



TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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Description	Beryl Irving 'Betsy' Leemon née Boyd as a driver, Australian Women's Army Service, interviewed by Judy Wing for The Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War of 1939-45.

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Identification: this is Judy Wing, recording for the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive an interview with Mrs Betsy Leemon, at her home, 18 Vivien Avenue, Lakemba, on Monday, 22 January, 1990.

Mrs Leemon was an ambulance driver with the 2nd Ambulance Car Company. This is Tape One, Side A.

Good morning, Mrs Leemon, thank you very much for talking to me this morning.

Good morning, Judy.

I wonder first could you tell me where you were born, and when?

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on 4th - 6th April, 1916. Because my father and mother were - had - were over in New Zealand. My father had a - a job in New Zealand during the first world war. He was in charge of a meat-freezing works. So - so they were there until - about ten months after I was born they returned to Australia.

So you came back to Australia as a baby?

Yes. First of all to Melbourne, and then later to Sydney. So I was brought up in Sydney, I don't remember anything beyond Sydney.

Where did you go to school?

I went to several schools all around Sydney. I went to a little kindergarten school, and then I went to SCEGGS Bay Road, and - which is now Redlands, it's moved around, and it eventually became Redlands. And then I went two years at Manly - at Brighton College, Manly. And then to Doon Arulun, at Edgecliff. So I was moved around by my parents a bit.

That was a lot of schooling, a lot of different schools, wasn't it?

Yes.

And ....

All private schools, because that's what my parents felt was better for me. I don't know, I think I would have preferred a public schooling. (Laughs).

And did you do the leaving then?

No, I only did the intermediate, and one year afterwards. And then I didn't like Doon, in that it was very social, it was a finishing school in its day, it no longer exists. And so I went to business college, I went to Chandler's Business College for a full year of training, and then took jobs as a secretary.

And - and how long would you have worked as a secretary then?

From 1934, until - until I went in the army actually, in 19 - the beginning of 1942. Mmm.

> What about in those years, did you have ambitions to be anything more than a secretary, or - what sort of ambitions did you have about your life?

And to travel. And in 1938 a girlfriend and I went up to Brisbane for six months, on a working holiday, to see if we could cope with living together. She could cook, and I could do the washing and ironing, so we taught each other how to live together. And then we went home for Christmas, 1938, and we went to New Zealand then, and we were in Auckland for six months, both working. I worked at Milman Choice, in the merchandise office of the department store. Phil was with the Canadian Consul.

And then we moved down to Wellington, and we were there for eight weeks, and the war broke out. So we decided we didn't want to be isolated from our families if the Germans put submarines in the Tasman, as they did in the first world war, so we got the first ship that we could get back to Australia.

(5.00) Scuttled for home, eh?

Yes, definitely. (Laughter).

> What - what about religion, was that important to you, did you ...?

Only being a nominal Church of England, both my parents were. But they didn't go to church, and I didn't. Although I went to Church of England schools, and got a little bit of religion from that. But it was not very important in my early life. Later on, after my husband died, I did go to church more regularly. But not in those - not when I was growing up, no.

> What about politics, were you involved with politics at all?

A little. My parents were always on tap when there was an election. My mother was a good driver, and - she got her licence in 1927 - and so she used to go around, and bring people into polling-booths, in the days in - that people didn't have cars, and a lot of people couldn't get to the polling-booths. So mother's job was to know about these people, and go and collect them, and bring them in.

But beyond that, that I was interested, I wasn't. I got involved in politics, I'll tell you that later, if you want. (Laughs). But not in - only just that I knew it was going on.

> Right. And were there any particular issues that you were aware of, political issues that stuck in your mind at that time?

No, not really, no. Our generation wasn't very politically minded, and my friends weren't. All we feared was a war would be coming. We had that feeling for some years before it came. And we felt: 'Oh, that'll be a disaster', really. We girls were - all the men would go away, and we wouldn't have husbands.

When were you - what made you first aware of it? What - what happened to make you think that?

Oh there was a lot going on, a feeling of: 'How do you stop it?' Quite a long time. I remember in 1938, when we were in Brisbane, how relieved we were when there wasn't going to be a war that year. But it had been the feeling for two or three years before that, that a war was likely.

Mmm.

What about leisure time, how did you spend that before the war?

Oh, doing all sorts of things. Keen on bushwalking. Not a great deal of it, but I was with friends who went bushwalking occasionally. I lived at Dee Why, so we went surfing. I played tennis. Not well, but socially. I loved horse riding. For me a holiday wasn't a holiday if I couldn't hire a horse when I was away. I loved that. And later I took up golf. Just generally. Didn't - wasn't brilliant at anything.

And what about getting married, did you have hopes as a young girl?

Oh yes, we all - it was our ambition to be married. All my friends, my girlfriends, that was the idea. But I didn't have many boyfriends, I was shy and awkward. I was an only child, and I was very shy and awkward with boys. Except in a big group. And it wasn't really till I came back from New Zealand in 1939 that I actually met a regular boyfriend, who was later killed in Malaya, and my future husband.

But then we both went in the army, my future husband and I, and we decided we'd wait till after the war.

So you knew him all that time?

It was about seven years before we were married.

Well that's - that's amazing, and - and stuck together?

Yes, well that was common in my day, that you waited, you didn't always rush into marriage. During the war a lot of women did. But the type of girls that I knew didn't usually rush into it.

One school friend of mine was engaged to the man she later married, and he went through Changi, he was in Changi, and nearly went blind. He came home, and she married him then. Another one who was in the army with me, she was already married to a man who was in Borneo, and she was very worried with - that maybe he wouldn't be able to give her a family afterwards. But they did. They - he came back, he was one of the survivors from Borneo who came back, and they had a family.

And those marriages lasted, and were successful, you believe?

Yes, yes, they were, mmm.

That's wonderful.

(10.00) Of course divorce was not so easy in my day. Whether they were happy marriages - I have lost touch with most of them, but whether they were - but they did endure, I know there's been no divorce. But divorce was a very difficult thing. And you didn't marry lightly, either, you - you thought about who you were going to marry.

So you knew many people who felt as you did?

Mmm. Mmm. It was a different attitude altogether.

Right. Now do you think you - at that time would you have thought of yourself as British or Australian?

Australian. Although my maternal grandfather had been born in England. And my paternal grandparents were born in the USA. But they had been of Scottish, or the grand - my great grandfather was a - from Scotland. The Scottish side of the family came through America, and eventually ended up in Sydney. So we were British on every way - side, but we were definitely Australian.

But there was that connection with Britain and - and ...?

Yes. You sort of had a feeling, oh, you'd like to go home, and see what Britain was like, but that was all.

And yet you're calling Britain home?

Yes, it was - that was the - our attitude. I don't think that I called it actually that, but you felt that your roots had been in Britain. Therefore the idea was to go and have a look at it.

And that was a fairly common feeling?

Yes, that was quite common amongst my generation.

Right, now relatives in the world war, the first world war, did you have any relatives that served in the war?

My father didn't, because he was a little bit older than they would take him, and also he had a protected job as the - an engineer, and a refrigeration engineer, and that was why he was in New Zealand with a meat-freezing works.

But my husband's father had been in the - he was went on Gallipoli as reinforcements for the 13th Battalion, and he - we have in our possession the Gallipoli Medal that he had, so we know it's genuine. He - and he also served in France, where he was lightly gassed, and he suffered with bronchial ailments until he died, but he lived till well into his eighties.

And how did you react then when the news of world war two came, you'd been anticipating it for some years, I suppose? You said - were saying earlier.

Yes. It was a shock, we felt almost like the end of the world at first.

May I stop, and go back, one minute?

My mother's only brother, Frank Burberry[?], enlisted in the AIF, and then when he was in England he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, and he came through without any injury whatsoever.

And that was in the first world war?

The first world war, yes. But in the early twenties he didn't know, nobody knew, that he had a brain tumour, and it was so painful for him that he committed suicide, and that was a great stain on the family, that Frank had committed suicide. But the ex-service people at - Repatriation Department I suppose it would have been in those days - knew that he had a history of brain tumour, because they granted his widow, my aunt, a war widow's pension. And that wasn't lightly granted in the first world war men, they - it had to be very much proven.

So my mother never admitted it, and I didn't find out till after she died, but there was no stain on the family escutcheon through the suicide. (Laughs). And it was a dreadful thing in those days. But he was honourable, not out of ....

That was a sad thing to happen for the family, wasn't it?

Yes, and he left three daughters too, a wife and three daughters, and ....

Right.

You were saying a moment ago, Mrs Leemon, that you belonged to one of the voluntary organisations before the war. Would you tell me about that, please?

Yes, well during 1940 I had a very good social time with my steady boyfriend. Then he went to - with the 8th Division, to Malaya, at the end of 1940. So in 1941 I happened to read in the paper that they were calling for women who already had drivers' licences to join up with a - for training. So I thought: 'Well that sounds interesting to me', because I had had a licence since I was a month over seventeen, so I'd been driving for some years.

So I joined up with this National Defence League. Of women who already had a licence for at least a year. And we were trained by army officers. And we had khaki uniforms, which we bought ourselves. Which included a - a straight skirt, with a belted jacket over the top, and we wore khaki shirts, and ties. And we also had a pair of slacks to go with it, and we did field training on the weekend.

(15.00) And so we looked similar to the army in that way. And they took us under their wing, and various men - we had a warrant-officer I think it was, who took us down into the Domain, behind the Mitchell Library, and gave us - at night, in the dark, marching. Orders.

