ROD ARMSTRONG

J.R First of all, tell me how you got into the army?

R.A Why I joined, or how I got in?

J.R Well, where you and why did you join up?

R.A I was a West Australian and I followed me brother's footsteps. He convinced me more than anything.

J.R He liked it?

R.A Yeah,... and he convinced me.

J.R So, when did you join up?

R.A 19th July, 1966.

J.R And was the fact that the army was involved in Vietnam, did that have any bearing on it?

R.A Not initially. Cause I think.....I came from the bush - what they call the bush - and wasn't aware of what was going on, to a great extent. Not as a 17 year old. But ... soon learn't about what was going on.

J.R And after you found out, did that make you more keen?

R.A Oh yeah,yeah, keen as hell.

J.R So where did you go for your basic training?

R.A Kapooka. Ah...12 weeks there, and then down to Bonegilla. Did my initial corps training at Bonegilla.

J.R Which corps did you go into?

R.A Ordnance.

J.R That was what you wanted?

R.A Nah. I wanted Engineers first, I had a desire to be a plant operator. And following that I wanted to go into corps of transport - Or RAASC in those days - to be an air despatcher.

J.R But you didn't get into that?

R.A Nah. I had their choice.

J.R So then what happened? You did corps training...?

R.A ...At Bonegilla. And from there my first posting. I think, I... in fact I was held up here for 5 months, I think it was, instead of the 3 months I shoulda' been here, because of the Xmas period at the end of '66. And did my training early '67.

J.R And where did you get posted to?

R.A 1 BOD in Brisbane. At Banya.

J.R How long were you there?

R.A Just on two years. A week short of two years.

J.R And were you keen to get to Vietnam?

R.A At that time I was, yeah. Yep.

J.R So, what was the procedure? Did youput your name on a list? or just make it known that you wanted to go?

R.A No, I think it was just general... just general conversation, throughout the system, the units. Aah... I don't think I volunteered. I think I was sent.

J.R So where and when were you sent?

R.A I...left home, left Brisbane, in February, early February, and I never went until 25th March. Never left Australia till 25th March, 1969.

J.R And you went to . ? To what unit?

R.A Vung Tau. To 2 AOD.

J.R Tell me about the trip over there and the first impressions?

R.A The trip over there was alright, we flew. That was by - ah - Qantas. Pulled in at Darwin where we refuelled or whatever there. Then from there to Singapore, and .. my first impressions of Vietnam itself was lookin' out the aircraft window and seenin'ah - about a dozen helicopters flyin' underneath us. That was my first - and lasting - impressions. Of my arrival there. And then when we got there of course it was the heat. That stuck with me.

J.R And you just stopped in Saigon briefly and then...?

R.A Aah.. I think it was about 4 hours in Saigon, if I remember rightly. Enough time for lunch. Which was an experience in itself.

J.R You went downtown for lunch?

R.A No, no, that was on Tan Son Nhut Airport - Weren't allowed to go anywhere, in fact we were just told to sit outside an aircraft hangar, and that was it. Fed us what is commonly called a TV dinner now, it was a cut lunch. We went from there.

J.R You were travelling on your own, or were there other reinforcements going to the same unit?

R.A Oh, there were - to the other unit I think there were - I knew 2 of them... If I recall, I think there were about 15 of

us went that day, that particular day. But I can only recall 2 that I personally knew. From before. But after that, I don't know what happened, I can't recall.

J.R So how was the settling in?

R.A Different. Different to anything I'd experienced. It was a shock to the system. Aah... I remember that we travelled from Saigon to Vung TaU. From Vung Tau, as soon as we were marched into AOD that afternoon, there was a ring of "Reos!". Who're the Reos! Reos! And everyone addressed me as a Reo. And I was bamboozled, I didn't know what a reo was. But I soon learn't that. Cause I had mates there as well. And they put me on the right track. Aah.. but you never ever lost that stigma of bein' a reo. There was always someone who'd been there longer than you had.

