



TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

Accession number	S00754
Title	(261374) Allan, George Urquhart 'Scotty' (Wing Commander)
Interviewer	Stokes, Edward
Place made	Not stated
Date made	2 January 1990 and 8 January 1990
Description	George Urquhart 'Scotty' Allan, as a wing commander, flying Catalinas, interviewed by Edward Stokes for The Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War of 1939-45 Archive of Australia in the War of 1939-45.

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BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE A.

This is Edward Stokes, with Scotty Allan, Catalinas, Tape One, Side One, just testing.

Alright, well this is just beginning talking with Scotty.

Scotty, you were saying of course that you were born in Scotland, and you were telling the story of enlisting in the war.

Yes.

I think it began with a poster about Kitchener. How did that - how do you remember that?

Oh I'll tell you. Mind you I was pretty young and thoughtless at the time. Whatever my mother wanted me to do I did. Till when this poster was stuck up in our village, 'Kitchener wants you' with a - and saying there would be conscription - my mother got hold of me and said that she didn't like conscription, and, since I was seventeen, I was almost due. So I was sent off to Glasgow to join up. Which was inevitable anyway.

I went to Glasgow, and got off the train. Saw a sign which said, 'To the recruiting office', and I walked in. And, after a bit of byplay, I sat down at a table, and did some sums, and a - and wrote an essay, and answered questions, and whatnot.

Then the - the next thing that happened was that it was decided that I would be accepted. I didn't suspect otherwise. Then I had to get on the train, and I found myself in the Royal Naval Air Service establishment at - I forget the name.

It doesn't matter, it was somewhere in London.

And I - I think you were saying, Scotty, that you - you had no idea of joining the air force or the flying corps before then? That - that you didn't - hadn't even thought of aeroplanes?

No, no, not I.

Well I - I did - I - of course you have to remember that at that time I didn't speak English too well. I spoke various languages, included Gaelic, and so that they pulled my leg a bit when I was in the air force, English fellows, you know.

Could I just pause to ask you one thing: in the village where you'd grown up, had you ever seen an aeroplane?

[A pause.] No. No, there wasn't any.

Had you ever seen an aeroplane ever in your life before the war?

No. There wasn't any. I didn't - I didn't - weren't any.

Anyway I went through, and did the examination, and whatnot, and became - in due course I came up, became a pilot. And of course, my diction not being as good as it might have been, I learned to bite my tongue, and never said anything to anybody about anything.

And in due course I went to - as I say I passed all the examinations for it. Well it were easy. Did some mechanical work. You know, towards knowing about aeroplanes Which was quite simple. And in due course I ....

And of course I had to say I was eighteen, when I joined up, when they asked my age I just told them.

And so then in due course I went to France and ....

(5.00) How long were you actually flying in France for, Scotty, before the war ended?

Oh, I went back to France again, after the war ended. I went - the first time I was not yet eighteen. And the Earl of Dalrymple's son, Ian Dalrymple, he was a - in France too, and he was not then eighteen. However, he got killed. Poor bloke. He was a very nice fellow.

However, the - before he got killed he - old Dalrymple and my father got together and said, 'They'd better come back to England.' Being under-age. So I was hauled up in front of the adjutant, who was an old man. Oh, he must have been thirty anyway. (Laughter). And ....

That was an old man to you?

Oh absolutely.

And I got an old RA8 to take back. Which I crashed when I landed it in - it struck a tree stump that would have been sawed off below the level of the grass. And - but the - so then I had to stay in England for a while.

Scotty, could I just - just pause for a moment, to ask you, what are your memories of those very early planes that you flew in the - in the first war? Did - can you remember what they were like to fly now?

Well and true I can.

Well the best of them was the Avro 504K. It - that's somewhat - somewhat similar to the one that QANTAS has. That was in 1917, that's a long time ago. Had - had mono Clerget engines. And Le Rhône - Le Rhône engines in them. That was a very nice aeroplane to fly. We all - fly a BE2e, and it was a - it flew about sixty miles an hour, full - full bore. And was very stable.

However there were some that were not so stable, and of course when I got on I got put in the Camel Squadron and - flying a Sopwith Camel. Now, while I was learning to fly the Sopwith

Camel a lot of young men killed themselves on the aeroplane, having - the aeroplane got in a spin, and that was the end of them.

I remember my first training book, and that described various stunts you could do. And under the one, 'spinning', it said, 'Little or nothing is known of this dangerous practise.'

Mmm.

Of course any pupil now learns - can spin the aeroplane, and get out of the spin again.

However, I flew the Camel. And went to France with a Camel. And ....

Were you involved in any combats in France?

Oh yes, quite a number. And we flew as a flight of aeroplanes. There was no question of you knocking down an aeroplane. This - it was the flight that knocked down the aeroplane. So I fired, oh, many shots, at numbers of aeroplanes, and chased them around in circles and whatnot. Because a Camel was very nippy, and could turn well inside any - any - any enemy aircraft.

So it was a matter of - it wasn't very fast mind you, but it could turn.

So that was that. I was sent back, as I say, to England. You know, I - because I was under age.

(10.00) You ...?

Mmm?

I was just going to say, Scotty, you'd said at the beginning that you'd never known - you'd never seen a plane before you enlisted and so on.

Aye.

Having learnt to fly, having spent some time flying, just in - this is just looking at the first world war ...

Yes.

... did you see then that your future would be with aircraft?

No fear. I'd no brains at that time, I was - I didn't think I had a future. You see, the common rumour in the Royal Flying Corps at that time was that the Camel pilot, the average life of a Camel pilot in France was nineteen days. So I didn't expect to come away from France again. Quite casually, I don't - I wasn't frightened or anything like that. There was - I just accepted it. And I -however, there we are, I've survived.

Actually, I do realise that about the pilots in the first war, I meant - in fact I meant after the war, after the first war was over.

Aye.

Did you then see, and did you really want, to make your whole life with aircraft and flying, or was it simply that one thing led to another?

One thing led to another.

You see, after the war we stopped flying, and I was sent home, with a gratuity, I think it was thirty bob I got. As a gratuity. And when I got home - during - in Scotland you have to plant three trees for every one you knock down. So the trees they'd had on our estate was cut down, my brother and I got the job of planting trees.

So then after that I thought, 'I wonder what I'll do now.' So I joined an - an engineering firm. I won't bother to tell the details of that.

And then came depression, [someone can mother?], so I thought ....

Could I just ask you about the engineering, because I have been told by other people that later when you were with Catalinas you had a much deeper knowledge of engineering than a typical pilot would.

Oh aye, oh yes.

What kind of engineering were you involved in, what were you doing?

Mechanical engineering. Mostly - some motor cars, blacksmithing. All kinds of engineering. Oh yes.

And how were you trained in that engineering, Scotty?

I - I went - I was apprenticed then, at that time. Mmm. And I completed my apprenticeship too. And I became very much in demand. You know as an engineer.

Mmm. Right.

For anything that went wrong at all they sent for me automatically. And I - so then ....

Just one other thing perhaps I could clarify now. In one of the notes on your life, a document I've seen, it lists between the period 1922, that's four years after the war ended ...

Right.

... 1922, to '29, you're listed as being in the RAF.

Yes.

Was that a full-time officer ...

Yes, yes, yes.

... or in the reserve?

Yes. I joined the - I was going to say - depression's came along, and I detested doing nothing. And I didn't put up with that for long. So I joined the RAF. When it went to the - when I went into the RAF I didn't mention that I had been an officer in the RAF - in the RFC - before that. So I was taken ....

Why - why didn't you mention that?

I'd never thought of it.

And I - I joined up in the - in the ranks. Whereupon, after various places I went to, I enjoyed, in the RAF, finally I was sent out to - to Mesopotamia. Iraq you call it now.

Mmm.

And when I arrived in Mesopotamia there was bubonic plague around. And all the troops were behind barbed wire, and I was not allowed any contact with them. And since I was a - at that time an LAC, which is a leading aircraftsman, I was in charge of the troop.

(15.00) And so I spoke to the officer through the wire, and I took charge of the station. You wouldn't believe it, the funny things that happen to - one way or the other.

So then, after I'd been there for a year or so, the assessments of your capabilities are - are either, 'average', 'above average', 'superior', or 'exceptional'. They tell me that only one per cent per annum are signified as exceptional. Well I was put down exceptional. Then - and it's all on the papers that I - the [inaudible].

Then I - they - there was a notice up, that anybody who could fly, or, you know - let the air force know, they may be trained as a pilot. So I thought, 'Oh, bloody hell, I'll have a try.' So I put my name down, and I was sent to Egypt, to Abu Sueit, to learn to fly all over again. (Laughter).

Well they - they must have had a bit of a surprise when you turned up, and ...?

No.

No?

No, no. You see, I was a - I was an LAC then.

No, but I mean that you - you could fly. They must have realised fairly quickly that you had flown before?

Oh, they - my instructor was so dumb, he wouldn't know anything. It's a fact. A fact. He was. A young officer. I knew more about flying than he did.

Anyway I passed that course. In which I was nominated as 'superior.' I was then sent to 47 Squadron, which was the most delightful officers and gents you ever came across.

When you'd completed your flying training, Scotty, what rank were you, were you a commissioned officer then?

Sergeant, sergeant. No, I was a sergeant then.

And I was telling you about 47 Squadron. A very nice squadron.

However, I wasn't there long, when the powers that be caused me to send back - sent back to Abuswar, to be an instructor.

So I instructed away merrily, and there was a squadron leader Saundby, who then during the war became an air marshal. However he was a squadron leader then. One day I took an aeroplane up, and once it got in the air, just when it got to off the ground, I went to close the throttle, and I - the - it was stiff. And I pulled it back, it stuck shut. No engine.

