ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

TITLE:	WILLIAM FITZPATRICK, FIRST WORLD WAR VETERAN
INTERVIEWEE:	WILLIAM FITZPATRICK
INTERVIEWER:	DAVID CHALK
SUMMARY:	ENLISTING AND THEN TRAINING AT BROADMEADOWS PRIOR TO LEAVING AUSTRALIA. EXPERIENCES IN GALLIPOLI, EGYPT AND FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR I.
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START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A

What I'd like to do is go through your service firstly, and find out when you enlisted, and where you were. You were obviously on Gallipoli, weren't you?

Yeah.

And then you were in Egypt.

In Egypt, yes.

And you went across to France with the Brigade, the first time they went.

Yeah.

And you were at Pozieres?

I'll say.

Were you wounded at Pozieres, or not?

No; I got gassed later.

You got gassed later.

Yeah; that was in May 1918, just back, with shells coming over, and we thought they were gas shells. I didn't put my mask on. I was in hospital for about two weeks.

How is your hearing? A you partly deaf?

In the left ear.

Would it be better if we changed sides?

I'm all right.

Good. Well, if you can't hear what I say, just say 'what'. And you were with the Battalion during that cold winter of 1916?

1917.

And you went on to Bullecourt.

Bullecourt.

Did you go across in the attack at Bullecourt?

Yeah.

You did? How did you get out?

Well, I got out somehow or other - four of us.

Were there? We'll go right back to the beginning then. Was your regimental number 11 ...

1175.

1175. Does that make you an original or ...

No, original. Original went up to 1300. And the First Reinforcements landed with us at Gallipoli.

Yes, that's right. I thought you might have been a First Reinforcement.

No, no.

How old were you when you ...

Eighteen.

You were eighteen. I think Fred Boyce was telling me you were the bugler.

Yeah, that's right. I enlisted as a bugler, but they wouldn't let me ... (laughs). But as soon as Gallipoli came, that ended the bugle (laughs).

And where were you when you enlisted?

Here in this town, Bendigo.

What were you doing at that time?

Watchmaker.

You were a watchmaker?

I was apprenticed as a watchmaker.

Was that your father's business?

No; a German it was ... a Dane I should say. He's been dead for years, of course.

Well, then I went into engineering when I went into a two-year course at the School of Mines, and I went as a turner and fitter into the railways. Two guineas a week.

That's after the war, of course.

Yes; that was it then.

(Break in interview)

What made you join up?

Adventure, I suppose. That's for all I know.

Did you have any friends at that time that joined up with

you?

Yeah, a mate and I; and he got killed at Pozieres.

What was his name?

Evans - E-V-A-N-S.

What was his first name?

Frank.

Frank Evans. How old was he?

He'd be my age.

If you were marching now you would have been only seventeen, I think, when you enlisted.

No, eighteen.

You were eighteen were you? And when did you enlist? Can you remember the month?

10/9/14.

So that's pretty soon after it started then.

Yes.

And there wasn't any problem with you being under-age? I think you had to be twenty, or something.

No, eighteen.

It was eighteen at that time was it?

Yes, eighteen, yes.

Under that you had to have parents' consent.
A lot of them was under that too, and they put forward their age.

Any questions you want to know I'll answer them.

(Break in interview)

You haven't seen that Percy Whitelaw I showed you.

I've seen that.

What was your name again?

David.

David what?

Chalk.

As I've said, I've seen three dozen 4th Brigade men so far. You were with the Brigade through until Bullecourt. There are more, but I'm not writing about after Bullecourt; I'm writing about the men in Germany then. A few of them were only on the Peninsula, but the majority of them went on to France. Some of them were badly wounded at Gallipoli.

I got hit in the foot. There's a little mark still there - on the heel. That was on Gallipoli, with a Beachy Bill they used to call them. I was only away a month and I was back again.

You enlisted with Frank Evans. What was he doing?

He - what was Frank? - a bootmaker, I think. I think so, if my memory is right. It's a long time ago - seventy-one years ago - to come back to that one.

And he was from Bendigo too?

He was born in Bendigo, and he got killed at Pozieres on the 8th of August.

That was when you went in, the day you went in, wasn't it?

That was practically the day we went in. That was the worst of the lot. We were there for four days.

I know the story of Pozieres.

It was cruel. The shells were coming over all the time. Even they couldn't get up with our rations too, in some of the support trenches.

No, it was shelled all the way back, wasn't it?

Yeah.

No, it was a dreadful place, Pozieres.

And Percy's hearing is going, is it? Or his memory?

His memory, yes: his memory is going. He's a great gentleman, but ...

He's a gentleman is Percy. He was secretary of the Board [NCF]. We don't have any meetings now; they're all gone, you see. There's just a few now.