J.R So you stayed a reo all the time?

R.A Oh, virtually, yeah. Till the day you left. But there was always someone that had more time up in country than you're.

J.R But there was always someone newer?

R.A Yeah, but then he was a reo. So took the heat off us.

J.R And so what was differen_tabout it? More pressure?

R.A Fear of the unknown. You didn't know what's going on. Aah..

J.R Did you feel threatened? Was there talk of bad guys firing rockets, that sort of thing?

R.A Oh I think that was always a threat. But then again, Vung Tau being what it was, a holiday resort for both sides, aah, I think that eliminated a little bit of that threat. Aah, but especially... I dunno...The Australian Base..I dunno, I can't recall. At the time I most probably wondered about it.

J.R So were you busy at work?

R.A Always, always had something to do.

J.R What was your particular job?

R.A I was corporal in charge of maintenance — stock and maintenance — in the vehicle company. Or one of the corporals. So...friendly term I suppose is a'yardie'. Myself, and then I had 8 soldiers underneath me. As a corporal. Used to basically maintain the vehicles, prior for an issue (?), as a storage depot.

J.R All types of vehicles?

R.A Yep. Everything, yeah. Everything. From armoured, plant, normal day to day vehicles, everything, yeah.

J.R But only new ones.

R.A Oh virtually new, yeah.

J.R So you didn't have to travel round to other units much?

R.A Not in workwise, never, they'd come to us. They'd have to return their old ones and we'd give 'em a new one.

J.R So did you travel outside ALSG much?

R.A Much as I could, much as I could get away with.

J.R And how much could you?

R.A Much as you could get away with - Much as you could arrange. Ah, ah...with the vehicles we had, um we were the first to meet any supply ship that come to Vietnam, and our task ----------the vehicles were carried on deck, above hold deck, so our responsibility was to offload those, or assist in the offloading of em. So we used to go our before the ship even docked, out in the middle of the - few mile off in the South China Sea - to unload ammo and vehicles. And that used to happen - I think the Jeparit's turnaround was every six weeks. And then the Sydney, whenever the HMAS Sydney went over there ... So we were always involved in that. The Jeparit used to go to Cam Ranh Bay, used to go up there.

J.R You'd go on the Jeparit?

R.A Yep, yeah, used to sail with it. Only while it went to Cam Ranh Bay. If they're offloading Centurion tanks and heavy stuff from underneath the cargo.

J.R They unloaded Australian stuff up there too?

R.A That was our resupplies, yep.

J.R And what about other trips around?

R.A As many as you could get. It all depended how interested you were.....

J.R How far afield did you get?

R.A I went to Cam Ranh Bay. Danany, Long Binh, Nui Dat was always on the trip... They're the ones that come to mind. Flew up over the Delta.

J.R What, in a chopper?

R.A Yeah, with the Americans. I had an outlet there too, I suppose. Where any trip was available...My brother was there at the same time, he was with Air Despatch, so attached to the Americans, so I had a good contact. Anything that was going.

J.R And you obviously enjoyed travelling around, seeing a little bit more?

R.A Oh, it was good, yeah. Experience. Something you'd never ever see again. Or never ever want to see again. Made the most of it.

J.R And what was Nui Dat like?

R.A It was...ah... I don't know. I never stayed there long enough to see if there was any internal strife or external strife or anything like that, but it was just a, like an oasis I suppose, something you could call home. For want of a better word. I suppose it was home, to a lot of types. But that was... once again, we used to just go there for trips. Hang around. Do what we could to help out. And never used to get involved with too long a stays, or anything like that.

J.R And how much did you see of Vietnam as a country, and the people, the villagers?

R.A Not much, ' cause it was, either you flew to areas, travelled by sea - on the Jeparit - or - ah, drove through 'em. I suppose the main areas that we saw were between Vung Tau and Nui Dat, they looked pretty common, you know, ah, but none of 'em ever impressed me. I really couldn't care much about 'em at all. Baria, I had no time for Baria, which was the main station between, the two places. The others were just little hamlets, didn't do much.