There was - I - the aerodrome was underneath me, and I swung round, and landed on the first bit of aerodrome I could come to. As it happened the CO's house was on the corner of the aerodrome, and I missed the CO's house. Not by much, but I missed it.

And what sort of plane was that in, do you remember?

A DH9A.

And Mrs Saundby got the willies. Hysterics I suppose. And I got - I was court-martialled. For endangering His Majesty's aeroplanes.

How could they reasonably do that if your engine had failed?

They didn't believe it, they thought it was just bad flying. Because whoever serviced the aeroplane said the aeroplane was alright.

Anyway a Squadron Leader MacIntyre was my officer - defending officer. And we won the case. And I was exonerated. And so nobody got blamed for it. But Mr Saundby was very - oh. Vicious. Vicious we'll put it.

(20.00) This was the squadron leader?

Yes.

Was the word you used then 'vicious'?

I said 'vicious'.

And I got the willies about it. So I asked for - to be posted. Because it was no good me staying in that - in 4FDS.

Well the air marshal at that time was Air Marshal - I've forgotten his name. Oh, I should know it.

The names don't matter too much, Scotty.

Well - oh, because these names went on and on, you come across them all the time.

[A pause]. I was saying then, I applied for a posting, and lo and behold, I got posted back to 47 Squadron. 47 Squadron was notified, and the day that I was to depart from 4FDS, the whole of 47 arrived, and the whole lot of the aeroplanes landed in formation. And the CO of 47 Squadron was in the leading aeroplane, got out of his aeroplane, and walked over to meet me, and showed me into his aeroplane, and put me in the cockpit, and he got in the back. And that was really something.

So that was a really very public vote of confidence in your ability as a pilot?

Too true.

And of course - and the CO probably was getting a bit at Saundby.

Yes, sure.

Could I just pause to ask you something more general here - you speak very highly of 47 Squadron, and, by implication, of this commanding officer.

Yes.

Who made a very public, and very clear gesture about your ability.

Yes.

But you'd said also before that - or implied - that you didn't think a lot, perhaps, of the commander of the other squadron, and that you'd also said that your instructor who taught you to fly in - in Egypt was a fairly hopeless sort of case.

Mmm.

If you looked at the general - across the general spectrum of officers in the RAF after the - after the first world war, in the period between the first and second wars, when I suppose you were laying the foundations of the ...

Yes.

> ... the second - the second world war air force, what was the quality of officer? How good were men?

Oh, they were good. The ones that were in the squadrons out doing the patrol work, they were good. In the training schools I suppose they didn't have people that had the nouse that those out on the squadrons had. We'll put it that way. I - I don't know for sure, but that was my experience.

> Mmm. But you say your general - your general estimation of air force officers would be a good one?

Oh yes. Oh yes. There were some good fellows, no doubt about it. The - because, you know, after I'd been in the squadron for a little while it was decided that we garrison Khartoum. And I and three others were signified - were picked - to go to Khartoum, and run Khartoum aerodrome. There.

So I then went to Khartoum, and spent a year at Khartoum, very happy. And at Khartoum I was meteorological officer, officer in charge of transport, and I - I was a sergeant mind you at that time - and I became a flight sergeant.

There was a bit of a shine about that, because flight sergeant was paid more than a sergeant, as you know. And later on the - it was found that flight sergeants were getting more - were paid more than pilot officers were.

(25.00) And - and they said to me, 'Alright, you'll become a pilot officer', and I said, 'No, sir, I'll stay as a flight sergeant.' And there was a big shindy about that. But - but another fellow and I, we stuck it out. And we became the only two flight sergeants in existence.

> That's interesting, Scotty.
>
> Perhaps if we can move on a little bit, because the aim of this tape is to try to talk more about the later period.

Aye. Yes. Right.

> I - I do know that in the - in the thirties of course you were flying as a civilian pilot in Australia and so on, but just going through to the later part of the 1920s, during that period did you see significant changes in aircraft technology, or did that really come later, more in the '30s?

It was beginning to move then. And an aeroplane like the Fairey IIID was an ordinary aeroplane. [Inaudible], you know, and slow. The next Fairey aeroplane was a Fairey Fox. Curtiss D-12 engine on it, and was very - got fast. Faster. And various aeroplanes came out that were an advance on the ones we had. It was the - beginning to - to shine, if you know what I mean. The air force, then.

But in 1929. 1929. I was then a flight sergeant. [A pause].

Mmm?

In 58 Squadron. I was flying an aeroplane at that time called Virginia. Great big aeroplane. Night bomber. And we were - flew at night-time. With very poor instrumentation, when you think of today, and practically no radio. There was a radio that made noises, but in certain districts the static on it was so bad you couldn't hear anything anyway. So it was practically useless.

What was the crew of this aircraft, Scotty, how many men?

About five. Thereby - tail gunner, nose gunner, engineer, pilot - two pilots. First pilot and the second pilot. That's five, I think there was six.

Navigator?

Aye. No. I was navigator.

However I saw where there was a - a notice in the paper, that Charles Ulm was here in London, and would like to recruit pilots who had multi-engine experience. So I thought, just for fun, 'I'll apply.' And - and I knew well that even if I did get picked I couldn't get out of the air force. So, one thing and another, cut it short.

I - you obviously had a philosophy in life of jumping in at the deep end, and working out the problems later? (Laughter).

Well I didn't work out the problem. Actually Charles Ulm worked out the problem. Because he told me after I'd - he - that I'd been picked to go to Australia, that - I said, 'Oh sorry, I've got to - (laughs), I'm in the air force, and can't get out.' He said, 'Oh well, I've fixed that.' He'd seen the Lord Coulson, who was something to do with that then, who said, yes, alright to let me go. And that - that shook me to the core. And then before I knew any - any more about it I was on the boat sailing for Australia.

Mmm. And you'd never thought of being in Australia before?

No, no. Australia was an island full of, you know, wogs, and away - there somewhere miles away.

Anyway .... [A pause].

So you'd - you were on the boat.

Oh yes, I'd - I'd signed on for three months. A three month contract. So I arrived in Australia, and when we did three months Charles Ulm said to me ....

END TAPE 1, SIDE A.

BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B.

This is Edward Stokes with Scotty Allan, Catalinas, Tape One, Side Two.

Just a moment, okay.

You - this was the story after the three months, Scotty?

Aye. Aye, well when Charles - when the three months were up, I was notified by Charles Ulm, and he said, 'Would you like to take - take on for another three months?' So I said 'Alright', and took on for another three months. When that three months were up, we forgot about it. So ....

Could you just tell us, in that - in that two lots of three months, the six month period ...

Aye.

... where had you been flying for him?

Sydney-Brisbane, Sydney-Melbourne. First non-stop services to these two places. To Sydney, Launceston, and Hobart. And that was all. That was just - still in National Airways.

The distances in Australia must have been very striking for somebody coming from Britain?

Oh, I don't know. I'd been overseas, you know. And it didn't worry me, it didn't worry me at all. You see my business in life, in flying from one place to another was to take a ruler and draw a line, and draw - connecting the two places. That was the line along which I flew. But in Australia people didn't do that. They went - followed valleys, and railway-lines, and whatnot. And - but I never did.

Did they do that to ease the problem of navigation, or what?

Well it meant you had to fly in cloud often. And you - I didn't pay any attention - when I say I paid no attention, I didn't deflect because of weather, or anything like that. Whereas there's habit still in pilot those times - at that time, they went where the weather was good.

That's interesting, was that because of your training in Britain, where you were obviously used to flying in worse weather conditions?

Yes. And not only that - yes. But then, not having sight of the ground, you could only fix your position by dead reckoning. Whereas if you went round valleys, and followed roads, and railways, and whatnot, you got yourself - get yourself lost.

Whereas, for instance, on 1st June, 1930, was the first flight to Melbourne. From Sydney. And I flew that, and I had nine passengers. Of whom Clive [Chaytor?] was one, and he was a

big heavy man. When - in - at Sydney, on 1st June that year it was raining like mad. We took off, and went straight into the cloud.

Over - I reckon we were over Goulburn - Clive Chaytor got up, because he - he never saw anything but cloud, he didn't know where he was, or anything.

(5.00) He got up, and started walking up and down inside the fuselage. That meant that the trim of the aeroplane became nose-heavy when he walked up the front, tail-heavy when he walked down the back. So I told him to sit down and be quiet. And that took a bit of - to do so wasn't too easy.

However, when we got to Melbourne we were still in cloud. When I was - I then turned towards the west, away from the hills, and put the nose down, came down through the cloud, and there were fields. And - then.

I then flew due south till I struck the Adelaide-Melbourne railway line. I turned to the left, ah, to fly along the railway line. I saw a railway station. I passed over the railway station, fairly low, (laughs), I would say, fifty feet, maybe less, and read the name on the railway station, which was Sunshine.

> (Laughs). That's very appropriate after your - after your flight through the clouds.

Yes, I'd say that.

So I then - I'd never been to Melbourne before, and I had with me a second pilot called Pat Hall, since deceased. And I turned to him, and said, 'Sunshine.' He looked out the window, and said, 'No.' I said, 'The name of the railway station.' 'Oh', he said, 'Sunshine.' So he turned that map out, and he said, 'There it is there.' And I said, 'Alright, that's where we are, we'll go along the railway line.'

We came to where the railway line was a little south of Essendon, which was Melbourne Aerodrome at that time, and I turned smartly to the left, flew over the aerodrome, which we saw momentarily, through the rain, and the cloud, and then swung, turned round, and landed. And taxied up. So that was the first flight to Melbourne.

