it around to the Australian soldier who wasn't paid so well.

What about the armed forces? How did you get on with them? The Australian armed forces?

Oh well, they were, lot of them, they were friends like. You knew 'em. And they were just see 'em when they come back. There's the brother, and uncles and cousins and that all in it. Another cousin, he was overseas there. Another cousin from Brisbane, he was in the air force. Well he never come home. They got word to say he's lost over Germany. He was a gunner in the, oh a gunner or a navigator in one of the planes, and that's the last. They don't know what, they never found him.

How did the members of the public look at the VDC? They'd sort of laugh that little bit, or did they take it seriously?

Oh there mighta been a few that thought we was 'Dad's Army', but most of them, I think, thought we were doin' something for Australia. That's what I said. The older diggers was the most ones in it, that's been to the first world war, and they were too old to go and they thought they'd do a bit more to try and help out on this one, and I think the people realised that and took it all right.

You never, you don't remember any incidents of people, sort of, throwing off at the VDC?

No I don't recollect anything like that.

> Earlier in the war, people in the Militia were called 'chocolate soldiers' and things like that. I just wonder whether the same sort of accusation was thrown at the VDC?

Oh there might have been a few, but with the Militia, there, some of 'em was in the thick of it in New Guinea. They were sent there and what I heard, a lot of Militia done a good job up there.

> Sure, sure. The .... Was it hard to combine the VDC work with being a farmer? Just getting the time in the week to do all those things. Was that hard or not?

Yes, well it took a lot of your time, but we just thought, 'Well, if it comes to it, we gotta know something', to be able to do this delayin' action. As I said before, the VDC, we were told we would delay action till the troops, the regular troops, could get down to take over.

> So, but I mean in terms of how it affected you, you didn't have any trouble getting .... Oh, you said it was hard, but you basically didn't have any trouble getting the amount of time you needed to go to the VDC and go off on all these bivouacs and on Sunday, or whatever it was, to do VDC work?

No, well on the farm, I was - like brother and I here, and he just took the time off. Had no-one, no bosses to ask, you just went.

> What about .... Some members of the VDC - were they a bit wayward? Didn't turn up?

No. I think most of 'em was all keen. There was not many absentees in it all through the trainin', all through the war, and we had good section leaders there. We was changed different times to different sections. Different times we had a different section leader and we all got on well. We just, as I said, just one band.

(10.00) After 1942, you know, going into '43 and then '44, apparently a lot of people felt that the danger of Australia being invaded had reduced. That didn't cause people to lose interest in the VDC?

No, well, it sure had the VDC a bit worried at times - how we were gonna stand up to it, to delay 'em, if we had enough trainin', enough to delay 'em long enough for the troops to get here. That was the only thought I think most of 'em had.

> But they didn't lose interest later in the war when the danger had gone away?

No, I think every man was there right till, we come till we's told we's no longer needed and we had a discharge. We discharged then after the war. We kept goin' for a while after the war and then we got word from the head VDC that the VDC would be disbanded, and we all turned up there and got a discharge, sayin' we were no longer required.

You used to meet, you know, following that regular pattern, Tuesdays and Thursdays and once on the weekend ...

Sunday mornin'.

And Sunday morning, even after the war had finished?

Yeah, for a short while.

How long?

Oh, it'd only be, if I remember right, only be a month or two after the war. (Telephone interruption).

You were saying that there was no-one really who dropped out right through those four or five years?

No, the only ones that's dropped out, they joined the forces. Decided to join the force. That was the younger ones like.

Were you involved in also watching out for aircraft and things like that? You know, air raid warden duty? Did you do any of those other types of war activities?

No, as I said, there was full-time VDC stationed at Sarina Beach and that was their job, twenty-four hours, to watch for everything. They had shifts and used to walk from the, as I said, from the CWA pub up to their, they had a beaten track up to their little shelter on top of the hill and that, and they watched for any suspicious boats or submarines or anything that may be suspicious.

Did they spot anything during the war in this area? Did they spot anything that you know of?

No, not that I knew of. One Sunday there I remember that well. It was my birthday, and the VDC we all put in a single line telephone to the VDC at Sarina Beach from tree to tree. That's how I remember that, bein' a birthday.

And what did you do when you had it in? What was the ...

Well that was for the permanent ones at Sarina Beach to use so they had quick contact with Sarina.

Were you paid at all for your involvement? Did you get any money at all for your involvement?

Oh the week's camp and that we did. We were paid so much a day when we went on full-time like, as I said, a week at the barracks in Sarina and the week at Shoal Point. I think that's the only pay we received.

Could you tell me a bit more about your work as a cane farmer, um, you know, under the war time conditions. How did the war affect being a cane farmer?

Well we was rationed of petrol for one thing, and you had to have the petrol tickets. I remember one instant where the depot wouldn't let me have the drum petrol. Said, 'There, you had one this month', and he had to ring up Croker - Rohan Croker in Mackay was in charge of Crokers and Sons - you might recall while you're up here they just celebrated their 100 years of business. So they said, 'Oh, well, give Eddie another drum. He's got to cart his cane'. And that's how bad the petrol was.