You didn't see - what do you call them? - under president ... did you? He come from ... What's his name now? Where's our book, Ted? Alec Martin, 14th Battalion. He was the president. He was in the police force; he was on the - what do you call it? - to have their photo taken.

Photographer?

Yeah. You didn't see him then?

No. I've only been doing this since about November. I did start in July but, of course, I've missed out on a lot of men who passed away before then. My own grandfather died in 1964.

1964.

It's a long time ago, yes.

What made you take on the 4th Brigade?

It's my grandfather's story really, you see. I'm writing about the men.

He had a diary, did he?

Well, no. I know a fair bit about him, but the story is the story of the 4th Brigade; but it's only that period in the Brigade's history in which my grandfather was involved, starting from the reforming in Egypt in early '16, and then going through to Bullecourt. And then I'm telling the story of the POWs, and that hasn't been told before as a book.

Hasn't it?

No. There have been a couple of articles and so on, but nobody has written about what happened to the men captured at Bullecourt - and it's a good story. So that's the motivation.

What happened to you when you enlisted? What was the procedure after you joined up?

I joined up at Broadmeadows.

You went down to Melbourne did you?

Yeah. I got examined here with a doctor, a doctor by the name of Eadie - Doctor Eadie.

How do you spell that?

E-A-D-I-E - Doctor Eadie. He's dead and gone. Then we went into Broadmeadows, and into tents there.

What was Broadmeadows like?

Just tents - different to what it is now.

Yes, only houses there now. Hundreds of tents I suppose.

Yes, hundreds of tents.

And you and Frank shared a tent, did you?

Oh, eight.

Eight in a tent?

Eight in a tent - ten it would hold - them bell tents.

Big wrap-round bell tents.

Yeah.

And what did they get you doing down there?

Physical instructions, you know - teaching you to march, and every other thing - just like as an infantryman. Teach you to march, and then you went into rifle. You were issued with a rifle and a bayonet and all that. That's a long time ago.

What company did you go into?

I was in B Company first.

Is that when the companies went through to G or H?

Mm?

I think the original battalions were made up of A, B, C, D, E and F.

F - I was in the original F Company.

Yes, an original F.

Well, then when we got to Heliopolis in February 1st 1915 ...

'15 they changed?

Yeah. F and B Company made one company. Before it was A Company. Well, then it made the four companies.

So you ended up in B Company.

B Company.

Who was the company commander of B Company.

Baldock - he's dead - he got killed. I think he got killed at ... Did they tell you about the ... You've seen Curl, have you?

Yes.

He was the only one come out of Bullecourt. All the others were killed.

That was Stanton and ...

Stanton and Orr. They were in charge of my (company) until they got killed. We got out of it, but they both got killed. That was a slaughter.

You were in which platoon in B Company? Can you remember the platoon you were in?

Number 5.

Number 5 Platoon. And who was the lieutenant?

Then after that I finished in 14th Platoon.

You went to change companies?

Yeah, I went into D Company.

Who was the lieutenant in charge of your platoon, in B Company?

Cooms.

How do you spell that?

C-O-O-M-S. I don't know what happened to him. But Baldock, our captain, he squibbed it when we got to Gallipoli. Did you hear about him - Baldock?

No.

He was our captain. Well, when we landed at Gallipoli he didn't come up any further than the beach. He was invalided back to Bendigo. He reckoned he had bad ears or something. That was our company commander!

That's not a very good example, is it?

No, it was not. And the fellow who took charge - I'll think of him in a second or two - he got killed, sticky-beaking over the ... with his eye, with his glasses. On Gallipoli it was, at Courtney's Post. Did I tell you about Courtney's Post?

Yes, I know about Courtney's Post. It was one of the worst places on the Peninsula, around Courtney's and Quinn's, wasn't it?

At Quinn's, yeah. I was there on the 18th and 19th of May when Jacka got his VC. I wasn't from here to those cars - not quite that far.

Do you remember what happened? Did you see anything that happened?

No, I didn't see anything that happened to him, but I know the bloke that's just died recently ... What's their names there in Bridge Street, them two girls? Howard, yes - Bill Howard. He was one us helping him - he killed seven. I buried two of the Turks - helped to burry them. There was seven of them altogether.

What did you think of Albert Jacka?

Well, he got a bit of a head when he got on a bit. He was my captain company commander in the finish.

In D Company?

D Company, that's right. Well, after him went then Billy Bowman. Did you hear anything about him - Billy Beaman?

No, I haven't.

He was the youngest chap there was. If he was living now he'd only be about 90. He was a fine fellow. Oh, Jacka was alright. He died young.