> That's a remarkable story, Scotty.
>
> Just going back to the period in the cloud, two things that interest me. How did you - how did - in cloud how did you work out your wind speed, and wind drift, to - to give you an accurate dead reckoning distance?

Ah ha, a good question.

First of all, there was a meteorologist in Sydney - as you know, I had been a meteorologist in Khartoum. And his name was Nelson, and we used to talk about the weather. Because the winds alter differently to they do in the northern hemisphere.

I knew that the wind was south-west, I knew it increased with height, and turned more to the west. So that I laid off the necessary deflection for a wind of sixty miles an hour, and - but - and coming in from my starboard side. Ah? And roughly I - I give you the idea, what I had to do.

Right, and that was fairly accurate.

The other things that pilots often talk about, the great danger of flying for anything more than a short period in cloud with no visibility - I understand you were in cloud with no visibility?

Aye.

The - the danger of losing your sense of the horizontal?

Ah ....

How did you cope with that?

Well the - an aeroplane is a funny thing. It has a rudder, and it's got ailerons. Ailerons is to - to keep it level, the rudder is to put it in the direction you want to go on. Now an aeroplane that's properly rigged, if you keep it going in a straight line, the - the tilt in either way, as long as the aeroplane doesn't turn, the tilt doesn't matter. It'll straighten itself up. So that you really - in those days I flew on what is known as the turn indicator, on the rudder only. You never - didn't bother ailerons at all.

(10.00) And in your cockpit, did you - you obviously had the instrument that gives the ...?

Oh well yes, the indicator tells you the line.

Mmm.

In the - the fore and aft meter to tell you whether you were level or not was deceptive.

Mmm.

But you - not - no good as an instrument. But then the airspeed indicator, if it showed the speed was higher than it was, you pulled the nose up till the speed was the ordinary speed.

That's most interesting.

Well perhaps if we can move on a little bit, Scotty, because we probably have to be careful that we get time to talk about the second world war period.

Oh sure, right.

I do know that - I think you had a brief time in the New Zealand RAF, in 1934.

Yes.

And then it was after that that you became a QANTAS pilot, I think in 1934.

Yes, yes. In '34 I joined QANTAS.

Right. Could you tell us about that? Why - what happened after the period with Ulm, and - and just that, perhaps fairly briefly, so we can move on to other things?

Well Charles Ulm wanted to make some money. Because he had big plans for the aviation, he could see ahead. And for that reason we went to New Zealand, to do flights carrying passengers in all the towns in New Zealand.

I got to know various people then, including the air force in New Zealand, and we carried them quite a number of flights. You know, carried various air force personnel. So we became acquainted that way. Mmm.

And then you did spend a brief time in the New Zealand RAF yourself, did you?

Not officially. Not officially. The - I've got a photograph of myself as I - I'm an honorary squadron leader.

Oh, I see, right, so there's a - a ...?

Yes. They made me an honorary squadron leader.

Right. Well perhaps if we could move on to the period with QANTAS, because I know it was with QANTAS that you later - or I know you were a pilot initially, and later a captain of a - an Empire flying boat, and of course it was that flying boat work that led ....

Yes.

Led directly to your work at Rathmines and so on.

Aye.

Tell us about the beginnings with QANTAS, and whether you immediately started working with seaplanes or not?

Well I joined QANTAS 1934. The fleet at QANTAS belong - were of the DC4 type of aeroplane, single-engine aeroplanes. And it certainly was a dicey business. You know, Queensland's struck with sandstorms, and these sandstorms are really something. You can't see your hand in front of your face. And so that from one station to another you have to follow cattle-tracks.

And you know where you are along these cattle-tracks, because every now and again the - arising out of the muck, from the sand, was a - you'd see a windmill. You - for pumping artesian water. So that is how you navigate in Queensland in the backblocks.

Mmm, yes, it ....

In those days.

For instance, Captain Brain had no idea about advanced methods of flying an aeroplane. But he used to fly in the sandstorms, and he knew the cattle tracks, and he knew every bush in Queensland, you may say. Which is quite extraordinary.

That's interesting, yes, I've been around that country a lot myself, doing other things, and I know it's ...it's very big and very empty.

Right. True.

(15.00) The sandstorms, did they pose a particular problem with your engines, and your engines getting ...?

No, the engines seemed to pay no attention to the sandstorm. Though Arthur Baird, who was the chief engineer, said they wore the pistons in the piston rings. Since the engine no doubt sucked up a lot of sand and - and ground his cylinders for him. I don't know if it ...?

Yes, that's really what I meant, that it - there must have been quite a lot of wear and tear on the engine.

Ah. Yes.

Do you have any particularly clear memories of any particular flight across the inland, that was perhaps difficult, or dangerous?

Oh, (laughs). Well one day I arrived at Longreach. And the sandstorm was pretty thick. And after - when I got to the hotel at Longreach I could hear an aeroplane. So I rang up the aerodrome, and said, 'What's that?' And they said, 'That was Captain Crowther, coming in. He doesn't seem to be able to find the aerodrome.' And he was flying up - backwards and forwards up top.

So I - I said, 'Alright.' And then they rang up again, and Arthur Baird said, 'Scotty, you come out here', - Jock he called me - 'come out here, and you go up - take off, and go up above the sand, and find Bill Crowther, and lead him in.' So I couldn't see much sense in that. But I thought, 'Well ....' However it was a good idea.

So I went up, took off, and went up, and I - I - it wasn't very long before I found Bill Crowther. And we'd no radio then of course, so what with waving our hands, and pointing and whatnot, I got him to follow - to follow me along. And then I found the aerodrome, and got Bill Crowther down. For which he was very - very frightened by this time, and, as a result, very grateful.

Yes, I can imagine that.

Turning to a slightly different thing then, Scotty, later I know in QANTAS you did begin flying with the seaplanes.

Right.

And it was during that period that you became a - the captain of a - a Empire boat. And I know you did also complete quite a lot of flights, I think, with Kingsford Smith.

Aye.

But just turning to the seaplane period now, when did you first fly in seaplanes, and how difficult was it to make the adjustment from a conventional land aircraft to a seaplane?

Ah, yes. Well it was decided just after the war that you wanted aeroplanes, and flying boats was to be the aeroplane. I was sent to England to - to learn to fly the flying boat.

This was after war was declared?

After war - the war was just finished as far as Australia was concerned. But it was - the war was still on. England was still fighting Germany.

I think we might have perhaps our dates a little bit confused here.

No, by jingo.

You were saying that you began flying - did you fly flying boats for QANTAS before the second world war or not?

[A pause]. Yes, yes, so we did. That was right. We - there wasn't a war that time. Aye, you're right, you're right. I was sent to England to learn to fly the flying boat. And I flew various kinds of aeroplanes, and sailed a yacht with a captain in Southampton, to learn the ways of the sea. I passed the necessary standards, and I found the C-class flying boat very nice to fly. No doubt about it. I - in my estimation the best aeroplane ever built. Including the 747. From the passenger point of view.

(20.00) For instance, in the present day the passenger sits in a - in a 747, and there's the noise, an aeroplane takes off, and we fly back through the clouds, out in the top of the clouds, and the next thing you see is the aerodrome that you're landing on, when you land - when you come to it. Maybe it's hours after. Where they've been sitting doing nothing.

Yes, there isn't much of a sense of travelling in a modern aircraft, is there?

No, by jingo. Whereas in the flying boat, oh, say from Sydney to Brisbane, we flew at fifty feet. With the beaches on the left hand side, and the passengers sit at the observation window, and see the people bathing, and swimming, and cavorting about in the water. The - all - any - so that all the beaches were easy to see, including ships that had wrecked themselves on the shore for - many years ago. And you see
fishing boats, and all kinds of things.

Mmm. It sounds fascinating.

Oh, absolutely.

So I suppose when you were going from Sydney to - to Brisbane, it would have been port out, starboard home? You know, that - (laughs), the expression they used to use for the - the POSH?

And not ....

For the P & O cruisers?

And not only that, but the passengers loved it. They certainly did.

And - so that there was no necessity to fly at any height.

I used to love Darwin to Koepang. Because the water on the Australian shelf is shallow, and the bottom is a pale colour. It's maybe white sand, I don't know, and you could see fishes in the bottom. And turtle, great big turtles, swimming about. And flying fish. And sharks.

In fact one day I - I saw a shark, which was as long as the aeroplane. I could see that because the shadow of an aeroplane is the same size as the aeroplane, the sun's so far away. You know, that - not like a shadow made by a candle.

Mmm.

You're close to something the shadow is much bigger. Whereas it's very little difference.

When you're flying close to the water like that?

So that if something is the same as a shadow, the length of the shadow of an aeroplane is as long as the aeroplane.

However that was some thirty feet. Maybe - maybe more, I've forgotten now. And many people in Darwin queried it, and said I was romancing. And Skipper Gregory, who was the pearl king at that time, said, 'No, he's right enough.'

So Skipper Gregory, on one of his trips out to sea, brought one of these sharks - caught one of these sharks, and brought it back, towing it behind his boat. And it was put up on a gantry, and hung up by the tail for everybody to see.

That's interesting, so you were proved right there?

Aye.

Well I can certainly imagine that, from the passenger's point of view, they must have been wonderful planes to fly in.

Yes.

From a pilot's point of view how good a plane were they to fly, were they to handle? And - and in particular what were the - what was it like taking off and landing and so on. You were saying before too about sailing a yacht, and learning the - the law of the sea. How important was that to handling a flying boat?