J.R So did you have any contact with the locals? Local civilians working in your unit?

R.A Yeah, we had 3 working for us. Nung I always had me doubts about, the other 2 were alright. Good workers.

J.R Could they speak English?

N.A Enough to make 'emselves understood. Same as we could I suppose. Talk a little bit of Vietnamese. Yeah, we could converse with 'em.

J.R And what about downtown Vung Tau? Did you get to meet anybody there?

R.A Oh yeah, The haunts yeah.

J.R Did any soldiers get to meet people apart from the bar scene? Contact with families?

R.A I suppose I did, yeah. We used to - in fact we used to go into old Chin's place, one of the girls that used to work for us, we used to go there for meals. There was 2 of us involved with that. We used to go there quite often, once a fortnight, I suppose, on Sundays, or wheneveer we could get away. But she was alright. We used to look after her. She looked after us at work. Her husband was badly shot up and all the rest of it. So we used to look after him. And then I also got involved with 2 - 3 - Buddhist monks.

J.R How did you meet them?

R.A A drunken stupour I think! (Laughs)

J.R Buddhist monks don't get drunk, do they?

R.A No, but we were! I dunno - but, went out to the monastry or whatever they call it, drank coke with 'em... So we kept in contact with them for about 3 months I suppose.

J.R So what was your impressions of the war?

R.A I think it was a shame we lost.

J.R Were the Vietnamese that you came into contact with, were their hearts in it?

R Nah. Didn't know whose side they were. They'd just swap and change. Didn't make any difference to them. Didn't make any difference to us - they're all the same, look the same.

J.R So if they didn't care too much, why did you guys care about it?

R I don't know that we really did care. Down deep. I don't know. Just doing a job.

J Did it worry you when Australia withdrew it's forces?

R No, I was already home. I think it was forecoming.Ls

J You didn't feel it was a waste?

R Yeah... I think the end result was a waste. It could've happened earlier, if the decision to pull out of Vietnam would've been made earlier I think it would have saved a lot of embarrassment on both sides. But I think Australia followed America.

J So what was your unit like? Was it a good unit?

R Oh yeah, yeah.

J No worries at work?

R There was then and there always has been, a distension, a friendly distension between the areas - Like you've got what we classify as storemen clerks, vehicle storemen,... The vehicle storemen are always better of course! That even happens today. But I think that was highlighted more over there. We had little groups where ..... Don't let a clerk into our area, don't let a storeman into our area, youknow we were all different people. So we tended to stick together.

J.R Was there that sort of feeling between the,people at Nui Dat and the people down at Vung Tau too, was there?

R Ah.. not so much... I dunno... I think there's always been friendly rivalry between infantry battalions, as an example, and with the armoured corps, I think that's always been there. I just think it's bred into you, I think, Yeah. Nothin' drastic, nothin' to get over concerned about. But, certainly added to the humour of the place.

J.R And were there ever any discipline problems?

R Occassionally, yeah.

J.R What sort of things? Alcohol connected?

R Oh yeah. I'd say majority were alcohol connected. A lot of .. ah...Two things that went hand in hand, I felt, one of 'em was alcohol, cheap, readily available. And I think the second one was the understanding from the people at home. Dear John letters.

J Was that sort of a common problem? R Oh yeah. Within

our unit it was, yeah. Quite regular.

J So, get a bad letter, go and get drunk, and ... then what would they do? Go and smash someone up?

R Yeah... just get drunker and drunker and drunker, then they'd either...wanna' commit suicide, that happened a couple of times... Change them, change their outlook on life.

J Was there a general feeling of lack of support from home? R

Oh yeah. That was always there.

J What, from reading home newspapers and things?