Yes he did, from his wounds, I think.

Yes - oh yes, he died from his wounds. He got gassed the same day that I did, xxx, when we got down. He roused at me. 'Fitzpatrick,' he said, 'you've got to have more xxx than any of the others and you got it.' I didn't know, but I said, 'They were gas shells. I didn't know they were gas shells.' See, they'd send them over when the wind would be blowing that way.

Blowing away from them. Did the 14th Battalion land on the 25th or the morning after?

After them, and then the other half landed on the morning of the 26th.

Which morning did you land on?

On the 25th.

Did you? You went in at nighttime?

In the morning; and I know it was broad daylight when I went in - when we went over.

Well, it was the summer or course, wasn't it?

Yeah, it was beautiful weather. Yes, A and B Company, and there were others. Monash was our captain then - our colonel.

He was the brigadier.

The brigadier-general he was. Then he got in charge of the 3rd Division as a Major-General. Then he finished up as a full general, and he got command of all the Australian troops.

What did you think of Monash?

Gentleman. He never worried me. But I wore my hat on the left hand side, and he was inspecting us at Tel-el-Kebîr ... I suppose you've heard of Tel-el-Kebîr, Serapeum and all those places.

Yes.

And he said, 'That's funny,' he said, 'You're wearing your hat on the left hand side.' And I will still wear my hat on the left - I don't wear a hat now, of course. xxx xxx.

They were always turned up on the left, weren't they? You are talking about your slouched hat, aren't you?

The hat was on the left-hand side, yes.

And did you have yours turned up the other way?

Yeah - must have - it was at the wrong side anyhow, when I was xxx. And that was a xxx compared with Serapeum. Did you hear about xxx Serapeum march?

Did you go on that?

I'll say I did.

That's interesting.

You heard that one, did you?

Well, what do you remember about that march?

I can remember it right from the start until the third day when we got to Serapeum.

Can you describe that? Can you give me a sort of story of that?

We used to march for three-quarters of an hour, and then spell for a quarter. And we sat down on, like I am here - in the open, of course - in the desert. That went on for three days - it was awful. Getting chafed; we all got chafed.

You were just issued with these new tunics, weren't you?

New boots and all I had.

What were you wearing?

They reckon after - I don't know whether it's in Bean's history or not. xxx Bean.

Bean, yes.

Well, he ...

You were talking about the uniform you were wearing - the boots.

Boots and that, yeah.

I don't know whether Bean did mention it; I think he did.

I went on guard after - that's right. They put me straight onto

guard ... Some of them didn't get in until the next day, you know - they dragged in.

Did you get there?

I got there, and being the hero they put me on guard. I won't forget that - Serapeum, Tel-el-Kebîr.

Can you go through those three days, day by day, and explain ...

We'd march all day and knock off about five or six o'clock, I suppose it would be. And then we'd have our tea. The what-d'ye-call-it followed us through.

The cookers?

Yes, the cookers. Well, on the second night we stayed at Ismailia. We stayed there, and there were New Zealanders camped there, and they gave us a big hot feed of roast beef and all that - at Tel-el-Kebîr.

Tel-el-Kebîr was a big camp too, wasn't it?

Yeah.

When the Battalion came back from Gallipoli it was at Ismailia and xxx for a while, wasn't it? Then it went to Tel-el-Kebîr.

Yes, that's right.

At Tel-el-Kebîr they divided the Battalion up, didn't they?

That formed the 46th Battalion - 47th. I always xxx the Battalion the 46th - 47, 48 and 49.

That's right. You, obviously, didn't go across to the 46th; you stayed with the 14th.

I stayed with the 14th right through.

What was the feeling amongst the men who had to go across to the 46th? How did they feel about being transferred?

I don't think there was much said about it: I didn't hear much said about it. Some of them complained, I think. I never heard much about it. They were mostly all the reinforcements, you see: I think there were two or three lots of reinforcements there. xxx xxx. The 14th Battalion had - something like fifteen to sixteen - didn't they?

Oh, there'd be a number of men there - there were thousands of reinforcements waiting for the brigades when they came back from ...

They formed the five divisions then. Birdwood was our head man.

I suppose you heard about him.

Yes. Do you know anything about him?

No, nothing about him, but he was a popular man.

He was popular, yes.

No, I know nothing about him. He used to go onto the beach and have a swim with us. I was at Courtney's Post for six weeks there - six weeks. Dick Courtney: he left us there and we never seen any more of him.

What was the story of Dick Courtney because I don't know that one?

He was a man who, I reckon, would be over 50 then, when he was Colonel in charge of us. And he was a good colonel; I liked him very much. He kidded you on a bit, as the saying is. And then on Gallipoli he got ill, I think, when we were at Courtney's Post, and he left us there. That's all we saw of him. He didn't see much of the fighting at all. In fact, I don't think he went up to the front line. See, we were right up on the top of a hill.