Oh yes, you had to know all about that, because you had to come up to buoys. And you had to know the effect of the wind and the current, in order to get to the buoy slow enough so that you didn't pull the buoy out by the roots. And which I seemed to have a flair for that kind of thing. To me it was easy. In the most restricted places even I had no trouble at all.

(25.00) So you found the - the conversion from conventional aircraft to seaplanes quite an easy one?

Oh yes, oh yes, it was very easy. And anyway landing on the water you haven't got to avoid the fence. And you can land any direction you want in. And there is plenty of runway, you see. So.

Would you say - just a moment, Scotty. [Break in recording.]

This is just going on.

Would you say, you know, weather conditions, other things being equal, that seaplanes are easier and safer to take off and land than conventional aircraft or not?

Easier, providing - providing that you're in protected waters, I would say, yes. Yes.

Tell us about - if - if you can cast your mind back, perhaps just talking about Catalinas now, because they're the planes that were involved later - you were later involved with in Rathmines. If you could put - put your mind in a cockpit, a Catalina cockpit, could you describe to us what taking off was like, and how you went about it?

In a Catalina? Well first of all you cast off from the buoy, got clear of the buoy, and taxied out to where you're going to take off. You turned into wind, and pushed the throttles open. Not too quickly, you know, so you didn't stall engines, and you held the wheel in the middle - in the central position, so the aeroplane didn't alter its - as it sat on the water.

I understand you had a lot of spray coming up in the early stages?

No, very little. Very little. There was water splashing around, but you didn't pay any attention to that. There was - not so - not enough water splashing around to obscure your sight.

When the aeroplane got enough speed up to leave the water, when it got up to sixty, seventy miles an hour, it would obviously fly, so you'd pull the stick a little bit back to lift the nose up, whereupon it left the water, and it then became an aeroplane.

The - the little steps in the hull of the Catalina.

That's to ....

How important were they in easing taking off?

That's - they're important at any time, for breaking the surface tension. Whereas if it was just a flat hull, you know, the - it sucks, it sticks. The steps caused - caused turbulence behind the step, which lets the aeroplane come unstuck.

Right, that's interesting.

Well as you then come up in a Catalina, imagining climbing in a Catalina, and actually handling it once you were up in the air, what were they like in those phases of flying?

Oh they were quite, quite easy. Nothing - simple. Of course on a flying boat you're unlikely - you don't do stunts or anything of that kind. It's all just ordinary, plain flying you - you have to do. So that for ordinary manoeuvres the aeroplane just - the seaplane handled like an aeroplane.

One thing I might just ask you there, Scotty, it's something somebody else has told me, for one of these interviews, that I did find a little bit hard to believe, talking about being in a combat situation, and flying a Catalina upside down, is that conceivable or not?

To me it isn't. No.

Would it have had the structural strength to hold together?

I doubt it. It might have. But it was just the - to get out of the upside down position it means you'd have to dive it down, and it would get considerable speed up in the dive, might tear the wings off, I don't know. You may not have enough height to be able to get out from - out of the dive, before you struck the water. I wouldn't try it anyway.

(Laughs). Right. So - well it is certainly most unusual, if it ever happened.

Yes.

Well let's perhaps just leave the ....

END TAPE 1, SIDE B.

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A.

This is Ed Stokes, with Scotty Allan, Catalinas, Tape Two, Side One, Side Three of the whole lot.

Scotty, you've told us generally about learning to fly flying boats, and the story about the shark and so on. Do you have any other particular memories of the flying boat period with QANTAS? Before the second world war? Could you perhaps just tell us the kinds of routes you flew, and how far you flew?

Well we started off flying to Singapore. That is the route was we - at that time we changed our headquarters to Sydney, from Brisbane. So QANTAS became a Sydney based operator, rather than a - than a Queensland operator. Mmm? Right.

We flew then from Sydney, Brisbane, Bowen, Townsville, Karumba, you know where that is?

Mmm.

Groote Eylandt.

I want to ask you about Groote something, I've - I've been there recently. But ....

Aye. Beautiful - beautiful island. Beautiful - Darwin. Koepang. Biama, Surabaya, Batavia - which is now Jakarta - Singapore.

What a wonderful route, what wonderful places to go to.

Oh wonderful places. The - I must say the passengers enjoyed it. Mmm.

And at those different places did you overnight at each place, or only at some of them?

Overnight at each place. Which was very nice. You usually left at six o'clock in the morning, so that it was all daylight flying. As I say it was - it was a - they were flights made for tourist passengers. In fact there was a - a big fuss about the aeroplane in - in England that is for sale now. They're - they're trying to buy it in - for here, to put it on show in - in Australia.

Mmm.

I hope they manage.

Yes, I do too.

Just a - this is just a small issue, but it's just interesting, in fact for some other work, I was in Groote Eylandt recently.

Aye.

Of course the flying boat base then was at Umbakumba.

Yes.

And the man who ran it was a - a European fellow called Fred Gray.

Aye.

Do you remember him?

Yes, sure.

What sort of a man was he?

What sort of a man?

Well what's your recollection of Fred Gray?

Well I - I can remember that he was - more or less belonged to the place. He wasn't always hankering to go home, or anything of that description. He knew all about the fish in the water, and what materials could be discovered at the Groote Eylandt.

Mmm. That's interesting. I'll just pause here a moment. [Break in recording].

(5.00) Scotty, perhaps just going back to the main story, if you looked at your experience in flying these QANTAS seaplanes before the second world war, what were the main aspects of your experience then? Apart from obviously understanding how flying boats fly. What were the main aspects of your experience that you would see being most useful to what you later did in the second world war? Do - is that clear?

I would think, you know, the fact that I could fly at night. I'd no fear about - when it got dark or anything like that I could fly just the same. That was air force experience. Always useful. Been useful ever since I learnt to fly.

That's one thing. Again in the air force I was allowed to spend a lot of time in the workshops. As you know, being a Scotsman, and not very - not very well-acquainted with English habits, and, further, not liking them much, I ....

(Laughs). [Inaudible].

Eh?

Yes. Sorry, I ....

[A pause]. I spent a lot of time doing things for myself. Which - like I didn't - didn't - my duties didn't put me in the workshops, I just went. And things like that.

Right, so by that you're saying you had a very sound grasp of - of mechanical - of aircraft engineering and so on?

Yes. Oh yes.

Was that at all common with the average pilot, or not?

No, it wasn't. Though, mind you, I have come across one or two who used to come with me on these expeditions I had.

Yes.

But - and I took - people often used to - for instance, I used to sit up at night with my big notebook, and make drawings of cylinders, valves, springs, valve-gear, all that kind of thing. And armaments, and sections of the - of the firing mechanism in bombs, and all kind of things like that. And I've had quite a number of fellows, (sneezes), who sat alongside me, and copied what I - into their notebook - what I put in my notebook.

That's most interesting. I have heard it said by one of the Catalina pilots I've spoken to that you were exceptionally good at taking weapons apart?

Yes.

Mmm. And that obviously goes back to this kind of interest?

Yes, absolutely.

Was your interest in this kind of mechanical aeronautical engineering, weaponry and so on, was that based on a first - firstly on an interest in engineering itself, or because you could see it being useful to your work as a pilot?

Both. Both. I didn't think that I could be a proper pilot, unless I knew how things were put together, and how they worked.

And on these long flights for QANTAS, for example to Singapore, did you on those QANTAS planes carry engineers, or were the pilots ...?

No.

Mmm. so if you came down in the sea, did you feel you - would you have had the skill, for example, to have gone about repairing an engine?

To tell the truth, I knew so much about engines, that, though I was in QANTAS for many years, at no time, at no time, did I have an engine failure. Though plenty of engines failed in my time. Flown by other people.

(10.00) Was that because you kept a very close eye on the ground-staff, or because you were carrying out very thorough checking before you left?

No, the ground-staff who overhauled the engine, and put the engine in the aeroplane were competent to do their job. Whereas the pilots maybe mishandled the engines one way or other. Took too much power out of them, and things like that. Mind you, an aeroplane engine goes a long time. And, if you take more power out of the engine than is normal, sooner or later the engine will give up. I never - I run engines always a little under the stated that I could use.

That's most interesting, Scotty.

Just one - a little issue I might just ask you here about, it relates perhaps in some ways to the story of what you've done with your life, being a Scot. And Scots are noted of course for their rugged independence, and for being engineers, and so on. But you also said something in passing a moment ago about the English, and some of their attitudes.

The which?

The - the attitudes of some English people.

Aye.

What did you really mean by that?

[A pause]. Well - mind you I - I'm talking about some, not all - there were many cases where they - how will I put it?

If you'd prefer not to, that's alright.

Oh, I think I'd prefer not to.

That's alright, that's fine.

There are some very nice English people.

Mmm.

You know. But in - you see, when - if you're a certain standing in England, and you join the air force, you automatically get your - get a commission. And whether you've got any brains or not, doesn't matter, as long as your father was somebody.

Yes, the old school tie.

That led me to despise a lot, a number. Never said so, mind you, I kept quiet, never - as I - I say, I didn't say very much.

Did that have something to do with your refusal to be promoted from a sergeant pilot?

Yes. Oh yes. I was very happy as a sergeant pilot, and I wouldn't have been happy in an officers' mess. Not then I wouldn't. In Australia it was different.

Yes, let's just talk about that. We're coming up to the war, and this is an interesting issue, not just for the air force, but for Australian services generally. Was - would you see a clear difference, or not, between the relationship between officers and other ranks in Australia and England?

Oh yes. Oh yes. Absolutely. In Australian service the officers are most appreciated - appreciative of a good man, and use him, you know, as such. In - mind you I was in the service in England in the early days. And no doubt that was the way they were brought up. But if you were an officer you lived in one world, and what is known as the men lived in another.