We were all tremulous. (Laughs). We didn't know what he was talking about half the time when he bellowed out this business. (Laughs). We were terrified. And after a while we realised he was complimenting us, and saying it was good, but we didn't know for a while. (Laughs).

> So even though the aim of the organisation was to be a driver, you did marching, with drill?

Yes, we did the basic military training under the - but it was all voluntary.

But we did lots of things. We did - went to tech college, and did Morse code. And we did signalling with flags. And we did - went to tech college and did some maintenance, vehicle maintenance - pulled down engines, and put them together again. This was fun for a lot of girls who weren't allowed to touch engines up till that time.

I'm trying to think of what else we did. Oh, First Aid. I think that was the main things that we did. Very little of it did we use, or need, in the army. But it was - was fun for that year, because the AWAS had not been formed at that stage. And we were filling in time, waiting for them to - to form up.
The WAAF formed up, and one of our girls got tired of waiting, and went to the WAAF as a driver. But we waited, and then when Japan came into the war, then things began to really hum.

The first thing we did, we were all called up and asked, would we help pack for the Red Cross, pack supplies to send over to Malaya - tinned goods, and all those sort of things, packets of biscuits. We did that over Christmas and New Year. And then we got our call-up in - and we actually went in on 29th January, 1942.

But we weren't - we - forty of us qualified for - medically. Some of the women who had been doing this training couldn't go in, because they had families, and they weren't allowed to go in if they were married women with children, although one did, because she was able to prove that her daughter was old enough. She was about nine years of age, and left with her grandmother. So she came in. But mainly they were - through age, or medical unfitness they weeded them out, and there were forty of us who were ready to go in.

Now AWAS headquarters were not very happy about this. They weren't ready for us. They were only taking in clerks, and office workers. And it - really they were upset about it, they didn't know what we would get into, whether the men would treat us right, and they were very worried about our morals, (laughs), coming into the army. Not from the girls' point of view, but how the men would react.

But army headquarters, the transport up at - under Colonel Milner, at Victoria Barracks, insisted that he wanted these drivers, they were needed to replace the men in the local

ambulance car company, so that they could be sent off to field ambulances further forward, where we would not be allowed to go.

So eventually AWAS headquarters gave in, and twenty of us went directly into the army, and twenty went to the first school at Killara, the AWAS training school at Killara.

The - I was the one - one of the twenty who went straight into the showground. And we were billeted in the horseboxes, that was where the ambulances had their headquarters. (Laughs). And we were day-girls for a while, they didn't - the men were still living in the horseboxes, so we had to commute from our homes.

And there were no facilities for - toilet facilities close by that area. The men had taken over the whole of the showground. So one unfortunate, very nice corporal, Corporal Murray, had to march us round twice a day to the toilets round under the showground. (Laughs). And with all the men waiting to be drafted calling out to us. It was really funny.

(20.00) It sounds as if it really was.

It was hilarious. The poor embarrassed corporal. He was nice though, Corporal Murray.

Then they co-opted the set of toilets close by, and renovated them in a hurry for us, and we took them.

How long were you there at the showground?

We were there for a couple of months I think. Not very - not terribly long. But then we - when the men went out, and we were almost all women, just with a few male officers, and the mechanics, we scrubbed out those horseboxes, to get them up to women's standard of cleanliness. And we worked hard. And then Colonel Milner came down on inspection. And he was horrified that we were living in the horseboxes.

So he went off, and the next thing we heard, he'd commandeered the barracks which were built for motor transport out at Kingsford, on Eboka Street, corner of Bundock Street, and Eboka Street. He co-opted that, and shifted us in a hurry. So we went out, and then we had all the bother of - of cleaning out those barracks for our, (laughs) - put them up to our women's standards of cleanliness.

But they were much better, they were built and - modern. They'd only been built at - oh, just before the war, so it was much better.

That was great, the army got a good deal on that, didn't they? But when you were in the horseboxes, did you have stretchers, or palliasses, or something, to sleep on, what ...?

Oh yes, there were palliasses we had to sleep on. It had ....

Otherwise it was really just a tap at the end as well, and the toilets a long way away?

Yes, yes, that was all that we had. But it was very convenient, in that we did our early training round and round Centennial Park, because it was so close. And so we had to learn how to manipulate these thirty hundredweight ambulances. Which were trucks just made with the ambulance top on it. And we had the crash gears, you see, we had to do them, sort of a lot of ....

Do the double clutch, did you?

Double shuffle.

Double shuffle?

Do the double shuffle. And of course, (laughs), the men had - one man to each, and one woman to each, and round and round trying to make sure that we, (laughs), got the right thing. And one day I had to take my training officer into the city. We were going down George Street, and he said: 'Go on, change down, show them you can do it.' (Laughs).

And we could do it. It didn't take us very long. We were very proud of the fact that we could manage these vehicles. Because none of us - although we had driven cars, very few of them, except a few country girls, had ever driven anything more than a light car.

Well you were all - you sound as if you were all young, and enthusiastic and had ...

Very enthusiastic.

... a sense of adventure.

Yes, yes, yes.

You'd already shown you had a sense of adventure with all the travel too.

Yes, we all - we were all 100 percent volunteers. The first few batches of girls who went into the army. We were not drafted.

I think that all of the early recruits in the army were - had been in a voluntary organisation?

Not necessarily, but they all lined up to be - as volunteers, to come into the army.

The - there was another organisation, the National Emergency Services, the NES, and some of our early drivers came from there too. But there were others who - who just came from country areas, and they just joined up, because that's what they felt they could do. They could all drive, and if they wanted women drivers, well they were qualified. And that - that wasn't the - a great thing, there weren't too many women who could drive in those days.

Cars weren't as plentiful as they are today?

No. And if there were boys in the family, the boys got the driving lessons, and the girls didn't. Their fathers and their - and their mothers didn't drive. My mother was quite unusual in - in driving.

Why do you think - what was the reason for that, do you think?

Oh, economics, I think, economics. Not - not every family had a car.

And - and they couldn't afford, they - it was for the men to do the driving, and not the women?

Yes. Yes. Because they ....

A two-car family didn't come in ...?

The two-car family didn't come in till much later really. So that if there was a car the father and the brothers drove it.

Yes, but the men got the preference over the women?

Yes, yes, they felt the women couldn't cope. Well that's all wrong. It - all along women have driven, but it wasn't universal like it is now.

Mmm.

Talking about the relationships between men and women - while you were training, you mentioned that the army took you under the - their wing, and they were pleased to have you along, and also the men that trained you, in the Domain and elsewhere. And you mentioned that the authorities thought that there might have been a morality problem.

Mmm

(25.00) And - what actually happened? Did you strike a problem, or ...?

No. The men were glad to have us there, we were their mates. In fact when - I was always amused - we had male mechanics all the way through. Although we did our own maintenance, we had mechanics to do the heavier work, because we weren't trained for that sort of thing. And something would happen, and one of the boys would swear, and he'd turn round, and see a woman there, and apologise. And very often we hadn't heard what he'd sworn. (Laughs).

But they were always apologetic, there was never any feeling that we were under threat because we were women. In fact they were marvellously gentlemanly towards us, and protective. And that happened all the way through, the drivers never had any problems, from patients, or other servicemen. That was good.

And if the girls got into any bother at all it was because they brought it on themselves. But, in our unit, we were too busy, and too enthusiastic about our jobs to - to worry about it. What we did on leave of course was our own business, but during our working hours there was never any problem.

So there was a real sort of difference between behaviour during working time, and behaviour outside, on leisure - in leisure time, on leave?

I think so, yes, yes.

[A pause].

Perhaps we could look at your enlistment now, the process of enlistment, Mrs Leemon.

Yes, well we went through the usual process that everybody went through, men and women. Report, and go through the medical, and have all the inoculations. And really the women took the inoculations better than the men. The men were inclined to faint in the line-up, and so on, (laughs), but only a couple of girls couldn't take it.

The only thing that I remember that was unfortunate was that some of them got infected arms from it. They took - I think maybe they were more or less allergic to the - the type of inoculations, and a couple of them ended up in hospital. They got over it alright, but .... I went through with no problem at all. [Inaudible]. Medically, or having the inoculations.

And I don't recall very much more about it. I suppose we had to fill in forms and things, have X-rays. But it was just the general that every service person goes through.

You would have had a group of friends with you? Did you know a lot - did you enlist with a group of friends?

Only those who were with me in the National Defence League. And one of them had been a school friend of mine. We met when we were eight years of age. So Molly and I were fairly close, in the early days. But then she got married during her service, and so, although we're still friends, we're not close friends any more. But at that time we were fairly close friends. But beyond that - well we folk mixed in, everybody got to make new friends, and ....

Did you go to the same camp, were you - did you sort of stay together in those early years, with the group that you went in with?

No, not necessarily. I think Molly stayed in Kingsford. I did for about - for November - November, 1942, I was in the group of twenty drivers who went up to Tamworth, and we stayed there for almost the full year, all but three weeks. So that split us up in - to a certain extent, that perhaps we had different interests. So you made your friends amongst those who were with you.

So that when you were standing in that line could you choose where you wanted to go, which you ...?

No, no, no. Actually when we went in as a group, as drivers, we - I don't know, we just took it for granted we'd be together. We didn't know what we were going to do, really, except that we were all drivers, all to be drivers. And it was quite a - a surprise to us, and we were delighted, when we found that we were all going into an ambulance unit, that was really good, and we were pleased about that.