Yes, that's right. You were a long way up on the ridge, weren't you?

Yeah, up on the ridge there.

On 25 April, when you landed at Anzac Cove, where did you go?

Back practically to Quinn's Post.

Did you? You went right up that far?

Nearly - not that far. It was a place called Rest Gully. That's right down near the beach there. Yes, you've been well informed.

You were obviously with the Battalion during the attacks in early May.

18th and 19th May, when we had the armistice on the 24th. The Turks asked to have an armistice.

I know more about France than I do about Gallipoli because I'm not going to be writing in full about Gallipoli. But I will be writing some. I'll be explaining what the history of the Brigade was from the time of the landing, right through until the evacuation. And there will be all sorts of examples.

The evacuation was on the 20 December.

You remember the dates well.

Yes.

What happened during those early May attacks?

They came up in the night - they had a couple of chaps, got up from there - where was it? Near Courtney's Post, or Quinn's Post, or Popes hill. They used to come there singing out, 'Surrender - surrender - surrender', and all this. It was like that the first two or three days. They must have had English officers with them, or officers who could speak English.

This is just after the landing?

Just after the landing, on the Tuesday - on Tuesday night. That's when we come right up. Well, then on 18 and 19 May, that's when they made the big attack.

What do you remember about that?

It was just like shooting sitting ducks. They'd be coming up in broad daylight. Shooting them like ... I hope I never killed any, but I fired a few shots. I often wonder if I killed any. I hope I didn't.

No, it's not the sort of thing you'd want to do, is it?

No.

Did you take part in the August attack on Hill 971?

Yeah, 971. That's when Major-General Spotwood ... Did you hear about him?

No.

Well, he was in charge of the Tommies.

That was down at Suvla Bay.

Suvla Bay, that's right. That's where we were - it was a failure.

They stopped and made tea didn't they - the Tommies?

Yes, they stopped. There was a big write-up about it. We went on to ... our post - I forget its name now. We were there for weeks or months. That's where a shell, one of the small shells came there, and Jacka had his legs like that. And the shell went right in there.

Between his legs?

It was a dud. That was on Gallipoli - that's around on the left there - Durrant's Post.

At what stage were you wounded on Gallipoli?

23 June.

And that was down on the beach?

Yeah.

Beachy Bill was firing across there.

Beachy Bill xxx on the beach. I was only away a month - three weeks to a month.

What happened to you when you were wounded? Can you describe what happened?

'Stretcher bearers' they sang out; and they took me down to the clearing station down below, right on the beach. Dressed my wound - there were two or three others wounded - then they took us on a boat; put us on a ship and we went to Egypt, to ...

To the Palace Hospital, I suppose.

Yeah, on the hospital ship.

Heliopolis?

Yeah - Heliopolis Hospital, that's right.

The big palace there.

Yeah. That was a great big place that was - Heliopolis Hospital.

What were you doing when you were wounded? Just sitting there?

Just sitting there.

It was a rest period, was it?

I'll tell you what we were doing on the beach then - unloading barges - and this is true. There were about six of us in the squad I was in, and we used to pinch the - you know, dump the stuff overboard. And I was the only one who could swim, and I used to dive right down about twelve feet and bring this stuff up. It was all officers' stuff, you know: we were living like lords. We were there for three weeks, and I got wounded. Gee, it was a good place that. We were living like fighting cocks - bacon for breakfast.

We had some old fellows with us in our battalion: they should never have been in it, you know. They couldn't stand up to it. See, that route march there: they fell out by the dozens. (Break in interview)

At Pozieres: did I tell you anything about it. Funny thing - Pozieres and [Mouquet] Farm. I was there too, and that was practically only one platoon - and a chap named Quinn. Have you ever heard his name mentioned - Quinn? He got sent home from when we were up at Ypres for hitting another officer or

something. He was sent back here. Well, he stayed behind.

At Mouquet Farm?

A place there, and the Canadians took it in the finish.

Yes, that's right.

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A

START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B

They took the place. We had to retreat back out of it. It was one platoon, or two platoons: that was 14 and 15.

Well, going back to Gallipoli again; you obviously came back to the Battalion after you'd been wounded ...

Come back into 8th August.

That was a fiasco, wasn't it.

They sent us all home - half of us were not right with our wounds - a lot of them - short of men. And the 6th Reinforcement reinforced them - I remember it well - and there were over 100 killed in the 14th in that attack.

This is the 971 attack?