And there was a very, very clear distinction?

A very clear difference.

That's interesting, Scotty.

Well let's actually move on to the second world war. And perhaps just a few things to ask you, before we actually get on to what you did in it. There had been very great changes in aircraft technology during the 1930s.

Mmm.

(15.00) What were the most significant changes in your mind, or is it - I mean can you explain that simply, or not?

Well one of the big changes were - was instrumentation. Whereas some clever fellow invited - invented, you know, an instrument which would tell you your position at any time. Later on, as you know, you - it'll automatically tell you where you are on an aeroplane.

And this is using radio direction?

Well it's got instrumentation now, and - and posts - and - along the route. That tell you where you are. Whether you believe it or not. It doesn't matter, it's right.

Oh this is today?

Yes.

Oh yes, sure.

So these are the kind of advances.

Then again aeroplanes - oh, in 1940 I used to read the - the air publication called *The Aeroplane*, and I always remember a remark of CG Gray, editor of *The Aeroplane*, before it became, you know, a bit of a newspaper, as it is now. He - he was the editor, and he said that no aeroplane will be ever greater than 40000 pounds.

The reason was quite simple, because by that time the undercap, which has to keep it up, the undercap will weigh more than the rest of the aeroplane, which in those days was a - quite a simple calculation. And obviously - and very obvious.

Mind you, when you think today that a Boeing 747, (laughs), weighs a certain amount, and carries hundreds of passengers, it was wrong.

Yes, but I guess he obviously didn't have the knowledge of metal technology that this ....

No, no, nor had anybody else in 1940.

So, to just go back to that question, you would see the key - the key changes or improvements being in instrumentation, navigational assistance and so on?

Yes, and of course general development of metals. General construction. The invention of titanium, and various other metals, and their uses, are all the kind of advances that [inaudible]. And of course very clever engineers.

That's most interesting.

Another thing I - I wanted to ask, Scotty - this may be a little bit difficult to - to answer, but, from what you - not what you knew when war began, but from what you later knew of the air force during your time with it, the RAAF, and - and perhaps also what you knew of the - indirectly - of the RAF, how prepared were those air forces for major conflict, as it turned out?

What year?

At the beginning of the war?

Oh, at the beginning of the war. Well we'd say - we'd take Australia, for instance. Australia was a pushover. They had no one there, they hadn't any aeroplanes that were worth a darn. They had two or three Hudsons, which were of - already out of date. They had no flying boats at all. Their fighter aeroplane was one designed by Wackett, which again was out of date. So that when the war started, the - as long as the Japanese stayed as far away as they did, the better.

Mmm.

To give Australia time to get some aeroplanes from America that could, you know, perform.

Sure.

Another general question we might just talk about now, before going on to the details of what you did.

(20.00) If you looked at the - the air force that you knew as the Flying Corps. Or the Flying Corps in the first war ...

Aye.

When you were a young man and the air force that you came to know in the second world war. If you looked at its - the planning, the organisation, the men in it, what would be the clearest differences between those two forces in your mind?

Ah, from - say at the end of ...?

Comparing the Flying Corps, as you knew it, at the end of the war, at the end of the first war, and the second world war RAAF as you knew it, what were the clearest differences?

There were more advanced aeroplanes of course. And, with the experience of world war two, the air force in - at the beginning of world war two was much better. At the beginning of world war two Great Britain had a lot of aeroplanes, and not only that, but they improved on them rapidly, as - as the time went on. During the war, they adjusted to world war two very well, in the production of latest type of aeroplanes. The - the - the heavy bomber, and - and fighter aeroplanes were very good. No doubt about it.

I - I'd assume there must have been a much greater level of organisation, given - given that the forces were much larger, and more complex?

Aye.

Was that - how do you remember that?

When world war two - you know, I wasn't in Great Britain. I left Great Britain, as I said, in 1929. But even then there were great advances. With - aeroplanes like the Fairey Fox, you know, were - were very fast aeroplanes. And heavy bombers. Which showed the way to later improved types of heavy bombers, and fighter aeroplanes. There was a - there was a continual development.

That's most interesting, Scotty.

Let's actually turn now to your involvement in the second world war. Just - just a moment though. [Break in recording.]

Right, this is just continuing with Scotty.

Scotty, I know at the very beginning of the second war you went to America to bring out a Catalina.

Right.

This was as a QANTAS pilot, I think, before you joined the air force?

No, I joined the air force. I went down to Wooloomooloo, and I walked into the recruiting office. And I said - the young fellow said to me, 'What - and what do you want to be?', a corporal, with his collar undone. And I said, 'A pilot'. He said, 'Have you any experience?' I said, 'Oh yes.' He said, 'How many hours have you got?' So I told him, '14,000.' (Laughter). So he - he gave a big laugh, and he said, 'Even God hasn't flown for 14,000 hours. But never mind, I'll put it down, I'll put it down. It'll cause a bit of fun.'

So he put down 14000 hours, and I was - walked in to where the chief doctor was. And the chief doctor said of course I'd have to do a medical examination, if I wanted to be a pilot. I said, 'Yes'.

And so this - while this was happening a doctor, whose name I could tell you, but I won't, came in, and he - the chief doctor said, 'This gentleman wants to be a pilot'. 'Oh', this - this doctor said, 'Oh, another - we know nothing about you. He didn't - he doesn't pass. I'll bet you a fiver he doesn't pass.' I said, 'Alright, I'll take that, mister'. Whereupon he - the doctor looked down his nose at me.

(25.00) But the chief doctor said, 'Come on, come on, produce your fiver', he said, 'he's taken you on.' So, with great reluctance, the fellow unbuckled his fiver and put it on the table. And I put mine on the table, and I then walked outside the door, to go to number one doctor, to test your eyes, your hearing, and so on.

Outside the door we met Dr Blakemore, who was the eye specialist. So he said, 'Ah, good day, Scotty, how are you?' I said, 'I've come to do a medical'. He said, 'You don't need a medical, I just did you last week'. (Laughter). Whereupon this doctor wanted to get his fiver back, and the number one doctor refused, and said, 'You won the two fivers', and I got the two fivers, and stuck them in my pocket.

(Laughs). That's a lovely .... So that was a very auspicious start to your second world war.

That's right.

So that was - that was how I joined up.

Mmm.

I was then dispatched to Richmond. Where they had some Hudson aeroplanes. So Mr - a flight lieutenant anyway, who said to me that I'd have to fly, you know, a Moth, before I could go on to more advanced types. So I, (laughs), said, 'Alright'. Then somebody else came along, and told this fellow the score, so we forgot the Moth then, and I flew the Hudson.

I went up with the aforesaid Pat Hall. We took off, flew around, came down, and landed. Pat Hall got out, and I had a fly in it then.

So then I - I was posted then to Brisbane. 23 Squadron it was, if I remember rightly. When I got there the squadron had one - one Hudson. And it was in the hangar. Because the pilots had broken the Hudsons - the other ones - there was only one serviceable Hudson.

So I - I remember the CO, he knew me, I knew him, so I was allowed to fly this one Hudson. So I flew that for a while.

And what were you doing, Scotty?

Eh?

What were you flying?

Nothing. Just flying.

Then a notice came for me from headquarters in Melbourne, did - I had to present myself in - in Melbourne. So I got a ticket, and I went down in the train, arrived in Melbourne, and there was .... [A pause]. The air officer, whoever he was, I've forgotten his name now. Who said I - go to America, and see what aeroplanes were available, and recommend, you know, what the air force was wanting.

Mmm.

I know - know nothing about it, and I thought, 'Well we'll take - try anything.' So I got on the boat, called the - forgotten. Burns-Philp boat. And sailed for America.

When I got there I was told to go to Santiago, so I went to Santiago in the train. When I got to Santiago, I met there the - the gentlemen that had their own Consolidated Vultee aeroplane works.

END TAPE 2, SIDE A.

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE B.

This is Edward Stokes, and Scotty Allan, Tape Two, Side Two. Side Four of the whole lot. And he had ended saying that the company in Santiago had been making Catalinas.

Yes. So that I got very well-acquainted with them. But they were tearing up the Catalina production line, and - because they were going to build a bigger flying boat called the Mariner.

In the meantime I was - I was going to - I went to Washington where they decided who gets what aeroplanes. And I stayed with the Consolidated Vultee representative there.

The air force then called on me, and I went and - the - America was not in the war at this time of course. And I was called to the Pentagon building. I remember it was in the middle of winter, ice on the ground, and very cold.

In the Pentagon building, when I got there, I was shown into a room as long as this, say forty feet long, with a table down the middle. Chairs one each side of the table, and I was - walked in, and sat down.

One end of the room was - what do you call this kind of apparatus? You know, for taking down conversations.

Right, for tape-recording.

Everybody present had a microphone. They - the people - men then started to come in, and fill the room up, and a couple of sailors to operate all this apparatus. The - all these gentlemen were in uniform, and with rings on their arms up to their elbows, and - a whole lot of people.

There when - whereupon, America not being in the war, and knowing nothing about it, they wanted to ask me a lot of questions. What went on in New Guinea, about - the Japanese were down there, how we were coping with the - holding them back and what not. Then - so all these conversations, questions, and answers, were all recorded, and there were many questions about - about the war in New Guinea, Australia, and whatnot, from various - various people.

And did you have to recommend what plane you thought would be a good plane?

Well I didn't have to recommend it, I only told them what I thought.

And what was that?