So - yes, so you did have friends that you'd stayed together with, and ...?

Yes, they - because all the drivers that they'd been training with, we all - well the ones that could qualify - the first forty, we were all together.

(30.00) And that was the group that went to Tamworth?

No, it was a mixed group that went to Tamworth. We were split up. See some - some very early on were - were sent to Bathhurst. And then there was a group at Goulburn. There was Ingleburn, and Moorebank. And some went up to Fort Scratchley in Newcastle. Dubbo. We were at Tamworth. But all within New South Wales. We were ....

[Recording ends on Side A of Cassette One].

This is Side B on Tape Number One.

You were telling me where the girls went, where you went?

Yes. It was wherever there was an Australian general hospital, like Bathhurst, or Tamworth, or Goulburn. Or even a - a camp hospital, a smaller camp hospital, or even a - a casualty clearing station. If they felt they had the need for an ambulance, or ambulances, then we were allocated to those. And we didn't stay there all the time, they changed us around, so that we served - over our period of service we were often at several different places.

I went to Tamworth for nearly a year. Then I came back to headquarters, and they sent me down to Moorebank at Liverpool, and there I got hepatitis, and was put into hospital at Ingleburn, and after - then I went back to - I was at Ingleburn for a little while, and then I went back to Kingsford, and I didn't go away again from there, I was just around doing the work from showground to Concord, and back again. And taking patients, say, to the limb factory, or to do - have pathology tests or what have you. We - we were a general runaround ambulance cum taxi service for patients. Some of them were sitting cases, others were stretcher cases.

But the main way we were important in the Sydney area was that we were on night duty as well. There'd be a call from a doctor that one of his patients, a serviceman, was taken sick at home on leave, so sometimes in the middle of the night we'd have to go out and look for this patient.

So you had connections with the civilian community as well?

Yes, in that way, yes. But we - of course we were never - the civilian ambulances did all the accident cases, we were never called into an accident case, even where - if it concerned an ex - a serviceman. They handled all the accident cases, and emergencies, those. We were just to - if a man was at home, and he took sick, we'd go out.

If they - the doctor said: 'He's too sick to walk', then we'd pick up a couple of orderlies, male orderlies, from showground, before we went out and looked for this patient in the suburbs. And - but if he was - the doctor said: 'Oh he can walk out to the ambulance', we just went on our own. And picked him up - found the place, and took him to - usually to Concord. That's where they took ....

But, (laughs), it happened that if we didn't take orderlies the man would be too sick to move, and we'd have to find out the neighbours, or relatives, to help us to put him on the stretcher, and get him up. Because you had to lift up high, it wasn't at a low level the stretcher, you had to lift up quite a distance, and of course we were not capable of doing it on our own.

Or, if we took our two orderlies, dragged them out of their beds, and they were grizzling a bit at, (laughs), missing their sleep, the patient would cheerily walk out, and say: 'Can I sit in the front, driver?'. (Laughter). So we had some amusing things like that, as well as some of the very sad things.

Yes, yes. Well it sounds as if you did.

Going back to those first days, when you enlisted first, when did - did you get your uniform immediately, or did you have ...?

No, we didn't. And we were very glad we had our National Defence League uniforms. But there again was something funny. We had to climb into the back of the ambulances, and fix up the stretchers, because the back of - of the top stretcher came down, was left down as a back rest, for sitting patients.

(5.00) But if you were having four stretcher cases you had to haul up this rather heavy top stretcher. And we used to put our legs up on the bottom one, and rest it on our knee, and tighten the thing up, and stretch.

Well we realised that slacks were much the better way of doing it, because you - in a tight skirt, if you put your knee up, (laughs) .... It was the days before pantyhose, you had stockings and suspenders and things on. But AWAS headquarters banned them. They weren't nice. They couldn't see that we were being much more modest wearing slacks.

But very soon after that we got our full uniforms. And while we were at Tamworth, later on that year, they brought in slacks, much to our amusement, because they realised they were much more practical for drivers.

What about the initial banning of the slacks for the women, do you know what the AWAS headquarters' reason for that was?

It wasn't modest to wear slacks. You see they weren't really recognised as being nice wear. We wore - I wore slacks when I went out on my uncle's yacht when I was a teenager, because I had fair skin, and I burned very badly in shorts. And shorts were quite respectable on sporting occasions, and so were slacks. But to wear them round in the street, oh no, you didn't wear slacks. No nice girls did.

So that was a fa rly broad idea about - or attitude to women wearing slacks?

Yes. Well all the officers, the trained officers, in AWAS, had all been in the girl guides. And they were very - I don't know, rather narrow in their outlook. But they were used to dealing with teenagers, and young people whom they had to protect. They didn't realise that we were all mature women. Particularly the first batches that went in, because we'd all had to have our licences for one or two years, so we weren't young. And we could look after ourselves. And we didn't like being treated like silly teenagers.

I was going to say, how did you feel about being treated like that?

(Laughter). We thought it was funny, and we were rather annoyed. But it of course all settled down, and so - but this was the confusion that went in, trying to set up the women's army. And they were doing the best they could under the circumstances. And there were very few women, beyond the guide captains, and commissioners, and so on, who'd had training of looking after a - a large number of women.
The men didn't want it. They were busy with their own affairs anyway, the men, they had no time to do that.

Did that attitude change then over the period when - the officers ...?

Yes, it did. It settled down, it settled down, and we were left to our own devices. And - not that our officers, who were men, weren't strict with us. They were strict. And they - we were under army discipline - so if we did the wrong thing, well we had to take it, just like the men did.

Were you always - did you always have men above you then giving you orders, or were you ever in charge of training of men, or ...?

No, we weren't in charge of training of men.

Or having anything to do in a - that was a - a higher rank, or a superior position, over men at all?

Oh yes, some of the - some of the women who went through the NCO and officer training schools, they would later on be in charge of men. But in our unit the boss was a skipper, a Captain Connell. He was in charge, and then we had a - an adjutant, Lieutenant Younger, and a sergeant-major, who was in charge of training. And then there was the warrant-officer in charge of workshops, with the mechanics under him, male mechanics under him.

But then we began to get our own NCOs and sergeants, corporal sergeants, and officers. So that they were in charge of the women as such, but they really weren't in charge of the men.

But I can imagine situations where an officer, like in - up at Tamworth we had a - a lieutenant in charge of us. Well she was in charge of us, but she had to cooperate, and she was similar rank to some of the male officers in that camp area with different .... So she'd have to stand on her own dignity in certain cases.

(10.00) Do you think that she might have encountered difficulty with the - being an officer, female officer, with men?

Probably, but I don't know from personal experience, and I haven't heard of any particular cases of it. But - but they - none of our women actually had to - officers or anyone - had to train men, no, that didn't come under us at all.

What about your quarters when you first joined, which - can you tell me about those?

Round at Kingsford?

Yes.

The - well we had four huts. And one was kept for the - the catering corps. They were part of our unit at first, the cook and her assistants, but later on it became catering corps. But we had a very famous person, Stronach, and - Mrs - Miss Stronach. She's very well-known, and she is now in her nineties, and still going strong.

What was she well-known for?

Well she has done a lot of things. She was - she'd been in charge of YWCA she'd been known for. And she was trained as a - a cook and caterer, so that she has been very well-known, and she still considers she's part of our unit, but she was catering corps. And she's a lovely person, and still going strong, in her - in her nineties.

Did that mean that you ate pretty well out there?

Nell Stronach. I was trying to think of her first name, Nell Stronach.

Nell?

Did that mean that you did well for food then out there?

Yes. We didn't have to do our own cooking. We did help in - in the dining-room, serving meals, or serving the tea, or something like that, and washing up we had to do when we weren't driving. Or if we were grounded - if we had an accident, we were grounded - we had to do these duties around the camp, camp duties. (Laughs).

That one was - because they got up early in the morning they had a hut of their own. Then there was a hut that was divided into several rooms. So two girls to a room or, if she was an

officer, she had a room to herself. And then there were two more huts where there were twenty-four to a hut.

And there was a division halfway down like an archway. And we had wooden wardrobes that were down the middle, back to back, so that we didn't look straight across at the other beds. But there were six one side, six the other. So we were all in together, so we had to learn to live together. And at one end would be the showers and toilets.

And we got on fairly well. We learned - when new drivers came in later on they were inclined to play up, and - and talk, and laugh, and giggle after lights out. And we used to get upset about that, because we had to be up doing either driving or picket duty. But it didn't take very long, about a week, and they'd done picket duty or driving out at night, and they were glad to go to bed, and keep quiet, and get as much sleep as possible. (Laughs).

So you all managed to fit in fairly well by the sound of things, eventually?

Yes. And it was such a strong bond, we didn't realise at the time, that our association still meets once a year. And we still have anything up to fifty women turning up for an annual reunion.

What - what is the name of that association, Mrs Leemon?

The ex-2nd Aust Ambulance/Car Company Association. And that has been going ever since the war, every year.

That's a big roll-up, isn't it?

We've had more, but of course through sickness, and - and death, we are getting lower. I think the most we've ever had was over seventy we had turn up to one reunion a few years ago. Considering that some have married, some have gone overseas, some have grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, it's a remarkable bond that we have. Through those early days.

It is indeed, for - for those number of years, it's ....

Yes, yes.

Yes, you must have formed some very firm ties.

Well we don't meet sometimes for ten years, or twenty years, and suddenly we come along, and meet some of the friends that we haven't seen that's - that has happened. And we just take up where we left off. Always something to get on about.