Yeah. And most of them were the 6th Reinforcements, all with their new uniforms and everything on. We were just like scruffy old - you know, you had the same uniforms on and stockings and same things. It was awful when you think of it. We got through it though: I was young and could take it.

You got all about France, didn't you?

Yes. We are going to be writing in detail ...

Did I tell you about Polygon Walk.

I'm not going to be writing about Polygon Walk because my story finishes at Bullecourt.

That was the 26th - Bullecourt.

It was, yes.

This Bill Howard will talk about it. Jack's gone has he?

(Incidental conversation)

Can we talk for a little bit about Egypt?

Yes. I enjoyed Egypt. We were in Serapeum after we left - that forced march I'm telling you about. Tel-el-Kebîr, Serapeum: we stayed there until May.

That's right; the end of May.

The end of May. And then we went to France. That's when Lord Kitchener was killed.

He was killed on the ship - drowned - wasn't he? Do you remember what happened then?

No; I've tried hard. I never had a report, whether it was bombed or what it was.

It was torpedoed. Do you remember hearing about that?

No, not a thing.

When you were down at Serapeum: the forced march was at the end of March, and you arrived down at Serapeum about ... well, it was certainly the end of March, beginning of April.

Yeah, that's right.

The camp was a couple of miles from the Canal, wasn't it?

Yes. We used to walk down to the Canal and swim. I swam right across that canal: it was a decent swim too. I never tried it again. Used to go down there every other day. We were all in shorts then. We'd wash our shorts out and have a swim, and when we'd finished our swim they'd be dry. I'll tell you who was in charge of xxx: Jacka's brother - Albert Jacka's brother - Bill Jacka, but he wasn't a xxx. I think he's still living, isn't he?

No, I don't think so.

He was a TPI in the finish. But he wasn't a bad fellow, Bill. And he had another brother; I never heard about him much. But Bill was a lieutenant then.

He was in charge of you. When you were swimming on the Canal he was ...

He was in charge.

Was he your platoon commander?

We never did much training at all: it was just a lazy spell there all the time. And we got a dust storm there when the dust blew - 50 miles an hour - ooh!

What happened?

You couldn't open a tin of jam, or anything. That went on for two or three days.

They used to have a light railway used to go right out. Did I tell you about the light railway?

I've heard about it.

That light railway used to go right out four or five mile further out than us.

Did you have anything to do with the light railway?

No.

You were in the infantry.

Infantry, oh yes.

Did you become a specialist - a bomber or a Lewis gunner?

Lewis gunner. I finished Number One.

Where did you join the Lewis guns?

In France. I'd say about after Pozieres, when we went up to Ypres the first time. I'd say about August - I was a Number One there.

Were you a Lewis gunner at Bullecourt?

No. xxx xxx. I might have been carrying a pannier then I suppose.

You were being one of the crew?

Yeah, that's right, one of the crew. There used to be four of us. I came home on six months leave, you know, when I came home. And when we got to ... half way home. What was it called?

You came back through the Suez, did you?

Came back through the Suez.

Colombo then?

Yeah. That's when we heard that the war had finished.

They gave you leave like that, did they? You were in Colombo?

No. We were at Colombo when armistice was signed - coming home. See, I was awarded six months leave - all of us - 800 of us out of the whole AIF. And when we got to Colombo, that's when we heard that the war had finished.

What did you do that day?

Just went on ordinary, like that; we didn't do anything much. I don't suppose we had any money to spend on anything. I was nearly always broke.

You didn't play two-up?

Yeah, plenty or it. I didn't miss out on much.

(Incidental conversation)

And what kind of training did they get you doing at Serapeum?

Not much.

A few route marches?

Yeah. Not much; not much. I don't remember being in a route march until Charlie Gordon xxx.

They gave you a bit of a spell, did they?

Yeah, gave us a spell when we were down there. They were feeding us up to take us over to France. Marseilles, that's where we landed.

Do you remember anything about the trip across, on the boat? It was the Transylvania.

Now, what was it about that?

She was torpedoed in the end.

That's right, yeah. That was torpedoed near England though, wasn't it?

No.

The Ballarat was ...

The Ballarat.

That's the one.

The Transylvania was torpedoed in the Mediterranean.

That's right.

Do you remember being on that ship, or not?

No. I'm just trying to think of the ship we did go on, and it got torpedoed coming back - it was empty. There were two battalions on it, the 13th and 14th, on our troop ship that went over to France from Egypt.

That would be the Transylvania.

Could have been.

She was the one that was torpedoed.

Well, that would be the one then. There was nobody on board it, only the crew. But going across ...

It would have been a disaster.

Would have been a disaster.

Do you remember any submarine drill, or anything like that?