Well amongst other remarks I said the Catalina, which I'd seen in Santiago, seemed to me the very thing, because you wouldn't need to need aerodromes, and there was plenty of water to land them on. And though it was slow, it would have to be a lot faster indeed to be able to cope with the - with the Japanese fighter, which was very fast. And anyway there may be an advantage in the - travelling at night functioned very slowly.

(5.00) So I was - all this was taken down, at least as far as I know, and I departed.

Then a day arrived, and the general sent for me. So I went, and there was a mob of people there again, and all these chairs were filled up. But this time I hadn't to say anything. The general said all there was to say. And he said that what I said was very handy for them. They'd decided that the Catalina was a good aeroplane. They would therefore recommend that eighty, I think, aeroplanes would be bought, and I - I would get some of them. So ....

And therefore that the plans to close the production line would be changed?

Never said anything about that.

So then one of the gents, you know, come - came to me, and said, 'Would you like to ring up Consolidated Vultee in Santiago, and tell them that we'll get an order for eighty for a start? Maybe you'll get 800 later on, but eighty to begin with, the aeroplanes, just' - would I ring them up, and tell them?

So I rang them up, and told them. They thought I was pulling their leg. However the representative was there, and he took the phone, and he said, 'That's right.' And so then I became a hero as far as Consolidated Vultee was concerned then, and they got busy, and got their line going, and got their order for the aeroplanes, and all was happy.

I went back to Santiago, and while the aeroplanes were being produced, in the meantime notice came that we were to get sixteen of them. And they increased the number of Catalinas for the - for the American air force. So that these aeroplanes were then built.

From - from Australia then came Captain Brain, who was the chief pilot of QANTAS, to fly the aeroplane back to Australia. With a crew of various people on board. So that when the time came to get the aeroplane to take it back we - I did the navigation across to Honolulu, and after that Brain recognised the fact that I flew the aeroplane better than he did. Anyway I more or less took over, shall we say. I didn't take over really, but I got more in charge of the aeroplane, eh? We'll put it that way. And arrived back in Australia with the first aeroplane.

That's remarkable, Scotty. And that was obviously - I mean in terms - before the war the amount of flying across the Pacific was relatively limited, wasn't it?

There wasn't any. However, as a matter of interest, while I was in Washington the Australian officer in charge at Washington was Dicky Williams. And I never saw him.

(10.00) The Australian officer, do you mean the Australian air force representative in Washington?

Yes. Was Dicky Williams.

Dicky Williams? Why did you never see him?

I didn't know he was there. And, as far as I know, he didn't know I was there. But that was right, Dicky Williams was in charge of the air force matters at Washington. Extraordinary.

Amazing. Just a moment.

This is Ed Stokes, just ending this tape. We've agreed to get together another time to finish this off. So that's that.

[Break in recording.]

This is Edward Stokes, with Scotty Allan, continuing on our second appointment.

Scotty, we've talked on the tape here about how you went to the United States to collect the Catalinas, and then you came back with the first Catalina to Australia.

Yes.

What did people in Australia think of your decision to recommend purchasing Catalinas, do you remember that?

No, nobody said anything. Never heard anything about it at all. I suppose it would be discussed, probably, in Melbourne, but I - I didn't hear anything.

I know you did later go to the United States again, to collect a second Catalina.

Yes.

That was - was that before or after you became commanding officer at Rathmines?

After. After. But - during, rather, would be better than ....

Right.

How do you remember being appointed as commanding officer at Rathmines, can you remember that?

No. I was at Rathmines, I was in charge of number 3 OTS, Officer Training Squadron, or something like that.

Operational Training Squadron?

Something like that. I - I just was - was - I was in charge of that from the - from the beginning. But I don't remember being appointed. I just was.

(Laughs). Right.

What sort of - with the - that operational training - operational training at Rathmines, what were the - what's your memory of the kind of training that people did, what were the main aspects of it?

Well they were pilots of course. And they had been to a primary training school, and the pilots were picked by air force headquarters, I had nothing to do with it. And maybe about fifteen or twenty young fellows would arrive who had flying experience. My business was to teach them the Catalina. But not only that, but teach - had to teach them wartime practices in an aeroplane. And teach them about bombs, machine-guns, how to use them, and how to protect themselves of course.

It was obviously a long time since you yourself had flown in the first world war, and then of course later you'd been a peacetime pilot.

Yes.

Did you have any - what direct experience did you have to help in the training?

I was in the RAF until 1928, where I won the Long Spirit[?] Bombing Trophy, for instance. So, when it came to the wartime practices - practice by the RAF, I already knew all about that.

Yes, so you were putting into practice the experience you gained as ...

Yes.

... as a peacetime air force pilot.

I - I - yes.

I was in Egypt, and in Khartoum, where, you know, we pursued various wartime practices, when the natives were - uprisings.

Yes, I remember we talked about that before, Scotty.

Yes.

(15.00) If you look back to the training of men at - at Rathmines, if you - thinking particularly about their training - the training of pilots, how much of their training was practical, and how much of it was based on theoretical, or bookwork. Would you remember that?

Oh, of course you have to give lectures on the various practices, and go out there, and - on a Catalina - and physically do it. When it came to gunnery I - on the Catalina there were machine-guns, and we manufactured, ourselves, drogues we towed along behind another - another aeroplane, so that pupils in a second aeroplane could practise firing at the drogue. In the air. And - and that kind of thing.

Right. How did you - how did you practise bombing, where did you practise that, did you practise it over the sea, or over the land?

Over the sea. With a target over the sea.

What a physical - an object in the water?

Yes. Aye.

So we dropped bombs on that. Aye. Starting off with smokebombs, you know, nine-pound smokebombs, the usual practice bombs, then - then other types of bombs. Mmm.

Yes.

So that people could learn where a bomb would land once you've pulled the string and let it go. But, mind you, you also had to teach people how to handle bombs. Bombs are not the kind of thing that you handle with - without some - some care.

(Laughs). I'm sure that would be a pretty good rule.

Yes. And of course in the bombs are pistols, and you - and - and all bombs - different kinds of bombs have got different kinds of gear, which has to be set for delay, or instantaneous, and so on.

And those settings, they - they would normally be done in the actual arming of the bomb, in the aircraft itself, would they?

Yes. Yes, oh yes.

When - when these young men, and I guess they were basically very young.

Yes.

Certainly much younger than you were.

Aye.

When they came to you as fresh pilots, new Catalina pilots, how experienced were they as pilots by that stage, how would you rate them as pilots?

How would I rate them?

Mmm.

I - I strongly suspect I got the pick of them. And one or two I discouraged as being not good, but - but ninety-nine per cent of them were quite good, and keen, and enthusiastic, fine young men, they were.

You said that you believed you got the pick of the crop at Rathmines.

Yes.

Do you have any evidence to support that belief?

No, except - except of the usual run of people they were high class, shall we say? Mmm.

So the air force obviously put a great - was putting a heavy emphasis on - on the Catalina program?

Yes.

Why was that?

Well the Catalina was there, it was - has a long range, it would fly quietly at night-time. It could fly all night. Obviously it was going to be a very good operational aeroplane, if handled properly. And the fellows that I - I trained, plus those that came from England, after they'd finished the war there, they are also highly experienced, and they did very well indeed.

That's interesting, Scotty.

Just going back to the training, if we put aside for a moment training in the actual ability to handle a Catalina in flight, to manoeuvre it effectively and so on, what would you rate as the other most important aspects of training that pilots received at Rathmines?

Well first of all you have to be able to fly the aeroplane. And the practices in flying the aeroplane were something I was well able to teach. The next thing is, when you can fly the aeroplane effectively, is to put it to good use.

(20.00) Well these young men were all keen and very good at whatever they were told. And I believe that - and the record shows - that when they got up in the New Guinea area they did very well at night. Bombing Rabaul at night, in the face of fire. You know. In - in the night, in dark, over Rabaul, they all did extremely well.

That's interesting, Scotty.

The - just a moment.

Just one other thing about training. Was it particularly difficult, or not, for men who'd trained in conventional land aircraft to convert to seaplane flying? I remember ....

No, no, it wasn't difficult.

We've talked about that with you before, but ....

A different attitude to - of the aeroplane when it's landing. But, after a little bit of training, they could quite easily - they could cope with that.

Mind you, you also had to teach them seamanship. How a boat on the water is in certain ways affected by the water and the air. On a land plane it's got the air only to bother with, the land's nice and solid. (Laughs). The land always stays in its place, but the sea, it isn't, it keeps moving.

Yes, that's true.

Scotty, just turning to another side of life there, what do you recall of the social life, the day-to- day social life amongst the young pilots, and the other people training at Rathmines, what was the - what was the spirit of the place?

Oh, there's the - we had a mess, you know. There was no females about, so we didn't have that trouble. So - but they were all nice, happy young men. They had a - assorted beers, you know, but none of them got drunk, or anything of that kind. And played games at night-time, which they all did very heartily, and all got on well together.

And what sort of games do you remember playing?

Pardon?

And what sort of games do you remember playing?

Oh, the usual thing with young men, trying their strength one way and another. And - the - at one time some fellow introduced a - a business of giving them a heavy punch on the back of the neck. To knock you out. Well I was - I did 't hold with that at all. That was a bit too much of the bunky[?].

But there were rough games, as well as games of skill.

Was there much singing?

No, not much singing, but there - quite a number of poems were made up by - oh - Tubby Higgins. Who was killed in a Catalina, unfortunately. Very nice fellow. He wrote quite a number of poems about the Catalina.

Do you remember any, or even a first line or two?

I can't remember one offhand, I've got them written down somewhere, I don't know where, I've forgotten.

One other aspect of life at Rathmines was the artist, Dobell, and I can see that's a Dobell hanging on the wall over there.