Don't always recognise one another, and say: 'Who were you?' (Laughs). Then we realise. Can always relate to them then.

And who actually gets the organisation, who - who organises the reunion of that ...?

Oh, we have a president, and secretary, and treasurer, who - I have been president, I was president for about seven years, but I'm no longer the president, and .... But they carry on, it's not particularly arduous, just get out a newsletter once a year, and have a committee meeting just to plan if there are any changes to our reunion.

(15.00) And we used to meet at various homes, but the last few years, one of our members, Judy - she was Judy Commins, she's Judy Latchford now, she is in a retirement home at Turramurra, Rohihi, a Church of England retirement home, and they have a very nice community room, that the members there - living there, residents, can book. So she books it for the second Saturday in September every year, and we turn up there. Bring our little plate, and we - nothing to be heated, all cold food. And the committee get what drinks we need delivered from the local liquor store at Turramurra there, just down the street, and we have a lovely get together, from noon till four pm each year.

That's wonderful. And so now it's an annual event, this reunion?

It has been since 1946. They used to have two meetings a year, but then it got too much for the - for various ones. So now annual reunion, that's all that's necessary.

That's wonderful.

Mmm.

You were mentioning earlier, Mrs Leemon, that you didn't go overseas, do service overseas, but you indicated that there was a reason why?

Yes, the - no AWAs were allowed to go overseas before 1944. And then a directive came out that if anyone wanted to go overseas, which was to New Guinea, they could apply. Unfortunately we wanted to go as a - an army - as an ambulance unit, and they said: 'No, you can't do that, because the roads are very poor, the - thick mud, and you - well in practical terms you'd need two hefty men with you to dig you out from the mud all the time.' So there seemed no point in us going, although we were disappointed.

We could still leave the unit and go to New Guinea if we wanted to, but you had to go at the equal rank. Which meant as a driver you're higher than a private. So you had to go as an equal rank, or higher.

Well one of our girls, one of the cooks in the unit, she was tired of the same kitchen after some years, and she was a corporal cook, so she went to New Guinea. I'm not sure what she did, whether she was - went to office work, or whether she was still cooking, but she did go to New Guinea.

And one other corporal who'd been directing our ambulances in and out of the showground, sitting in a little cramped office for some time, she went to Darwin, and was there when Darwin was bombed.

So those two girls, the only two that I know of, left the unit for quite valid reasons, and went to - saw overseas service, and came back with the Returned from Active Service madge [sic]. Badge. Which none of the rest of us could do. So this was the reason.

Now, I could have gone, as a secretary I could have gone into an orderly room in New Guinea, but at that time my future husband and I were about to be engaged, and he'd been in New Guinea, and he said: 'One of us in the family with malaria is enough, thank you.' (Laughs). So I said: 'Alright, I won't go.'

And I didn't mind, because we were doing a needed job around the Sydney area particularly. There was no one else to do it, the men were all away, and we were needed. So there was no point really. And this was what the attitude of our unit as a whole took, we were needed in the job we were doing, therefore it was not necessary to go overseas. Unless they'd send us as an ambulance unit.

Right. It sounds a pretty good reason to stay.

Mmm.

You were going to tell me an amusing incident, Mrs Leemon?

Yes, about - one of our members was Dorothy Pascoe. Later she married Charles Cutler, who became leader of the Country Party, and he was knighted, so she's Lady Cutler. And OBE. But we always knew her, because of her name Pascoe, as Passie[?]. So to this day we're never formal with her, she's just Passie with us, and she's never Lady Cutler. (Laughs).

And this was because all the recruits in the army were called by their surname?

Yes. You always got your surname. And to this day I think there are quite a number of the women, the ones who have not married, who I don't really know what their first name is, they're always known by their surname. Or - I was known as Boyd, but some of them had diminutives of their name. (Laughs).

(20.00) Now when you were in the army you got paid, and it was two thirds of the men's pay?

Yes. We got paid, I think it was five shillings a day. And then we were - because we were drivers we were automatically brought up to six shillings a day. But if we took rank, like a corporal, it was only another shilling a day, and a sergeant another shilling on top of that. So it wasn't very much compensation for having to take rank, which really - you couldn't drive, you weren't allowed to drive once you became a corporal, a sergeant, or an officer, and it seemed to me an awful job to have to go and boss everybody around.

Whereas, when you were ambulance you were driver, you had complete control of your own ambulance and vehicle. You could say what you wanted to any of the patients. If they wanted to sit in the front with you, and you didn't want them, you just said, no, you had to sit in the back. And that applied even to a general, if you didn't like the look of him, and he was a patient. You'd say: 'I'm sorry, general, but your place is in the back.' And it was a very nice

thing for our pride. That we were taken - accepted as good drivers, and we had complete control over our vehicles.

And that was worth more than having a higher rank?

Yes, (laughs), in most cases.

Of course you had to put up with the fact that you had to do all the maintenance, and hard, dirty work on your vehicle. And some of the girls preferred not to do that, so they took rank. And we didn't blame them, if they - if they wanted to do that, we were happy for them. We needed officers anyway.

And you actually did become a corporal for a short time, didn't you?

Yes, because they found out that I had been a secretary, and they were short of office workers in our unit, so - but I had been sick for a while. The early work was hard, and I wasn't used to it, and I ended up with some unidentified sickness in Concord, so I thought maybe I'd better relax for a while, and go into the orderly room which I did.

But the fact that the ambulance was going by all the time, in and out, in and out, by the windows - very upset, so I ended up, although - I was - let me see, there three months, and they made me a corporal, thought that would keep me quiet. And another two months I was very restless, and I was very - I was hard to get on with. (Laughs). So the sergeant-major got annoyed with me one day, and said: 'Alright. You're supernumerary.' Meaning that he had enough staff without me.

But I had to drop my stripes. I said: 'Thank you very much', and went back to the - my hut, and unpicked all the stripes, and returned them to him, and said: 'Goodbye.' (Laughs). And I - he gave me another army ambulance to drive, and I was happy again.

That was great.

Now you were going to tell me about your job in the army, the actual driving ...

Yes.

... and all that you did?

Well one thing about once we got our army licences for driving, and we were out on the road, we had to do our maintenance. It was very strict that the vehicles be maintained properly. So that we had to watch the mileage, and change the oils.

Now in those days for the vehicles there were three kinds of oil, there was the engine oil, the gearbox oil, and the differential oil. And we didn't have facilities for putting them up on a hoist. We had to crawl in underneath with a container, and drain the oil, and then fill up with the new oil. We had to keep the engines clean, and the army style was almost polish the engines. They had to be really clean, no grime and dust in them.

As well as that we had to keep the back of the ambulance clean. That meant sweeping out any dust, and washing out the ambulances. The floor we found kept cleaner if we polished it afterwards, so we dutifully polished them, and shake out the blankets, and fold them up neatly, and put them in the corner for - ready for use.

So that - all the days we had off in the camp were - we did that. For - and we wore overalls, we were given blue overalls to get round in.

> I was wondering about that. For getting underneath the vehicle, and doing all the greasy jobs, you had overalls?

(25.00) Yes, we had these men's overalls issued to us. Navy blue overalls. We looked marvellous too in them. (Laughs). Particularly the fatter ones.

> They were seen as a practical necessity, I suppose?

Oh yes, you had to have those. But we had to do all our own washing, we had to - we had a laundry, and we had to boil up our own overalls and all that sort of thing.

> All those greasy ones too, you had to clean those?

Yes, oh yes, we learned how to handle those, and put kerosene in the water to get the grease out, and all that sort of thing. Boil them up, we had a - I suppose it was a gas copper, I've forgotten, but we had to boil them up.

> And you got them clean successfully?

Oh yes, yes. Near enough. Near enough. (Laughs).

And so - also our - our duties, when we were not driving, if we were not on night-duty driving, we had to do two hour pickets on the gate. And this was just a matter of seeing that no unauthorised vehicles or people came in and out the one gate at Kingsford. But at night all we had was a - a lamp, a torch, and a - the slip of paper for marking in and out the vehicles that were going in and out, and a whistle. That's all we had. No guns, nothing else at all. (Laughs).

> So you weren't allowed to carry weapons?

No. No, we never - we were not trained, as ambulance drivers, to have any weapons. The men were trained, but actually an ambulance unit does not - is not armed.

> And so you didn't even have any training in arms either, even though you were ...?

No, no, none of the girls. Some of the girls in other units, of course, not ambulances, were trained in weaponry, but we weren't. We never had any. But they used to take out the men in the camp, they had to do regular training. And they'd go out to the rifle range down at

Malabar, and do their training now and again, but the girls were never considered that we should do it.

What about the men, did they carry weapons in the ...?

No, the ambulance units never carried weapons, but the men had to know how to use them, that was all. It was part of their general training.

The men that were in our unit, incidentally, were ones who didn't qualify medically to go overseas. Either they had been and were wounded and on light duties, or they had never been medically fit. And our warrant-officer in the workshops he didn't go away, because I think he had eleven children.

Good reason to be - keep him home.

(30.00) Yes. They were - anyone with a large family was exonerated from service. And he was an older man anyway.

This is the end of Tape One.

[Recording ends on Side B of Cassette One].

This is Tape Two, Side C.

We were talking about you being on picket duty, Mrs Leemon. Did you - did you have any particular incidents that you ...?