No, I can't remember any. I think coming home we had a bit of a ... It was in the ... No, I don't think so - whether we had any scares about ... I think we did have one scare coming across, but we didn't see anything. The Ballarat: that was torpedoed. It didn't sink, did it?

It took quite a long time to sink.

Of course, they all got off. Eric Kirkpatrick: he was one of them that got off it.

Was he a brother of yours?

No; I'm Fitzpatrick and he's Kirkpatrick.

What do you remember about Marseilles and the journey on the train up through France?

Oh, all the way up - oh God, that was a good trip going up there, through all the tunnels. I forget how many days we were on it - two or three days - on that trip going up to ...

Went up to Bailleul.

That's right, Bailleul. And then we went into trenches in Bois Grenier. We went into there first.

They used to call that 'The Nursery', didn't they?

Yeah. And after that we ... We never had anyone hit or killed or anything while we there. It was a quiet sector. They did raid us once, yes, they did - they raided us and we did get some killed.

The 14th Battalion had a raid, didn't they?

Yeah, and then they followed through after - they retaliated. A funny thing about it: I wasn't there, I was out on fatigue duty down in the reserves, or something, and when I come back where my dugout was, it had been blown right up. So I was very lucky there. The two I remember - I know the one I remember was on the 18th and 19th of May - Bill Day and Snowy Walker. I was on the parapet, you see. They were taller than me, and I was down short, and they both got killed - bang, bang - with a machine-gun. It missed me. I can remember that one well. I can remember a lot more too.

There were a lot of lucky escapes. I've heard of a lot of things like that.

The war, in the finish, from - what do you call them? - from

4th July. Beaumont Hamel: did you hear about that?

Yes. That was a big advance.

At the start of the advance of the 4th Brigade, when we went over there. The French Premier came over and congratulated us: they had us all lined up after it. We hardly lost a man. Well, on 8th August we hopped over again. And on the 23rd we went over again in daylight. After that I didn't see much fighting; then I came home.

Took you home.

Coming home in the ... Finished there early in October, I think it was, to come back home to Australia on leave. The most remarkable thing about that too, I had one pass to go, fourteen days to go to England; and then an hour or two afterwards they come back and said, 'You're going back to Australia: you'd better hand back that other pass - that green pass.' I landed in London on my first leave in November 1916. I landed there with not a penny - no money in my pay book. And I got a haircut and one thing and another, cleaned up a bit, and the bloke that shaved me had his hand out like that wanting me to tip him. He was an Australian, you see: they were on duty there, cutting your hair and that.

He wanted a tip, and you didn't have any money?

Well then I slept in the War Chest Club, they called it, the first night. I got on a bus or something, and - I did not have any money at all. I said, 'I've got no money' - 'Another Australian', she said. Anyhow, I come back, and then the next day - I had an awful sleep through walking around all night in this joint. The next day I was standing there on my own, and I had my colours on; I had my overcoat on, and I had my ... It was November, you see, and it was cold. And along came a fellow named Jack Duxbury, and he said, 'You're in the 14th: what company are you in?', so I told him. He said, 'What platoon were you in?'. I said, 'What do you want to know everything about me for?'. He said, 'Oh, I just wanted to know. You're standing here lonely. I'm only wanting to have a yap.' I said, 'Yeah, where did you sleep last night? In there?'. And he said, 'Well, you see, I've got ten pounds. I'll lend you five pound.' And he gave me five pounds, and we had a good time with the five pounds. Took us to see all over London; went to everywhere in London.

Was he English?

No, he was an Australian, out of A Company.

He was with A Company in the 14th?

Yeah, xxx xxx me.

So he gave you some money.

Yes. The chap with the ten pound note come - I forget the name

of the note - John Bradbury. So I went down and I dug up Jack, and I gave him the five quid. We had a hell of a time.

What did you do?

We got down to the estaminets. We went into Amiens, I think.

This is when you came back?

Yeah.

What did you do in London when you met up with Jack?

We went through all the places, through the London Tower - had a good look there - Westminster Abbey - went through there.

What about Madame Tussauds?

Yes, we went through there.

The waxworks.

That's where Crippen was - that man ...

That's right, the murderer.

Murderer, yeah, that's where he was.

(Incidental conversation)

I was awarded a Military Medal.

Yes, I heard that.

(Incidental conversation)

Where did you stay after Jack Duxbury gave you that five pounds? Did you stay in the War Chest Club, or did you go elsewhere?

I went and stayed in a private room. I got a room. We chummed up together.

How long did you have in London?

Ten days. That's all I seen. Next time I went to Leeds - up to Yorkshire. That was the following November. Then I was due for this other one - I'm coming home then.

So you got leave every twelve months.

Yeah, every twelve months.