Aye.

Now I understand you were quite friendly and that at some point he painted your portrait?

Well before the war I met Dobell when he was what might be called a poverty-stricken artist. And I liked his pictures, and I went and spoke to him, he was a very quiet fellow, here at - Dobell, he didn't make any fuss about anything, and we got on well together. And I bought a few of his pictures, for the purpose of - (laughs), so that he could eat, if you get me. But he didn't like selling his pictures.

(25.00) Do you mean he - in the sense that he wanted to keep them for himself? Or that he didn't like the business of dealing with money, and ....

No - that's so. Money didn't bother him much at all. But he liked his pictures himself. It's a funny thing. I bought two pictures from him once, and I said I'd collect them another day. It took me about three months to get them off him. (Laughter). I had already paid him for them too.

Well while you - I think it's while you were at Rathmines that he did paint your portrait?

That's so. Aye, that's right. When - he came to Rathmines to camouflage aeroplanes. And I was strolling about the place as a CO, (laughs), does, you know, to have a casual look around, and I found him - he was digging ditches. Which - I think that was a bad thing to have a fellow like him digging ditches and whatnot. So I got him the job as a camouflage painter.

Just to pause for a moment, had you arranged for him to come to Rathmines to work?

No. No.

This was just purely by chance?

Absolutely. Aye.

I see. So he then became a camouflage painter of - of aircraft?

Yes. By jingo, he painted our aeroplanes so that when they sat in the water actually they were very difficult to spot. He became an official camouflage painter.

There must be quite a science in camouflage painting, quite a skill, did he ...?

It's beyond me.

Mmm. Was it something that was talked about, or was it something that was just left to the artist themselves believing that they knew how to do it best ...?

I couldn't say. I don't know. I strongly suspect it was left to the artist. And when the artist had done it they had a look, and either approved, or didn't - or didn't approve.

It was during this time I think too, that he did paint your portrait?

Yes.

Was that - was that an official portrait of you as commanding officer, or ...

Oh no, oh no.

... or a personal ...?

When he - he lived at Wangie. Wangie. Quite near where the camp was. And I went over and had a drink with him. While I was having a drink with him he did sketches of me. Oh, a whole book full of them. Noses, and ears, and eyes, and all little bits. And they were very useful to him.

After - afterwards, mind you, after the war and everything was over, I was talking to him, and he told me that he had those sketches, and he'd give them to me. But then he died, before he give them to me, so I don't know where they are now.

That's interesting.

Just a moment.

Well just going back to the more - your more formal activities, Scotty.

Yes.

According to the dates I have, it was in September to December, '40, you were with 23 Squadron.

Yes.

What were you doing during that period?

Where at?

At September to December, 1940, you were with 23 Squadron?

Yes, it sounds right. Oh, I was with 23 Squadron when I - that was at Brisbane. That was before the Catalina business, it was early on. I - I went to Brisbane, and ...

Right, we ....

... and they only had one aeroplane.

That's right, in fact, I'm sorry, I remember we did talk about that before.

Aye.

Going on a little bit, you were made a flight lieutenant in October, 1941, and you were training at Rathmines from January, '41, to July, '42.

Right.

And according to this it was January, 1942, you were promoted as squadron leader?

Ah.

And just two months before that, November, 1941, you'd become the commanding officer of Rathmines. After you'd been doing the - the training work, you became the commanding officer.

Aye.

What did you see as the main ...?

END TAPE 2, SIDE B.

BEGIN TAPE 3, SIDE A.

This is Edward Stokes, Scotty Allan, Tape Three, Side One, Side Five of the whole lot.

Yes, just rephrasing that, Scotty, as commanding officer, what did you see as your main role, and how do you remember that period as commanding officer?

I always remember my role as - of - whether I was a flying officer or a squadron leader, I carried on just the same as I did before. It didn't mean - I was called a commanding officer, but I already had my duties, and I carried them out, just as an ordinary - in the same way as I did before.

So you were still doing training, as commanding officer?

Yes.

Right.

At Rathmines.

How many people, roughly, would you remember being at Rathmines during the period when you were commanding officer? In terms of people - pilots and other people doing courses, and the - the people, the staff at Rathmines?

Oh I don't know, how many they'd be. See, I had fifteen or twenty pilots under training, fifteen or twenty pilots who already had been trained, but were ready to be posted. There

were of course many engineers. I - and I had them as well. There were boats to look after. That is to say boats for tenders, for laying out buoys and things like that. Oh it - I don't know.

What were - what's your recollection of living conditions at Rathmines, how comfortable, or uncomfortable, a place was it as a - as a base?

There were - we had rats everywhere.

Rats?

We also had numbers of Dutchmen. And, like any CO of a station, from time to time you inspect the huts, to make sure they're clean and whatnot. But when I went in the Dutch - in their hut, it smelt .... It smelt. (Laughs).

So I found out that it smelt because they'd been cooking food in the thing. I asked the - I asked the - the sergeant major in charge of the Dutch contingent that was there what the smell was, and he said, 'We was cooking'. And I said, 'You will stop the cooking. From now on you go to the cookhouse, and have your meals.' So evidently they had their own foodstuffs that they liked to eat. But that was not in line with what I required.

Yes. Not encouraged.

Yes.

But the - the accommodation for everybody was quite good. We had huts you - they lived in.

How formal, or informal, was life at Rathmines? For example, did young pilots who were training, and - with yourself, did you socialise much? Would they have called you squadron leader, or would they have called you Scotty?

They called me 'squadron leader'. They called me 'sir'. Yes. Of course.

Mmm. (Laughs).

Yes. They didn't call me Scotty, I can tell you.

Right. Whereas, perhaps ....

Not - not to my face anyway. But ....

(5.00) Right, so there was a - there was still - there was a degree of formality that - quite different from the - say the relationship between a flying crew?

Oh yes. Yes, surely, yes.

Right.

Something that I think is interesting is that in - in the early phases of the - the war with Japan the Catalinas did play quite an active part. They were at Port Moresby before the evacuation and so on. And then later they were very involved in reconnaissance, minelaying, bombing, et cetera.

Aye.

While you were at Rathmines, how much information did you have fed back to you from pilots and squadrons who were operating ...

Ah.

... to enhance, to improve, the training you were giving to new pilots?

Well the pilots that were up there were getting the experience. But they had to come to Rathmines to get new aeroplanes. So when they'd come down we had many conversations. Plus the fact that I had to have more instructors. And of course, for instance, there was a squadron leader, he had been a pupil of mine, had done a lot of practices up in the New Guinea area, and his name was Frank Chapman, a Queenslander. A most - a - a beautiful gentleman he was. And he became an instructor under me, at Rathmines. But he knew everything that went on in the war area. So that I consulted with him what was required.

Right.

Did the authorities ever suggest that either yourself as commanding officer, or other instructors would go - go up to spend time with squadrons to bring back information, or was it based only on, as you were saying, pilots coming back?

No, they came down. Aye. You see, they came down to Rathmines, that was when - to give us some information about what was required.

Just generally, looking back on the quality of training that men - pilots received, and other air-crew too, before going off to operational flying, how would you rate the quality of the training they got at Rathmines, and if it could have been improved, how could it have been improved?

Well if it could have been improved, we would have improved it. So, as far as I knew, it couldn't be improved.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Right. Yes, I wasn't, incidentally, implying that it wasn't, (laughs) ...

Aye.

... that - that it wasn't adequate. But you - so that your judgement would be that it was - it was as good as it could conceivably be?

Aye. Absolutely. Mind you we were under threat at Rathmines. And we dug little runways beside - in the lake bed, or out on the shore, so that we could camouflage the aeroplane by keeping them in the water, but in these little channels.

I see, what, in amongst the vegetation, mangroves?

Yes. Amongst the vegetation. Also with machine-gun posts ready - already erected, should they be attacked.

Lake Macquarie of course does have a very narrow sea-opening, though I think it is a navigable opening, isn't it?

No. It's a bar, a sand bar.

Right, so there was never any thought of sea, for example submarine, attack?

No, no, submarines couldn't come in. But shipborne aircraft could come, no doubt about that.

Just looking back to that period, as - as commanding officer, and the training aspect, Scotty, is there anything significant about Rathmines, and what it achieved, that we - that perhaps we haven't discussed?

(10.00)Well there's a lady up there, Mrs Rita - oh gosh. Who collects all she knows about the Catalinas at Rathmines. She has done so for years. She sent me newspapers, Newcastle newspapers, of the earthquake, for instance. But that's the only time that she's sent data down to me that she - that was - was not actually connected with the flying-boats.

I see. But going back to the wartime period, did you yourself - do you yourself remember anything else significant about Rathmines as a training - training base, that we haven't discussed?

Not - not offhand. Though there probably is. There's plenty - plenty to discuss about it, about Rathmines. And I don't think we've touched on it.

Mmm.

Yes. It would take a long time to tell you all the story about Rathmines, and the pilots, what have become of them since. And my communications with them, or their communications with me. And now that I'm pretty old, you know, they send me cards from time to time, to let me know they're still alive.

That's very nice. So there was obviously - I think what I was trying to say to you before, when I asked you about the - the degree of formality, or otherwise, at Rathmines, and I asked you about the use of your name.

Aye.

There was then obviously a - a very warm feeling amongst the people?

Oh absolutely, yes, quite.

Did - did seaplane pilots, Catalina pilots, for example, did they see themselves as something of a - a breed apart from pilots of conventional aircraft, and ...

Yes.

... and did they perhaps, did they see themselves as - as better than conventional pilots? Or just different?

Oh they were different, there's no doubt about it. And the - it became a closed circuit, if you like. They were separate from other pilots.