R Just things that we missed out on, through the Australian public. Favourite saying "Punch a postie, whack a wharfie".

J Because they disrupted your mail supplies?

R Mail supplies, all supplies...Not only our mail, our whole source of supply was generated through either the wharfies or the posties. We had no other way of gettin' stuff there, so, sure ...And that I think led to a belief that, lack of support, by the Australian public, yeah.

J And that made it harder for you up there?

R No, I think, sometimes it did. Everyone always wanted a letter from home. But there was also some good people around. Channel 7 from Perth at the time, Xmas Day or Xmas period, they sent every West Australian, that I'm aware of, a hamper. And it was the only T.V Station, in the year that I was there, that anyone got it. And it was the West Australians. So we felt privileged I suppose. And that, I think, raised our morale, or give us, or gave me in particular, the opinion that there <u>was</u> someone at

home that cared, other than the immediate family. And I think that was a highlight.

J So how did you relax when you weren't working?

R Drank.

J Drank?

R Drank. Most of us.

J At home, or downtown?

R Anywhere. That was the biggest thing. What else to do?

J Well, I was wondering. Were there any sporting activities?

R Oh, you could play football, Australian Rules, cricket, but you can't play that day in, day out. Limited games I think you could play. Football season, you know 2 seasons in the year I think they used to have.

They went by the Australian seasons? There's not really a winter up there?

R There's monsoons. So I suppose we used to classify those as winter. You might have to wear a shirt occassionally. But I think there was 2 seasons of football, 1 season finished and the next one started, forget now. The occassional cricket match, social match. Most of it was organised... Darts competition was I suppose was the internal sport.

Did you have much contact with the Americans?

J No, not a great deal. Aah...individually I think we did. We

R had our own individual contacts,.and mates, and things like that...

Where was the American Base?

J The airbase. Yeah, that was on the airbase. Run by Americans.

R And you could go over there?

J

R We had, different areas had better contacts than others, and I think we, in the Vehicle Company, ah, had more contact than the storemen, who couldn't get out of the Depot, or had no reason to go out of the Depot, whereas we were drivin' vehicles, and picking them up... So I think we learn't a lot there, and I think we had more in common than the average, like the clerk storemen, I think they're compelled to be behind a desk or in a storehouse. But we had open slather.

And were the Americans much different?

J

R Yeah, wasted more I think. That always stuck in my mind. Especially

in my trade, the vehicle trade. We used to send Landrovers here's an example - we used to send Landrovers home to be repaired, rebuilt, after being blown up and all that sort of rubbish. The Americans didn't seem to worry about them.

J Just throw them away?

R I think so, yeah. Oh they used to have their auction depot, or what we'd call today an auction depot, just like a junk yard. But the Australians even went to the extent where they'd delivered - they had to dispose of their Landrovers over there I suppose, I think at the current rate they used to get $11 I think for a Landrover. I think ... it was crazy. If they were going to send something home, send the lot home and sell it as j unk

J What about drugs. Were you aware of any?

R Marijuana was there, yeah.

J Was it widely used do you think?

R Not so much by the Australians, or not that was aware of, Ah... certainly no-one that I had any contact with was ... took marijuana. The Americans, yeah.

J It was freely available?

R Oh yeah. Through the Americans, yeah, or in town. But as I said, those I had any immediate contact with, never ever worried about it. There was just too much alcohol anyway, or alcohol was readily available.. So there was no interest I don't think.

J Your health while you were up there, was your health good?

R Oh yeah, always.

J Any, you didn't have any medical treatment?

R No...Tinea, I think, was the worst I ever got. Or a cut on the arm. That was nothin'.

J But the health care was good up there? Oh

R yeah, I never had any problems, ever.

J And no problems as a result of service up there?

R Nah. Nah. Not for mine.

J When you think of Vietnam - what were the highlights?

R All the good points were the highlights.

J What were they?

R I think just the lifestyle. It was different.

J You enjoyed it just because it was a change?