Did you go and see any plays in London? Did you see [Chu Chin Chow] or any of the ...

No, no. To tell you the truth, no, I didn't.

What did you do during the day - sightseeing?

Sightseeing, yeah. Oh yes, we went everywhere. None of us drank or anything though.

Did you go down to Horseferry Road?

Yeah, Horseferry Road. That's where I stayed, at the War Chest Club.

That is the War Chest Club is it?

Yeah, Horseferry Road. That was the meeting place. When I come from France on my first leave they issued me with new clothes there, and they put them all down in my pay book - charged me for an overcoat, and all that.

In Horseferry Road?

Yeah, in Horseferry Road. And this bloke there; he was a soldier, but he'd got this job there - there were two or three of them - in this hairdresser joint. He put out his hand out like this: he wanted a tip, but I had no money at the time. He leant me five quid, Jack Duxbury. He's dead too, Jack: he was a fine fellow.

Where did he come from?

Up the country somewhere.

This is Victoria?

Yeah, in Victoria. He was a fine fellow.

Did you have any relatives in England?

No.

You didn't know anybody?

No.

Why didn't you have any money?

Well, I was overdrawn in my pay book. They'd give me anything to xxx. I got Jack - his name in the pay book there somewhere.

I'm sorry about Percy Whitelaw going a bit ... He'd be about ninety-one, I think: he is a bit older than me. I think he was a sergeant.

I think so, yes.

By jeez, a good secretary if xxx.

Yes, I'm sure he would have been. I've got a good photograph of him. I took a colour photograph of him, and I'll do a colour photograph of you today too, if I may.

I've been getting photographs of the men I meet.

(Incidental conversation)

Which company were you in at Pozieres? Were you still with B Company?

Yeah.

When did you change to D Company?

I don't know when I changed to it ... No, I was in D Company after I got knocked on the foot.

You came back and you went to D Company.

Went into D.

I see. So after the evacuation you were in D.

Was in D all the time.

Who was the D Company commander?

Oh, we had several there. Combs was one; Jacka was one; and Billy Beaman was another one. They're all gone.

Did you ever know Ted Rule, the author of the book 'Jacka's Mob'?

Ted Rule: yes, he was a sergeant. I know him. Is he still going?

No, they've all gone.

How did you get on with the colonel?

The colonel helped me quite a lot.

(Incidental conversation)

Do you have any photographs of yourself in uniform?

I've got one, in uniform.

I might get a copy of that.

... sitting down in the open. Well, this fellow: he was doing it sitting down, you see, and he took both his legs off and he died in the military hospital, or the xxx hospital. Tommy Muir: he went right through the war.

That's you sitting down on the right.

Yes, that's me sitting down. Right through the war and didn't even get a scratch, and yet he's only home and that was done in May 1919.

What happened to him?

Had his feet dangling down, you see.

This is on a train?

On the train, you see, and thought he was in France, xxx at the catwalk. He hit the platform. Took both his legs - amputated. Tommy Muir: and he went right through the war without a scratch - saw everything. He had a commission, I think - Tommy.

What rank did you have?

Only Number One.

You were a lance corporal?

Yeah.

When did you get that?

I was never made a lance corporal - always a Number One ...

Lewis gun?

... Always a Lewis gun and Number One.

What can you tell me about Pozieres? What do you remember about that battle there, going into Pozieres?

It was hell. I remember going up the Saps - going up Sausage Gully - and they were shelling us, and we got to the front line, and there we stayed for four days. We were there for two days, and then they relieved us for a night, and we went down into Sausage Gully and stayed the night there, out of the range of fire. Came back and stayed another forty-eight hours up there. And all the time it was, stretcher bearers, stretcher bearers, all day and all night. They'd start shelling one night; they'd start at four o'clock in the afternoon. He was shelling us by the time - what you'd call a box barrage - north, south, east and west - boxes you in. You couldn't move. It was hell on earth. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and nine o'clock the next, barrages all the time, wherever the shells came from, until nine o'clock the next morning. I got belted out of my dugout twice. Where I was - we were in the front line - no, in supports it was. It was worse than the front line. They were giving us hell in supports, that's right. That's where I stayed then. It was terrible. Crash here, crash there. There were two lots trying to bring up the tucker to us - couldn't get through. We were right near the Pozieres cemetery.

Then we went up to Mouquet Farm, the week after that. Then after that we went up to Ypres, up to Dickebush and all around there, and into Ypres. That was a spell there: we hardly had a casualty there.

Well, then we came back and went into Flers. Did you ever hear

about Flers - F-L-E-R-S?

Yes. It was worse than Bullecourt.

Yeah, and xxx. xxx my horse through there. We had a fair issue of it.