No, I always had a very quiet time. I don't recall there were many incidents. Perhaps other drivers did, but I don't recall it. But the only thing was that we didn't like the three am to five am picket. Because we had to leave our boxes - of course it was pretty quiet - and light the boiler. So that when the catering staff got up, the cooks got up, they had a hot stove. If you didn't do the job there there was trouble. And it was a pretty miserable job trying to get this darn donkey going for the hot water and stove. (Laughs).

What was that, a donkey engine, was it?

Yes, in - in the - in an enclosed area, into a special area it was, with a door on it, and so on, it was bricked in, in our case. You had to light it with whatever was available. But ....

And .... What was the difficulty in lighting it, you couldn't just press a button?

No, you had to get paper and - and kindling, and all that sort of thing. It was all supposed to be there, and I don't remember having to hunt for it, I think it was there, but it was just that sometimes the darn thing didn't want to cooperate, and you'd go away from it, thinking it was lit, and find it wasn't. And have to go back to it, make sure it was going. (Laughs). You knew there'd be awful trouble if you didn't get it going.

And then of course going off at five am was really too late to go back to sleep again. Because everybody would be up and about from about six, so that you didn't get much leisure, and you were not supposed to sleep in anyway, you were supposed to get going. (Laughs).

Was that particular duty rostered fairly fairly, or ...?

Oh yes, yes, it - it was divided up amongst us fairly. Just that if - you knew it was coming up and you didn't like it.

Right. And after Kingsford you went to Killara, is that right?

No, Killara was the early days, right at the very beginning, when the - there were forty of us went into the army, and, because they couldn't take us at Killara - they were already pretty well full up - so they compromised, and said, 'Alright, twenty can come to the first school at Killara, twenty go into the - out to the horse-boxes, and halfway through we'll change over.'

Well I was in the second half. So I got up to Killara for this school. Everything was done at the double and with whistles. And I didn't have a clue what was going on. I was always running ragged, (laughs), not knowing what - and rather resentful. I already had my driver's licence, and could - was accepted in the army, why did I have do this training course at AWAS - the training school. So it was about ten days I had there, and I didn't like it one little bit.

And how was it different to the first ten days you'd had?

Well for the first ten days I was learning to drive round the Centennial Park, and having a good time, feeling I was really doing something. I was in the army, and I'd got my licence. And then had to go back to school as it were, after being out in the real world.

But I didn't blame them. It's just that I was bewildered the whole time. And being rather - brought up in a rather protected sort of family, and no brothers or sisters, I hadn't had the rough or - rough and tumble that a big family would have. So that everything - I took it hard.

Right. I'm wondering what the difference between you being at the Centennial Park and that sort of driving, and the kind of activities you undertook at Killara?

(5.00) Oh, it was only drills and lectures and that sort of thing. And making sure you had your bed straight, almost like a hospital trainee.

So there was none of the fun of driving at Killara?

No, no, nothing at all, it was like going back to school, and you'd left already. (Laughs).

But they wanted us to - it was important I suppose in that they wanted us all to have some similar training, all the AWAS have a basic training the way the women were trained, not men.

So it was useful for - I think. I think we - we all should have gone through it, but just, as I say, I went in the wrong way round. I'd have been better off if I'd gone in with the first batch, and not the second batch. (Laughter). All I can remember is a blur of running all the time, always being late, and not knowing what I was supposed to be doing.

And being treated a bit like a - an inferior being by the sounds of it?

Well they wanted to toughen us up. Because some of us were very soft, you know, going in from office jobs, and not having to do things in a hurry, and be organised. So it was necessary.

And that was the course that all AWAS went through?

All - yes, everyone went through.

Mmm. Right.

What about the vehicles you drove, Mrs Leemon, did they alter in any way?

Yes. After we'd been used to the thirty hundredweight truck bodies with the canvas tops on them, we had a batch of English Austin ambulances delivered to us. They were on a ship that was designed - was sent to - it was supposed to be offloaded at Singapore. Well Singapore fell before that ship arrived. So it was diverted to Australia.

And the vehicles were going - were short of spare parts. They knew they were going to be short of spare parts, there was no hope of getting spare parts from England at that stage of the war. This was still 1942. So they - they kept half of them with us, and half went to the ambulance - the women's ambulance unit in Brisbane, as I understand it. And they were the box-like ones on films. In fact Princess Elizabeth, when she was doing her driving training had - was on one of those.

But I was very amused; they had great big tyres, 150 pounds weight, it took two good men to change a tyre on those Austin ambulances. And on that wartime documentary with Princess Elizabeth doing her training, she was changing a tyre, but it wasn't on an Austin ambulance. It was on a smaller vehicle, she couldn't have possibly changed one. (Laughs). We never did.

But the - those great big tyres didn't deflate very easily. You'd get a slow leak, but it wasn't very important, and you were aware of it, and you could get it changed when you got back to your own headquarters.

And so we liked those. They were much more comfortable for the patients in the back too. And we quite were fond of our Austin ambulances.

But after some considerable time we had the disconcerting happening of front wheels dropping off. While we were driving along. And they'd just sort of sheer off, and go across the road. And, do you know, nobody had a serious accident from those - what was happening. They seemed to have missed any pedestrians, or anywhere else, they didn't run

into other cars, and the - the boxy ambulance didn't tip over, it just would [inaudible] with only three wheels.

They didn't know what was happening. But they did some tests, and they found that the - metal fatigue in the stub axles was the cause. The vehicles were only supposed to last, in wartime conditions, 10000 miles, and we'd already done 20000 in them. So they replaced the stub axles and we had no further trouble. But for a while you were nervous about going out, if you had an Austin ambulance to drive, as to whether you'd get home safely. (Laughs).

I'm sure you would have, and it could have been so dangerous, couldn't it? But ....

It could have been, but it never was, we were lucky.

What about speeds, did you travel at very high speeds?

No. No. We weren't emergency ambulances, and we weren't supposed to travel any more than the limit, the ordinary speed limit of that day, which was about thirty miles an hour. The ambulances weren't fast. Sometimes if we were - felt that we had to get to a hospital quickly we did speed up, but not - not very significantly, that wasn't our role at all.

You didn't have a siren on the roof?

Nothing like that, no. All we had was our red cross on the side.

(10.00) What about any other equipment that you might have had to use, did you have to use other, Morse code, for instance, or radio signal ...?

No, nothing - nothing like that, no.

Anything in the - in the vehicle?

No. Though the - in the [inaudible] - we'd trained at that, we never had to use it at all, no. No, that was - wasn't important at all.

We were allowed to - well we were trained a bit in mechanics, and we could - we were - knew enough to know when - when a spark-plug went which one it was, and we could test for that. But we weren't allowed to change it.

And our warrant-officer who was of the old school I don't think really approved of the women much. But I went to him one time and I said: 'Number five spark plug is not firing.' So he went over to the vehicle. He did everything but test number five spark plug. He didn't like me telling him what was wrong. (Laughter). So I went to one of the boys, one more my own age, and said: 'Look, will you change this number five spark plug?', he said: 'Yes.' And I went off - everything was alright.

But I realised what you should do with this warrant-officer is go to him, and go all helpless, and say: 'Please, something's wrong with my vehicle, will you fix it?', and he was right then.

He didn't like us knowing too much. (Laughs). He was a very good mechanic and so on, but he - he was of the old school.

Well it seems that he was, he didn't like the women to be - to know too much, or ....

No, no.

And wanted them down in the ....

Yes. Though we'd been trained for it. Even when we were in the unit we - Sergeant - Stolly, Stollsenberg, I think his name was - he took us through mechanics, and made sure we knew the basics, and so on.

That's right, I was just thinking that, when you were talking, that - why wouldn't you have been allowed to change a spark plug, when - when you scrubbed the engine, and got underneath, and ....

(Laughs). Yes. We weren't supposed to do it. And of course some of the country girls, who'd come in from the country, they were very clued up about mechanics, and could do a lot more than I could have done.

Do you ...?

But they still weren't allowed to.

Do you think this somehow reflects the attitudes between men and women, and the woman's place?

In those days it was very distinct, yes. They didn't like it. I think they still don't like it if a woman thinks she knows more about a car than they do. And there are an awful lot of men who don't know very much about mechanics. They drive cars, but they don't know any more than I did before I did a mechanic's course. (Laughs).

So it was very much a male preserve?

Yes, yes, the mechanical part of it.

Did you mention - say that you had married women in your unit?

A few, yes. But their menfolk were overseas.

Were they treated any differently at all?

Oh no, no, no. They were just there to do a job, and that was all. No. If they .... One - one had a husband who was a prisoner, another one had a husband who'd gone down in the *Perth*, she was, you know, very upset for a long time, though.

They were inclined to be a bit moody and upset, and we understood that. You know, they had problems that we single girls didn't have. Even though we had boyfriends over there it wasn't quite the same as being a husband.

Mmm.

What about Colonel Irving with the ...?

Sybil Irving, yes.

Yes. Did you know her?

Not personally, no. I never met her.

And did you - did you know - you knew of her, presumably?

Oh yes, yes, she was the head of the - but I had no personal contact with her. And I don't recall that she ever made a visit to our unit as such. I just - I don't think so.

Well what would your impression of her be?

Oh she was a fine person, yes. I have great respect for her, but, as I say, personally I had no contact with her.

And initially she apparently felt that she wanted - that women were to be women, and not men, or - not aping men?

Yes. Well they were ....

Were you aware of that?

Yes. Well I think that was part of our early troubles with the AWAS headquarters.

Yes. And the officers.

They wanted us to be women, and we were in there to do a man's job. And the point was that we had to do the job, heavy work and all, as well, if not better than a man, to be recognised. And that was the early part of it. We worked harder than the average man did, just to prove the point, that we could do the work.