R I think I enjoyed it...it was a change to me, it was a change to my system. And...I believe that I grew up. And fast. Ah...

J Because you were far from home? Had to manage on your own?

R Nah—you don't have to manage so much on your own, everythings supplied. You don't have to cook for yourself. Everythings there. I think it's just ...In the circle that I was with, it was always you had to be the strong...And I think it bred an arrogance in me. An arrogance that I still reckon I maintain today.

J Because you were coping well?

R Yeah, yeah. I always took the attitude that when I went there no-one was going to stand on me. And why should they? And I think that....pulled me out of the hayseed, the country boy, to the....man or the boy with no feelings. Lost a lot of feeling, personal feelings.

J Did you?

R For human life.

J Why exactly? You sort of felt you had to be tougher?

R No, no, I think it's just...I just didn't consider that the Vietnamese were worth anything.

J Were you aware at the time that you were doing this?

R Nah, nah.

J Just later on?

R It still is mentioned to me today, from people I served with in those days, how much I changed, and the difference it made to me, and to them.

J What,you changed during the time you were there?

R Oh sure. I used to look after 8 people. Now we used to work together, play together, so we virtually were with one another, day in, day out. So it was a group that was hard to—split up.

If one was in trouble, the lot of us were in trouble. If one had a bad time, the whole lot of us'd have a bad time. So I think...And I was the junior NCO at that stage, and I think that there was guidance there somewhere. There was always something to do, we made something happen, rather than just sit around bored. We .....er..stuck together, we made things happen. Contempt for the Vietnamese, I suppose, is a good word. Just broaden our whole - well, broaden my mind.

J So was that group thing stronger there than in subsequent units you've been with?

R Oh yeah. Cause you had nothin' else to do. In Australia, like home here, people are married. So they go home at night. You've got places to go, different places, things to do and see. You had no car there...You had nothin' to get around with. And you finished work and that's it for the day. Whereas over there you never finished work. You were always with your mates. Always with the people you worked with. Couldn't get away from that.

J Were you disappointed at all that you weren't in a combat unit? I was pleased!

R Yeah.

J So you weren't a frustrated warrior, anything like that?

R No, no. I think I had a job to do and I did the job. I didn't go out looking for any more. I think there was...certainly the combat units are trained to do what they're trained to do, and I'm trained to do what I'm trained to do...Never the twain shall meet.

So you remember the good things - what were the bad things?

J I dunno. The bad things. I never had 1 bath there, 1 hot bath, I think that was, the other 364 days, I think that was bad, never

R being able to have a bath. We seemed to - in those times we were showering in cold water. We never ever got clean, it was just inground dirt. We used to set up a bath ourselves, that was alright.

Did you get sick of living in a hut with sand blowing around?

J I think you get accustomed to it. I think the first couple of months it was a bit hard to take. There was also sand, there

R was also monsoons where you were walking and working in water up to your ankles, and runnin' in the tops of your boots. I suppose that got us down. But you don't remember the bad points or I certainly don't, don't remember the bad parts. Remember the good parts. The happy times.

When you came home, what was it like?

I didn't like it. I didn't know where I was.

J When you arrived back, were you sent back to Perth?

R

J No, no, I was married and I was living in Bne at that stage -

R

So my wife and daughter were in Bne. Ah.. my daughter didn't know me. She was born in September '68, so she would've been 14 - 15 months. So. She didn't recognise me. So I couldn't get close to my wife anyway... I wasn't met anywhere, I wasn't met when I landed in Sydney, I wasn't met when I landed in Bne, I got a cab home with all me gear, all that sort of thing, I think it was... very impersonal - no-one wanted to know me, no-one was interested in what I was, or where I'd been, or... anything...

It's a pity they did it like that.

J I think it's a shame. They

R should've sent groups back?

J

R Yeah, they still sent us back, I think when I left 2 AOD there was about 10 of us left that particular day that I did. But then once again they go their different ways and then you're ...I think I was given - what? 5 weeks leave, I think.