So there was that bond of a - a kind of brotherhood?

Yes, absolutely.

Right. Just a moment.

Just turning to the planes as - flying as operational planes, Scotty, although I know you yourself didn't fly operationally, because of your age.

Aye.

You'd recommended Catalinas very highly when - after your visit to the United States and so on. If you look back on how they performed during the first few years of the war, did they live up to your expectations, or not?

Oh yes, they did so. They did. The aeroplanes did a very useful job. Mmm.

And - and were the strengths you saw at the beginning the strengths that they actually had in reality?

Yes. I - towards the end I was - became CO at Lake Boga. I think when I went there to begin with there were 12,000 men, and we were overhauling the aeroplanes altogether. You know, did the overhauls on them. We finished - when I took that station over they were producing aeroplanes at the rate of one a month. When I finished up at Rathmines, when the war finished, I was doing one a day.

They - we had sent to us a number of aeroplanes which also had the undercarriages fitted, so that they could land on the land as well as the water. But then that reduced their performance very greatly, and we undertook at Rathmines to remove the undercap, and reshape the fuselage so that it was smooth all the way through. And we did quite a number of them. As well. All that kind of work.

That's interesting.

(15.00) I was just going to ask you in a moment about the later war years, when I knew - know there was more ferrying of Catalinas, and you were a chief flying instructor for a conversion course, but just going back finally to your time when you were commanding officer, you were saying there are lots of stories about Rathmines, and I'm sure there are, and we couldn't possibly record them all.

Aye.

But if I asked you to think of one episode that was perhaps very - very humorous, perhaps to do with life or flying, perhaps one episode that was sad or tragic, is there anything that would spring to mind?

No. I was proud of the fact that while I was CO at Rathmines we never had a crash.

That's most interesting, and very unusual, because in talking to other pilots in the training programs the - the crash rate was often very high.

That's so.

Okay, well why ...?

My crash rate was nil.

What did you - what would you put that down to?

Careful training. And teaching people how - if you've got a weapon, you've got to use it properly. It's no good if it's broken. Mind you, it is possible that at headquarters they thought that I put much stress - too much stress on careful training.

How could you put too much stress on anything like that?

Air force headquarters wanted pilots to fly aeroplanes. I wanted to produce aeroplanes and pilots who would stay aeroplanes and pilots.

So you're implying that the - the emphasis higher up was on - on faster training, on quicker results, is that it?

Yes.

Did you ever have any - were there any clashes with you and authorities higher up on that issue, or not?

Oh yes. Oh yes.

Could you tell us about them?

(Laughs). If you like.

The - the air marshal came up one day to inspect the base. He inspected the base, and during - while he was at the base, he told me I would have to shorten the period of training.

What was his name, incidentally?

Bostock. He was under orders, like me, no doubt.

I remember when he was - when - when he was departing from Rathmines, in an aeroplane, he shouted to me, 'Three weeks', or 'Six weeks', or something of that, and I said - I said to him back, 'Seven weeks', and that was how we parted. But I didn't - I didn't - I - every day of the training I had was full.

So there was no less time?

So that any cutting of the time cut training.

So what was the resolution of that issue? Did they force you to go their way, or did you manage to stick it out?

I was posted to Lake Boga to take over the Catalina overhaul place.

And are you saying that that posting was a consequence of your refusal to ...?

No. No. I don't say it was a - was a consequence of it, but it happened at the same time.

Right, okay, so you're - what you're saying is that there was a kind of possible connection?

Yes. Aye.

Let's just talk perhaps briefly about the time that you were at Lake Boga. This was a much more routine operation, and - more dealing with planes than people?

There were - when I went to Rathmines for a start there was 12,000 men there, so it will give you an idea.

To Lake Boga?

Lake Boga I mean.

Sorry, I didn't mean that there weren't a large number of people involved, but the - the aim of the operation was - was to work on aircraft, not a training role.

Absolutely. Aye.

Did you enjoy that as much as you had been at Rathmines?

Yes. Oh yes. And Lake Boga's out west more or less, it was completely new kind of countryside to me. The grape area. Grape-growing area.

(20.00) Mmm. Right.

And wine - the - all the grape growers there had little winemaking things, and everybody had bottles of wine all over the place. Terrible stuff.

Mmm. Right.

The - just perhaps going to one final thing at Rathmines, Scotty, I know you've said before, and other people have said too, that you were, unlike most pilots, you also had this real interest in engineering and how you can look after machinery and so on.

Yes.

Did pilots - how much of that did most pilots pick up from you?

Quite a lot. I've had a lot of pilots come to me since, and say that they learned a lot more than just about aeroplanes.

Right, and that was obviously of use to them later in their operational flying?

Yes.

After the period at Lake Boga, I think you then were involved again later in the war, ferrying Catalinas from the United States to Australia, is that correct?

After the war?

Sorry, later - later in the war?

Oh no, it was pretty well - the first time I went to America, America wasn't in the war. But the next time I went to America I passed through Honolulu. Ah? And the very next night the Japanese bombed it. And that was the beginning of America being in the war. So that if you want to fix the date, (laughs), no doubt it's well recorded.

Right. So you were in Honolulu on the eve - the day before the attack on Pearl Harbour?

Yes. That's right.

And - and you stopped there, did you - had you stopped there overnight, or you'd stopped to refuel.

I stopped overnight.

That's fascinating - do you - what was the mood of the place then, did - amongst people generally, was there any - any awareness of the danger they were in?

No. I was - I was - I went to America in a Liberator, as I say, and I went - I landed at Honolulu, went to a hotel, got up early in the morning, and departed, and that was all I saw of Honolulu.

So there really wasn't any talking to people?

No.

So when you came back, flying back to Australia with a Catalina.

Yes.

For the - on this occasion you were flying through hostile, or potentially hostile territory?

Yes, I suppose so.

Were you conscious of that at all, or was it a fairly slight sort of threat?

It didn't bother me at all. We knew there was a possibility there'd be Japanese about. I never saw any. Never heard of any.

Later in the war according - this is according to the information I got from this biographical data, Scotty, it describes you as having been the chief flying instructor - flying boat conversion. Was that at Rathmines, or was that at another period of the war?

Where?

Well it didn't say where, but it said that you were - actually I think it might have been in the United States, that you worked as a chief flying instructor for a flying boat conversion course.

Aye.

Where was that?

Rathmines.

Right, that - that refers to the Rathmines period.

Yes.

Okay, that ....

I instructed on the Sunderlands before that, you know, so - aye.

Right, I just wanted to clarify something.

Well going back on through the war, after the period at Lake Boga, what did you do then, did you remain involved with Catalinas?

When the war was finished I went back to QANTAS. At least Hudson Fish asked me - asked for me, since the war was finished, to come again to QANTAS. So back I went to QANTAS, and it was decided that I would stop flying, and be sent to London, to set up, or get the new - get an office set up, in order to have a communication in Great Britain. And so that they - to get - for the purpose of establishment - establish a trade liaison, plus get - take, and negotiate for getting, new aeroplanes.

(25.00) That's interesting.

I was going to ask you a little bit about that peacetime flying, but just going back to the end of the war, you were at Lake Boga when peace was declared, is that correct?

Aye. That's right, yes.

How do you remember that - that day when the news came that the bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, and later the - shortly afterwards the Japanese surrender, how did that affect you?

[A pause]. I don't remember. All I know is that Hudson Fysh, immediately the war was finished, applied for me to be jettisoned from the air force and come back to QANTAS. Air force headquarters evidently agreed, and I went back to QANTAS.

Right. And it was shortly after that that you travelled to London to establish this operation?

Absolutely. But Japan was still in the war against - with Germany. No. Germany was still at war with England, and the United States, of course.

Well of course the - the war with Germany finished before the war with Japan. Are you perhaps - I think perhaps we - the dates are a bit confused there?

No, I don't think so.

Alright.

Because when I got to London they dropped bombers on me. But - but, as far as I know ....

Well then that must also have been before peace was declared in the Pacific, because that happened after the peace in Europe, Scotty.

Was it? I don't remember.

That's fine. So - so you in fact left the air force before the end of hostilities?

I don't think so. I may be confused, but as far as Australia was concerned it had stopped fighting anyway. But I didn't see anything of the return of the men from New Guinea, because I was immediately sent to England.

Mmm. Right.

Where the war was still proceeding. There were still flying bombs.

And you were there - and you were there on QANTAS' behalf?

I was there on QANTAS' behalf.

Well then I guess you must have been demobilised before the - the war had actually ended?

Before the war had actually ended in Europe, I'm sure of that.

Mmm. Right.

Just one final thing, perhaps, looking back on your period in the - in the war, Scotty. In the first war, twenty or so years before, of course you'd had very, very little, or relatively little operational flying, because you came in pretty much at the tail end of the war.

Yes. That's right.

In the second war you were ...

Too old

... judged to be too old.

Ah ha.

Did you - did you ever regret that, unlike a lot of other pilots, that you never really had much actual operational flying?

I never regretted anything. I had other things to do. Yes.

Right.

If I'd had nothing to do I might have room for - for regrets.

Mmm. So that was a very full time in your life?

Yes.

Just looking back finally on the war, is there anything else that you'd remember as being significant about it, and about how it affected you, that perhaps we haven't touched on?

Don't think so.

One could go on talking endlessly about either war, or both wars. But I think we've touched on most significant points.

Right. Well that's good.

Well look, on behalf of the - the War Memorial, for making these tapes, Scotty, thank you very much.

Good.

They'll be most appreciated.

Uh huh, fine.

END TAPE 3, SIDE A.

END OF INTERVIEW.