We were lugging round four gallon drums of petrol, that were too - almost too heavy for a woman. Later on towards the end of the war, when the women were being demobilised, I believe the men built themselves little trollies to take those - those forty-four gallon - not forty-four, the four gallon drums of petrol round on. They didn't build them for us. If we were in the army we had to learn to lug them round like the men did.

(15.00) And you were conscious that you had to be better? Not as good, but better?

Oh yes, better. Driving - now there were three transport units under Colonel Milner. They were male units, the other two. General transport, trucks, and semi-trailers, what have you, anything that was general transport. We were only ambulances, with a few trucks that we had that were not. And over a period our - our accident rate was far lower than the two units who were male drivers. They had some horrific accidents. And we didn't.

In the whole of the four years that we were operating I think there were only two pedestrians killed by our ambulances, and that was in the brownout, blackout/brownout days. And they were in the inner suburbs, and they were older people who wore dark clothing, and you could not see them.

Because we had these - for the first part of it we had tiny little blue lights as headlights. You couldn't see more than a few yards in front of you. And so the - I wasn't involved in either accident, but I have heard of them, we were very upset about them. But as far as having bad accidents involving other people, or our patients, no, there were never any. There were only minor accidents as such.

That was a very good record to have.

Yes, we were very proud of our record. We showed them that women could operate a whole unit. We had a - a strength of about 200 women in the unit at any one time. That was scattered through New South Wales. And I estimated that there - we had about 400 go through.

And after the war, in fact in 1981, '82, after I retired from work, I went down to army headquarters in Melbourne, and went through our records, and listed every woman who'd been in in the unit. And there were 427 of us.

Goodness, that - that was a good thing to do. You were obviously very interested in it all.

Yes. And I had promised the unit that I would do that once I had stopped working. But - I did that.

What about your leisure time in the army, what did you do when you were on leave, and how much leave did you get?

Well we used to get leave from 1700 hours, that's five o'clock in the afternoon, if we were not on duty, and we had to be back at eleven o'clock. And ....

Was that every day?

No, but there'd be several days.

In a week?

Yes. It's hard to - I can't recall really, it's gone out of my mind how many we had. I'd say there's a couple we'd have. And then you'd get one - get a leave for a couple of days. Well I

was in the position where I had my family at home at Dee Why, so I could go home. But the girls who didn't have families, I've heard later stories that they made friendships with girls who had homes, who took them home with them and that sort of thing, and - or ....

But on the night leaves, they'd just go in to the movies or something like that, and come back again - to the camp. But I don't know what - I suppose if they had boyfriends they met their boyfriends. But I didn't have a boyfriend at that stage, or at least I did, but he was away in New Guinea somewhere. (Laughs).

I was going to say, did you see much of your future husband?

Not a great deal, no, not a great deal. Because he was in New Guinea for fifteen months. And then we got engaged, thinking that we'd have a - that the war was nearly over, and that we'd - perhaps we'd get married.

That was in 1944 was it?

'44, yes. And we were sort of feeling that perhaps it wouldn't be too much longer. Well we got engaged, and four days after the war was over Jack was sent over to do a job on the death railway, the war-graves job. And he was away for seventeen months. (Laughs). So I had altogether - I can't work it out now, but over two years before we could get married. (Laughs).

So you ....

Engagement, over two years.

Right. But he went to the - the war-graves before you could get married, did you say? Just four days after the war.

He was sent overseas, yes, he was given another job. Four days after the war was over. Had to get into Thailand in a hurry, to collect the records from the ex-prisoners, before they were repatriated. And he had - he was first of all staff sergeant, when he was in New Guinea he was staff sergeant, but he was a lieutenant by the time he was given that job. And he took the first war-graves unit into Thailand, to get the records, and go up the death railway, and do that. So we were corresponding all that time. (Laughs).

(20.00) I was wondering how you managed to keep this relationship going over that long time, without really having seen one another a great deal. Was it by correspondence?

Oh yes, yes. The only time we were together for any time was when I went to Tamworth. And, oddly enough, Jack was not my boyfriend at that stage, but I knew of him through his sister. And when I was posted to Tamworth, Con said to me: 'Oh Jack's up there.' They were up at Tamworth waiting to go to New Guinea, his unit. And he was 2IC of it. So I said: 'Oh that's nice, someone I know.'

So when I went up there we started going out together every time we had leave, and we ended up very fond of one another, but we didn't get engaged at that stage. But more or less we'd realised that when - we would be married at some later date, and then we started the correspondence. Though I wasn't a regular correspondent in New Guinea. But when he was in Thailand I was a very regular correspondent. And - it was just that we were friends first, and then we fell in love. Which is the - is a - I always feel is a - a better way.

I guess getting the mail through might have been a little difficult too, when he was in New Guinea? On active service.

Yes and no. It did come through in spasms. But we managed somehow, we just didn't - we took it for granted the mails would come when they came.

Right.

Talking about Tamworth, Mrs Leemon, could you tell me about what it was like up there?

Yes, it was quite different from the city headquarters at Kingsford. We still had the same huts to go into, taking twenty-four people. And they - but they were scattered in groups along the Manilla Road. And there was the big hospital in the centre, and then there were various groups of huts, some men, and some women. The AMWAs, and the sisters, all had their own areas.

And our job was - actually in some ways was not as interesting, from the ambulance point of view, in that we were more or less like general transport. We had to go up and provide a bus transport for the sisters going on and off duty, the nursing sisters, and also the AMWAs. And we were a bit grizzly about that.

But we also had more contact with patients in the hospital, convalescing, and we could stop and talk to them. We also had to go round and collect the bags of dirty linen, and take them up to the laundry. And take round the clean stuff. And the - a couple of boys who were convalescing would help us with it.

And every week also there was a trip to Armidale, where the big laundry was. And we always wanted to do a trip with that. But one of our girls had the - the truck that did that. So she always did the trip herself. But occasionally she'd ask one of us to go along as a - an extra. And so we'd have a - a trip all the way to Armidale and back for the day, and have lunch out, and that sort of thing. (Laughs).

What - what was the attraction about that trip then, was it the lunch out, or ...?

Yes, and the couple of boys who were regulars on this linen thing, they were rather fun, and we'd have a - almost a day out, three or four of us at a time. (Laughs). Because once we got away from - as long as we got there, and got the linen back, nobody worried what we did in between times, so that was rather fun.

And also we could speed on that trip. The truck used to do up to sixty miles an hour on the - on the ridge going through to Glen Innes.

So you wouldn't have been able to get much speed up around the camp?

No. You'd have a heavy day and you'd be tired, and you'd find you'd done all of eight miles. Round and round the huts. And taking patients from one hut to - up to the eye doctor, or back again.

But there were some other trips too. The local people in Tamworth were very generous with hospitality to the convalescent patients. So we provided the transport. So you had afternoon tea or a lunch out at somewhere.

Either afternoon tea in the town, or out - we used to go to Goonoo Goonoo, the big property outside Tamworth. And they were very good, and gave us a beautiful lunch. And we'd take two or three ambulances out there. And we'd have a look around the property, and bring them back again. That was a regular thing too.

Would that have been a day's outing?

(25.00) Yes, that was a day's outing. And we provided - the ambulances provided the transport. Because there wasn't enough general transport around the camp, as such. It was more a transit camp for ordinary army personnel. It was a big camp for hospital patients, but not for ordinary personnel. More transit, en route to somewhere else.

And we - it was more free and easy up there too. On your days off you made your own fun, with either mobile patients who were allowed out on leave, or amongst our own group. And one famous time we had a twenty-first birthday party for one of our members, Joy Hasting. And her parents came up from Sydney. And some of our men around - she was a very popular girl, very bright - they went out to a paddock somewhere, and dug a hole, and I had to go in and - with the warrant-officer from the hospital - and collect a sucking pig, and we - it was barbecued, or put into this hole, and buried and cooked. And we had an evening picnic out, with a keg of beer, and whatnot.

The funny thing about it, the colonel in charge of that area, not the hospital, but the general area, he heard about it, and he didn't approve. So we had to try - he more or less refused to let us have transport, so we had to sneak around him. (Laughs).

How did you manage that?

Oh there's always ways and means, there are ways and means. (Laughs). Anyway we had our - we had our party, it was a - a marvellous success. (Laughs).

You managed to get there without transport?

Oh no, we took our ambulances, but we made sure the colonel didn't know. We went a back road, you see, where he didn't know, we went round. Round the camp to get there. (Laughter). Went a few miles out and so on.

And into town with - there were always dances on in town, so that if you wanted to you could go in. And everybody was welcome, the townsfolk ran the - the dances in the hall. And then you could go and have dinner at - one or two of the hotels served quite a nice meal. And there were two - two picture theatres as I recall correctly, so you had a choice.

But altogether it - it was more relaxed and more fun.

And quite a nice, varied, and interesting social life too, by the sounds of it?

Yes, and the - as I say, the local people were involved in that too.

Incidentally the colonel whom we didn't like very much was rather famous. He was Colonel de Groot, the man who rode over and cut the ribbon at the opening of the Harbour Bridge. I thought he was a bit of a hero, but when I met him, and he was in charge of the area where we were, I had a very different opinion. He - he was terrible to us girls.

And at one stage where we were, near to a carpark, where transient troops used to park their vehicles, and then spend the night in the camp, they inadvertently wandered through our huts, between our huts. They didn't do any harm, and when they pointed out to them they were in the women's area, they said: 'Sorry', and moved off. But Colonel de Groot decided then he'd put a barbed wire fence around us.