Did you have a posting when you came back?

J

R Before you went, yeah. That came in before you left over there, so you had your customary 5 weeks leave, and then joined your new unit. So... you couldn't even go back to your original old unit, off somewhere else, new country, new area or location. So that was hard.

And I can remember there was always one question used to bug me, and I used to hate that, anit was "What was it like?" And I think that was not so much the mentality of the Australians but the understanding the Australian public had, "What was it like?"

It's a bit hard to know, what else can you say, it's an all purpose question?

J I used to say, I said it was like a ball...like going to a dance, what do you think it was like, 12 months away from home? No recognition when you get 'ome,..and idiots like you asking me

R what was it like. I think that was um standard answer.

But what was it like when you got back, did you miss it?

No, no. Never missed it at all.

J

So even though you enjoyed it, you were glad to get home?

R

Yeah, wouldn't go back. Never ever would go back. I dunno'

J suppose it's strange.

R Yes, actually it's interesting because when you were telling me before, I got the impression that you really liked it.

J Oh it was good whenI was there. But I think you've gotta' make that. Like anything. Make the best of what you've got. If

R

you miss out, well you miss out. I always had the opinion that we was there for 12 months, do your job and forget about it, and get out. So that's what I tried to maintain. That's what I tried to instill in the people that worked for me. No matter how bad it was, it was always .....?

J Make the best of it?

R The money was good.

J So did anyone react badly to you because you'd been to Vietnam?

R Yeah, yeah, that was always there. I remember the first day, well the first night, it was 2 or 3 a.m we arrived in Sydney, there was a group of young protestors, or whatever outside the Mascot airport, waiting for us. That was interesting.

J Did you have any personal contact with them?

R Nah. Jumped in a cab and went. Didn't want to get involved.

J So you didn't have a problem with people saying, you blokes that went to Vietnam, you did the wrong thing?

R No, no. You always felt it. No-one was interested. Other than the dumb stupid question What Was it Like. Everyone was interested - what was it like - how.. you can't explain, to a single question like that. You couldn't explain that.

J So do you think about it much now?

R No. Only the good times. They're always there.

J Does it stand out from other army postings that you've had though?

R Aah...Yes, I think so, yeah. Because

J in an exotic foreign place?

R No,no, no. It's just something that happened, never erased from your mind. It was...well it's been proven today it was ... um...there was no purpose to it, no purpose was achieved. But I think today it's highlighted more by the movies that've been made about Vietnam. some of them now getting closer and closer to the truth.

J Which ones have you seen?

R Oh, I dunno. Seen a lot. Purple Hearts, I didn't mind that... etc Uncommon Valour - just different American movies. The Odd Angry Shot, I remember I read the book about that. I think that was more of a laugh than anything else.

J You think the American movies reflect your experiences?

No, no way. More play acting. Oh, I believe the Amerians are

hopeless, Not ... shouldn't say that - they're our allies. ...(laughs) I don't mean they're hopeless, I mean the Australian soldier was more trained, in self-discipline and all the rest of it. Even as an Ordnance soldier, I think I've got more self-discipline than an American. Different attitudes to the American - where the American tends to go in ... quantity rather than quality. I think that's always been brought out, from when the war was first started...

So what do people think about Vietnam veterans now?

J

Lot of them ask, where's Vietnam? I think the biggest problem they got with Vietnam veterans is that we might be getting that recognition, but I think in a lot of people it's just forgotten.

Do you think you deserve recognition?

J Oh sure, why not? Most of us didn't volunteer to go there. Oh fine, we were regular soldiers, we didn't volunteer to go there,

R it was part of out commitment when we signed the dotted line, when we joined the army. We were still there, we performed to what the government required us to do, to what the policies of those days required us to do. And we did it to the best of our ability.

What sort of recognition?