(15.00) What about labour. Was labour difficult?

Yeah well, some of the farms had the girls on. They had, they come to the dances and that, they had the uniform on.

These are Land Army? Land Army, are they?

Yeah, they were the Land Army girls there. And I know there was a few in Sarina and they only wore their uniforms like when they went out.

And how did the, how important was the Land Army in helping sugar farmers in this area? Was that fairly insignificant, or was it, did they do a lot of work here? The Land Army? Was it a really big contribution or a small contribution?

No, there wasn't many in Sarina. I only know two or three of the Land Army girls in Sarina. But labour was short and in those days it was all hand cuttin'. Cut by hand - the cane knife.

Yeah, I was just going to say a lot of the Italians had been interned, hadn't they?

Yes. At a camp, oh, at a place set up in New South Wales I believe for a lot they interned.

Did many go from this area?

No, I don't know of many from here. Most of 'em was up from north around Innisfail and up that way.

Where would you get .... You didn't employ any Land Army girls I don't think, from what you were saying. Did you? You didn't, no. No Land Army girls?

No. We had no ...

The men to cut your cane. Where'd you get the men to cut your cane?

Well, we cut our own, my brother and I, and loaded and carted it right through Sarina. First was in to, right into the mill yard, and they got stuck for room and we went right up through the street right up near the ambulance there, in front of the Catholic Church, to the tram line there.

And how many people would you normally have to cut your cane? Just two or three? On that size farm?

No, as I said, on our side, we cut our own there then.

I'm just trying to get an idea of how, what the difference was between the normal situation and that war time situation.

Yeah, well, before when they were hand cuttin', there'd be round 350 men cuttin' cane. That's with the cane knife. That's before the harvesters come in. We're all harvesters now. We got harvesters about twenty or thirty years ago. We had different sorts, the Hodge and the Crichton and the Mezzy and the Massey, and now we're on the Toft.

So, just talking for the moment about the business of being a cane farmer, how, who was it who determined how much you could produce? Were you controlled in the way you operated as a farmer, in terms of selling and production and volume and things like that?

Oh yes. It's always been controlled. You have a Sugar Board and you have the sugar peak and assignment. You just couldn't come here now and buy a block of land, even today you can't just go and buy a block of land and start growing sugar cane. You gotta have sugar peak and assignment. It's gotta be assigned to the Sugar Board, and there's all different - there's some big growers, some small growers. They're all got a different tonnage, and that's what you're allotted to right from way back since I can remember.

The war. Did that change that system? Affect that system at all? Or it was just completely normal?

No, it was normal, but fertiliser, you had a job to get the right fertiliser. You had to make do with any sort of fertiliser. You never got the next year's back then. Fertiliser was short.

(20.00) And in terms of your VDC work, you were also working, you know, your VDC work was with the manager of the mill. Did that make any difference to you, the fact that you were, you know, your VDC work and also your farm are all sort (interruption by train horn) were also, all of them connected to the mill? I mean the mill is a very key part of your life there.

No. We just knew him more personally and we got on with him well. The cane inspector, he was our ambulance man, first aid man, and you had to go up and say, 'Bill, I want another couple of trucks or something to get out', and he'd just say, 'Well Eddie, don't go out on me, will you?'. 'No, I won't go out on you Bill'. And ... (another train interruption).

When the war came to an end, what were you doing? How did that day go, that August the 15th? What were you doing on August the 15th?

Oh, that's askin' me something now. I just couldn't tell you.

You don't remember the end of the war as a particularly interesting day?

Oh I remember when it finished like there, but I don't remember any special occasions. They had celebrations up there, victory dances and that sort of thing like in Sarina. Everyone was happy, I know that. The war was over. We're still lookin' at some of our clothin' coupons we still got here. Goin' through the old tins yesterday, and the old coupons you had to have for your clothin', or tea, as I mentioned before, you had to have them. Petrol coupons and I explained about the petrol.

> So the war came to an end. You're no longer in the VDC. Had they been wasted years in the VDC, or you think they had been worthwhile?

No I don't think it was wasted. I had a lot of friends. I knew everyone those days in Sarina. Well in those days I reckon I knew ninety per cent, but today I don't think I know ten per cent. All the old ones are goin'. There's newcomers comin', and specially now with the coal over the range, we got - they took, ah, an eighth of our farm and got the diesel sheds on it, and they, take the diesel sheds in '79, they took a tenth and then they took a bit more, and then three or four years ago, they took another chunk, another seven acres, and then just after that they took another two acres for a car park. So we still don't know what's gonna happen with the coal line. All the diesel sheds - you might look out the window and see 'em there. And if you're here at night, and they're shunting, you haven't got to look to see 'em, you hear 'em.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1