And we were furious, we didn't like that barbed wire fence one little bit. (Laughs). It - it, I don't know, hurt our dignity for some reason or other, and we'd - we realised that what the men had done was not - but we had no problems with men coming into the huts. We left them wide open in summertime, and nobody came in uninvited. Not that we ever invited the men into the huts. But if they came by, and realised they were in, they just backed off, and took off, and said: 'Sorry.' So that's why we didn't really like the Colonel de Groot. (Laughs).

You felt he was trying to keep you in, rather than the men out?

Yes, definitely. (Laughs). There were problems all along. We just didn't get on with him at all.

Were there other problems that you - you took exception to, that you didn't like? The way he treated you?

No, I don't think so.

The other problem was of course there was the officers' mess. We were not allowed to be invited into the officers' mess, because we were in uniform. We were invited, and often went to the sergeants' mess, the hospital sergeants' mess and enjoyed ourselves.

(30.00) This is the end of Side C.

[Recording ends on Side One of Cassette Two].

This is Tape Two, Side D.

Would you like to continue the story, Mrs Leemon?

The - we were not allowed to be out of uniform, officially, and most of us in Tamworth didn't have civilian clothes with us anyway, because we were not supposed to, and we obeyed the rules. So - but the office - and we were not allowed to go in uniform to an officers' mess, that was just army regulations.

But what got on our nerves a bit, and irritated us, was that the officers could invite any of the civilian women in from Tamworth, and no matter who they were. They just - anybody they could pick up off the street if they liked it, and - of course that sounds dreadful, but you know what I mean, some of the girls around the - an army camp, (laughs), were up to no good. And we thought - and we were perfectly respectable, or we thought we were - and we were not allowed to go to the officers' mess.

Seems rather unfair, doesn't it?

Yes. It was just a minor irritation, we had plenty of fun with our own friends really. So it - but it was just one of those things that was niggly.

And talking about what the AWAS headquarters thought we might - mischief we might get up to, Tamworth was a place where we had the opportunity if we wanted to. But none of our girls got into serious trouble.

And the only two girls that I know did get into real bother, and had to be invalided out of the army, one was a signals girl, who was nice, but very naive. And she was - I think it was an unfortunate situation, she had to do duty down in an underground bunker, with a male officer. And of course, the inevitable happened, she got pregnant. Well, they were unsupervised most of the time, and I think it was - she should never have been there on her own.

The other girl was a very young girl who hardly should have left home I think. And she was a canteen worker in the army, AWAS again. And she really - I don't think she was more than fourteen years of age, mentally. Sweet little thing. And of course she got pregnant. There was a great to do, and stir about it.

But they were girls who really shouldn't have been out like that in the - the circumstances where they were. They were very vulnerable.

And the first girl was with an officer, did you say?

No, I don't think so, it might have been an NCO, I don't know, a technical man.

Mmm. Mmm.

But they had these shifts down in the underground bunker. Well it - it wasn't a good idea, I don't think. We were very sorry for both these girls, because we felt that they were the sort of girls that any man could have talked them into anything.

Right. But other than those two incidents, there wasn't very much?

No. No.

And you say that Tamworth was the place where it could happen?

Well it was more open.

Yes.

And you could wander off in - up into the hills, from the back of the camp you could wander off. Jack, my future husband, and I used to wander off, and walk up into the hills, and - by ourselves, and everything. But we were - you know, we weren't 'up to anything', as it were. They - a lot of the camp thought we were. (Laughs). He used to get chipped about it, but we were just friends, and we liked to get away and talk.

So there was a lot more freedom at Tamworth, that you didn't find at the other camps?

No. No, you weren't supervised, and - of course in the city once you got out you - what you did was your own business, and nobody knew what you were doing. But that was nothing to do with us. Like any civilian life, what you do away from your own work is - is your own business. And time.

(5.00) But in - in the camp - well even when you were on duty things were more relaxed too. It was more - it was a fun thing being in the country. And I quite enjoyed it. We all did.

It sounds as if it was - you became part of the country community as well.

Yes, you were too.

We had to put up with extremes of climate. The huts we were in, were just tin huts up off the ground with asbestos - corrugated asbestos roofs. But all the way - and double doors each end. Not windproof. And all around the top, underneath the eaves, were pieces of timber, which could be opened up in hot weather, or closed in cold weather. Usually they just flapped, and nobody took any notice of them, they just stayed that way. Well you can imagine in the hot summers in Tamworth they were like ovens. And in the winter time, with the frosts, it was freezing.

I remember having five blankets on my bed, and a sleeping bag in the middle, and still cold. And it was awful cold getting up in the middle of the night, if you had to go to the bathroom, which was fifty yards away across the paddock.

And outside?

And outside, yes. (Laughs). We had sewerage in the latrine block, but it was well away from the huts, it wasn't at the end of the hut, as we had in Sydney. So things - things were - we put up with a lot.

Living conditions weren't as good?

No. (Laughs).

Oh, I must tell you about the time we met the hospital train, the first hospital train to come into Tamworth, with casualties from Milne Bay. They had been flown to Townsville, straight from Milne Bay, and then put on a hospital train, without any respite. And the dressings and so on they had looked as though they might have been put on in New Guinea when they came through. They did have hospital staff with them, but only a few.

So all our twenty ambulances went in a line, and lined up against - along the railway station, to meet this train.

At Tamworth?

At Tamworth. And bring them out to the hospital, which was about two miles out of town.

Well they'd been in New Guinea for some time, these young men, and they didn't know women were in the army. They got such a surprise to find women were going to drive them, in uniform, to the hospital. They hadn't believed it. They'd seen nurses of course, but they hadn't seen anyone else.

But they - some of them were in very bad condition. And the one I - one of the trips I had to do - because it took us all day to unload this train, backwards and forwards - but he had his leg - was very badly - badly wounded somewhere high in his leg, and he had it up in a sort of splint, up in the air.

And it wasn't comfortable in the ambulances, and he was in awful pain. And even though an orderly was holding this frame in position I had to drive at about five miles an hour, avoid - trying to avoid the bumps, to get him to hospital. And even then later he died, I heard, which was very sad.

Some of our girls said they had to stop, and wait for the patient to calm down again, before they could get - get him on his way again. So it was really a - that was the first time that we had met with these casualties, so soon after they'd received them.

You were really sort of confronted with the harsh reality of the war?

Yes, this was really war. Mmm. We hadn't really noticed up till that time.

Of course we'd - we'd gone through the times with the - the Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour, and the later shelling, but that still didn't come near us really. Mmm.

Were they - was that the first of many times that you were brought face to face with the - the reality, the harsh reality of the war?

Yes. Later on when the Americans were involved with - and they were - they didn't have their own ambulances at that stage, and there were flying accidents. And we had to contend with those. Meet them - I had one man who was blinded in a flying accident, I had to take him to hospital.

And another time, when the English navy came out, and was based, some of them, in Sydney, they had no ambulances of their own in the beginning, they hadn't been sent out. So we had to provide an ambulance service for that. And at one time there was an accident in Sydney harbour, on one of the British ships, and it was an explosion, and a lot of men were badly burnt. And they were taken first to Sydney hospital, and then we had to pick them up, and take them down to their own hospital at Herne Bay. I think.

(10.00) Anyway we had to transport them to another hospital, from Sydney Hospital, and that's when I saw these horrific burn casualties, where they were all like one huge blister. It was a terrible experience.

We - it was brought home to us. Although we were safe, not like in Britain, we were safe, we did see at times what - how terrible things could be.

Yes. And when you say 'we', how many of it - would you have had a - an orderly with you, or ...?

In those cases, yes, they did have an orderly, they - but other times we just - we - they'd put them in the back of the ambulance, and we'd take off, to get them unloaded at the other end. So that we didn't have our hospitals, or orderlies, or nursing staff with us, as a rule. But we were only drivers, we couldn't do anything on the - en route anywhere.

That's what I was wondering actually, whether you were ...?

Mmm. No, we'd had no training that way at all, and we weren't supposed to.

But you had done first aid earlier on?

We'd done first aid, but I never used it. It wasn't our job. In fact we probably would have been in trouble if we'd tried to do anything. The main thing was to get that person safely to wherever he was supposed to go, to a hospital or whatever.

And you were often on your own in the ambulance with the patient?

Oh yes, yes, quite often. Quite often.

I remember one time up in Tamworth when I had to - it must have been another train that I took him off, and he was a malaria case. And he had a - almost like an epileptic fit inside the ambulance. Throwing himself around, and I thought he'd injure himself badly. When I got to the hospital there were other cases, and they didn't take him for a while, and we didn't know

what to do. I think I got into the back of the ambulance then, and tried to stop him injuring himself. But ....

> Yes, you'd think that there would have been occasions when it was really necessary for you to be helping the person? The patient?

Yes, but there was a shortage of - of manpower. We just had to make do, do what we could. And there just wasn't anybody available in those cases. You couldn't complain about it, because there was no one.

> So you had to do your best, to get them where you could, as fast as possible?

Do the best, yes. But it was only rare cases that this happened. But we all had one or two cases when we would have liked some more help. Mmm. At times.

> And how many patients would you have carried at a time? I guess it varied, would it?

We could take eight sitting patients in the back, and maybe one in the front. And four stretcher cases. We could only take four stretcher cases.

> And you sometimes had less than those, because - I guess?

Oh yes, usually it was one stretcher case, or even one sitting patient. But if the man had to be transported, ours was the transport. Mmm.