I don't know. It'd be nice to ... just to ... I don't know,

J just get the same recognition as World Warl, World War 2.

R What about the RSL, do you belong to it?

No. I did, but not anymore. Dunno' why. Always known it's

J there..

R When you belonged, was the RSL interested in Vietnam veterans?

No, not other than the fact that you was just another member. I don't think they took it into consideration. Or didn't show

J you anything special, or anything like that. You were just

R another member of the RSL.

There was another crowd formed ....[S.E.A) ..... **etc**

I remember I was in Perth when I joined that, I went to one of their Anzac Days, and I never went back again. I thought it was a disgrace. All they wanted to do was sit around in a hall and drink beer, I didn't think that was too exciting. So I didn't go back. But they didn't seem ... everything they seemed, didn't seem to achieve.

But getting back to what people seem to remember of Vietnam now, I think one of the things they remember is the fact that Agent Orange was around. I don't think that people remember too much about Vietnam.

J Do you think they've got any picture of Vietnam veterans now?

R No, not the younger generation. The middle generation

Yeah, I think they'd still be aware that Australians were there. 'Cause Vietnam has never ever gone away. Vietnam will always be there, even with our population today. The refugees and all that. I think that's where the Australian public now are concentrating their efforts on. The Vietnamese are getting more than ..or it looks like they're getting more than the Australian does.. As a refugee...

J They work pretty hard?

R Oh, they might too. But they're still an outcast. Put it that way. I think they're an outcast.

J Do you think that you would have got more recognition if the war had been more successful?

R Oh yeah, for sure. No doubt.

J So you do think there's a bit of a

R Put it under the mat...

J ..A, a bit of a stigma being part of a ...

R Yeah, yeah, part of a losing force, for sure. I think that had a lot to do with it. 'Cause Korea, Korea, they got a little bit of recognition. But we got none. Just, just wipe that 12 months, that's part of ....

J But what sort of recognition, do you think there should be special memorials?

R No, but I think we should be included also, along with World War 1, World 2. You hear all the time, World War 1 veterans, World War 2 veterans, why not the Vietnam veterans? We're all human, we're all Australians.

J Are you going to go to the Welcome Home?

R Sure am, yeah. Wouldn't miss it. Because

J you want a reunion, or...?

R No, I believe it's time that we did get recognition, and that's one way of showing recognition. Even from the time that we first started coming home, or after '73 when they pulled us out, if they had'a given us recognition then. Let us march, as Vietnam veterans, give us the pride and the glory.

J What about marching on Anzac Day?

R Always, always march.

J And quite a few Vietnam veterans do?

R Yep. Yeah. Always march.

J And do the World War 2 people accept you quite well.....

R Yeah, yeah. The World War 2 veterans are as interested in our experiences as we were in their experiences. They had it a lot harder, I think. But technology takes over. Sure, but, geez, there's never been any distinction there between where you come from. I think we're all soldiers, deep down, and I think we're recognised as soldiers deep down, Even ... it's hard, I think, when you march as a unit on Anzac Day, you get a lot more..garbage thrown on you.

J Do you?

R I think so. I was singled out in Melbourne, because of wearing medals. ... the unit there would've been 10 that were wearing medals, and I certainly got picked out.

J Who by? What, other people saying...?

R Rape for Women! Interesting. But then it was a World War 2 veteran who marchin' that pulled the female off. So, to answer your question, yeah, we stick together. I don't think. ...I've never seen any ill feeling between any of the sections.

J Do you think when the march is on in Sydney they'll be any sort of hostility towards it?

R Oh, most probably.

J Do you think there's still people who do feel...

R Not so much from the years gone by, but I think Rape against Women...

J No, women against Rape.

R Yeah, Women against Rape, that's it. Yep, Rape, burn and pillage — Yep, I think they'll be there. Rent—a—crowd. They'll be there.

J So what's going to happen?

R I don't know, I hope I'm far enough away from it.

END OF INTERVIEW