Do you want to come on yet to the end of the war, and the hospital ships?

> Yes.

Mmm. that was the next thing that happened to us, when the hospital ships started to come into Sydney, from Malaya. And every available vehicle was put on the road, and we had mile-long convoys of ambulances. Some of the ambulances like I - one I had, didn't have a horn. But it - it went otherwise, but you just did without a horn, and that sort of thing. And we had police escort in that case, when they were mile-long convoys, to get us through safely.

And I remember, I think it was the first one I was on, it had just started raining along Anzac Parade, and the road was greasy with oil, and the vehicles started skidding. And in the convoy it's a - very awkward. Because you can't go up faster, it's hard - the vehicle in front of you. I was about third or fourth in the row.

> On your own?

On my own. And this vehicle started sliding, waltzing, up Anzac Parade. And I couldn't go fast, because I'd hit the one in front of me, I couldn't go slow, in case the other one collected me from behind. There were empty ambulances, but we wanted to get down to the hospital ship, that was the main thing. In mind.

And I do remember two - a cyclist with a pillion passenger coming up behind me, two men. And they were sort of beside me, and I could feel me going, and I yelled at them. 'Get out of the way, I'm skidding', and they went zoom, right, bang away from me. (Laughs). And I waltzed all the way up Anzac Parade.

But a few of the ambulances toward the end - the tail end of a convoy is always driving faster than the front. Even though the front is keeping a - a slow speed, for some reason or other there's this sort of concertina effect, and the ones at the back are always trying to catch up, to keep in line. And I believe two of them turned round, or banged one another. But I think we all got down to the hospital ship, I never did find out exactly what happened, except that there was trouble at the rear.

(15.00) There were others that had the same skidding difficulties?

Yes, they were all doing it. But of course we were all pretty experienced drivers in that time. We didn't panic about it, and we kept - kept going. And once we got out off Anzac Parade I think the rest of the roads were alright. It was just along there, that it just started to rain, and that's a very bad situation if there's oil on the road, and the beginning of a light rain.

Anyway we got down to the ships alright, and we were all lined up, and there along the top deck were all these rows of amputees, and they lost their legs, with the ulcers and things, all sitting along the top row, waiting their turn to get off. The walking cases came off first. And what they did was they got the walking cases off first. So they piled them in, eight in the back, one in the front with me.

And they were all very subdued. They didn't know how they were going to be received back home. And we drove off, we had to get from Wooloomooloo up to Concord Hospital, where they were all going to be examined, and reassessed. And their relatives were all up - not encouraged to come down to the wharf, they were waiting up at Concord.

So I was talking, and mentioning about, I'd had a boyfriend killed in Singapore Island, I was mentioning about his unit, and so on, just to make conversation and so on, but didn't get very much response. And - and we took off quietly. We were allowed to go, we weren't in convoy, once we got our load, they said: 'Go driver', and we went like that.

And going along Parramatta Road, it was amazing, everybody came out, along - around Leichhardt, like - there were hundreds of people, and banners, and - 'Welcome Home'. It was wonderful. And as we stopped for the lights, or traffic hold-ups, and so on, there were women coming out with freshly baked cakes, and scones, and thrusting them into the ambulances, and 'welcome home', and bottles of soft drink. I don't think there were many bottles of beer, beer was a bit scarce at the time, after - just after the war.

But by the time we got up to the hospital I think all those men were just euphoric with pleasure that they were home, and they were going to be accepted. They didn't come home like dogs with their tails behind - between their legs. But it was a very tense time, and they were - we were very tense too ....

It must have been a very moving time.

Mmm. We were very tense too. But it was really wonderful the way Sydney came out, and welcomed the - the ex-prisoners home. Really wonderful.

Were there other occasions where you met hospital ships too?

Oh yes, we did meet them later on, but it was those first couple of ships that made the big impression, and they were the - probably the worst of them, the ones that came in first. They had had some treatment, and attention, and food, so that they didn't look to unhealthy. But the later ones who'd been kept back, and came in, I think they had more time to get them almost rehabilitated before they put them on the ships. But they got them home all as quickly as possible. And so it's - the early days were the busy ones, getting ....

When - when would that have been, in 1945, or ...?

Yes, oh yes, it was before the end of ....

Right.

It was - I was still in the army, and I got out in November, so it would have been late September, early October that that happened.

Mmm.

What about when you were demobilised?

Demobilisation took place when you had a point system, how long you'd been in, and your reasons for getting out of the army, and so forth. But in my case I was due to get out fairly quickly, because I had accumulated a lot of points, being in from the very beginning, in the ambulance car company. So I - I could have stayed on for a few months and - but eventually - by the end of the following year our unit was completely demobilised anyway, it became a transit camp for a while, for women getting - just staying there, until - they were waiting to be demobilised.

But I decided that I'd get out, because I thought I could have gone over to Singapore to be married. Because Jack was in that area. So I decided I'd take my points, and get out, so I got out before the end of '45.

And - but I tried to go over to Singapore, but it was still under a - an occupied country, had military occupation. And I had to apply for a permit to go over there. Ships were scarce, I had to find a ship to go on. And ....

(20.00) Jack by this time had already gone on the Thailand railway?

Yes, he'd been over there for some time. Yes, in Thailand.

But the - the job in Thailand, as far as he was concerned, was going to be over, and he was going to be - come down to do another job in Singapore, which didn't eventuate. But he had

the idea that we'd have a nice wedding in Singapore Cathedral, if I could get over there. Thinking that he had to do this other war-graves job around the - the islands off Singapore.

So I tried for months, and I had a pile of papers about two inches thick. With permits, and writing to people, and so forth. And I just got everything organised, the name of the ship, and I got a cable from Jack, he was on his way home. (Laughs). So I didn't get my trip to Singapore.

And then when he did get home there was a - a strike on in Melbourne, a transport strike. But Jack was a great one for having friends everywhere, and he knew a girl who was in charge of RAF - RAAF transport, and she smuggled him onto a plane. And he got home a week before our wedding plans were due to expire. (Laughs).

Now that - after the war it was very hard to organise a minister, a church, and a venue for a reception. That took quite a bit of doing. And I had it all planned. I thought I'd given Jack quite - several weeks to relax before we were married, but he just got home in time before our marriage. (Laughs).

What was the difficulty involved with setting it all up, getting it all arranged?

Oh just the scarcity of everything. There were food shortages, and I don't - there were not many venues available. During the war everything sort of faded out. You couldn't get anything just as you wanted it. So you had....

In fact I went to the Hotel Australia. It was only going to be a family - small wedding reception. And I got turned down by the Hotel Australia. Until I - I had a rich uncle, and I mentioned his name, he was often there. 'Oh, well that's different', you know. They - they could get me in. (Laughs).

So you had to have some sway?

Yes. (Laughs). It's the only time I've ever used the rich uncle's name. But I knew that he'd - they'd often dined at the Hotel Australia. As soon as I just threw his - his name in, it was amazing the change.

And - but in the meantime of course, waiting for Jack to come back, I had taken temporary work, and gone back to work. And also took a cooking course, through the Sun building, the - there was a cooking school up in the top branch of the *Women's Weekly*, I suppose. No, *The Woman*. *The Woman Magazine*. And I did a cooking course, and went back to work.

In preparation for marriage?

Yes.

What sort of work did you do then?

Oh just temporary secretarial work.

You went back to the business?

I didn't go back to business college, no.

No, but you ...?

Oh well whatever temporary jobs were going, I wasn't looking for a full-time job. But I did go to - AWA at one stage, was - I was sent there for a job. And they dictated some letters, and I went and typed them, and took them back to the man who'd given them to me. And he said: 'Have you finished already? Have you got any knitting?' And I was so surprised, things had so changed. You worked hard before the war, and you were scared of losing your job if you didn't do everything correctly, but with the - everything relaxed because there were not enough women. Oh I don't know, it wasn't that - I don't know what was happening, but they didn't have enough work for the girls that they employed.

And this was in the AWA?

Yes, in AWA. But it was only a job for a couple of weeks, or something like that.

You weren't sort of thinking of office work as a career at that point?

Oh well this is - you didn't - once you got married you were supposed to leave your work, and leave the jobs for the unmarried girls. You weren't expected to work. It's only very recently where married women automatically keep on with their jobs. Oh no. In fact if you did get married, in the early days when - particularly later, during the - after the - when the depression was beginning to ease down, but still jobs were tight, if you got married you kept it secret. You didn't wear a wedding ring, and you didn't tell your boss that you were married. That was the way it was.

(25.00) Would they have given you the sack then, would they?

Mmm. Yes. Married women didn't work. At least, you were widowed, or had some reason like that.

What about any rights that you had? Did you have access to - as an ex-servicewoman, did you have access to any home loans, or low interest loans, or ...?

No, no, not - the women didn't have that. The only thing I could have done was a university course if I'd wished to.

What, under the CRTS scheme?

I think so, yes. But I - I didn't want to, because I was going to be married, and I was already a trained secretary, it didn't seem important to me. But if I'd wanted to I could have done some sort of technical course, or university, or something like that.

You could have got funding for that?

Yes. The men - that was the same as the men, you could have got funding for that. But home loans, no. No.

Your husband would have been eligible for the war service home, wouldn't he?

Yes, but we didn't make use of it.

Right.

Well thank you very much for talking to me today, Mrs Leemon, it's been most interesting.

This is the end of the interview. End of Side D.

[Recording ends on Side Two of Cassette Two].