And you were blown out of your dugout twice, I believe.

Yeah, blown out.

What happened at that time?

I was just blown out xxx. Stuff come on you, see; all the dirt and everything - they were big shells - 9.2 - coming on you. They were shocking. I saw some crying then. I was pretty tough then. I'd been baptised a lot in Egypt, and I was pretty tough then, and I could take it. But I've seen some of the fellows cry.

Some of those on Gallipoli?

Yeah, some of them; yeah, seen them crying. That was in France. Well then, of course, when it came to the end of the war, there was xxx like Charlie Beaufort and xxx Hamel. They were in that one; no casualties at all.

Different all together.

Yeah, different there. Open warfare was alright. But before you used to sit in the trench, and sit there like a sitting duck.

You were out in xxx at Pozieres, and then again at Bullecourt.

I had a fair issue, I'm telling you. I had a spell at the ... I didn't tell you I had a three months spell. The Battalion went out with two - I went out on a course - a Lewis machine-gun course and a bombing class, at a place called [Abberloi] near Albert.

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B

START OF TAPE TWO - SIDE A

Do you remember anything about the attack that occurred at Pozieres shortly after you arrived? That's the one in which Jacka was wounded. The Germans came across and they actually overran you.

Yes, something happened there, and he didn't come back - oh, he was away about four or five months that time.

Yes, he was badly wounded.

Yes, he was badly wounded.

Did you take part in any of the ... I don't know whether

the 14th Battalion was involved in an attack the first time it went into Pozieres. Did you have to make an attack across towards the Germans.

No, I didn't. I didn't leave my one position, bar when we were relieved that time, and back again. And you know the reason: we were in the same position. They never attacked us at all - we never had a counter-attack or anything.

You were just shelled that forty-eight hours of four days.

I can remember - I always thought of that dozens of times during my life - what they were shelling for. All the cemetery was all dug up - bodies - French people been buried there, of course. We did a lot of good, you know, that war in northern France, because it blew up a lot of the villages, and they all got new houses out of it (laughs). There were some awful places in northern France. They were shocking places they were living in.

What did you think of it?

I remember there was a school there - this time I was in the school - and I got friendly down there with a mademoiselle, and a farmer, and a mother there, and I used to pinch coal and take it down to them - poor wretches. I carried it down there to give them a fire. That went on for a fortnight. Nothing - curtains - nothing in the house at all - they had nothing at all. Just boxes there to sit on there was - and he's the sort of man, I reckon, should have been in the war; but she was a nice little woman. I forget her name now.

How did you get on with the French people? Did you respect them, or didn't you think much of them?

Oh, not much; no, to tell you the truth. Only when I used to see this woman, and her mother and father. Plenty of lively estaminets - pubs - go and have a soft drink or something like that. I never drank liquor then, xxx. I used to give my rum away. I had one too many on Gallipoli: I had too much and I got very sick, and that taught me a lesson.

This is from the rum?

Yeah. SRD it used to be known - Seldom Reaches Destination. The bloke who thought that out wasn't too bad, was he?

There's a lot of funny stories I've got on tape.

Oh, you could write a book on it. Jack Devereux, he had a book: he had a diary. But his memory went in the finish: he's been dead a couple of years now.

What about Mouquet Farm? Did the 14th Battalion have to make an attack for Mouquet Farm?

We wouldn't know. We didn't attack, but they never ...

You didn't, no. Well, some of the men did.

Some of them did, yeah; but I didn't. The Canadians took it in the finish.

That's right, yes.

(Incidental conversation)

Frank Evans was killed at Pozieres, wasn't he?

Yeah.

What happened to him?

He got killed with a bomb, so they tell me.

He was in a different company.

He was in a different platoon to me. I was in 14 in the finish. A man's lucky to be alive, isn't he?

(Incidental conversation)

What about Bullecourt? What do you remember about that attack?

The whole trouble is that I remember about it alright - the 'b' tanks: they went about as far as - half way through. We just went over like a lot of sheep - and got into the trench you see, our lot came up saps you see - we didn't notice them. But Jacka was one of the ones who went around, Jacka, and said everything was all clear. It wasn't all clear!

He did a reconnaissance, didn't he?

The barbed wire was there, and everything else there. But in the finish, I remember the tanks came good then - in 1918. By gee, they were good. I think on the 8th August we didn't have that many killed.

And that was because of the tanks you think?

Yeah, they cleared everything up for us. One fellow had Mills bombs in his pack, and a bullet hit it and exploded them, and killed him. He was accidentally killed, but we only had four or five killed, and a few wounded, xxx. Oh, it was good: you could travel eight miles - a good eight kilometres, of course.

What about the winter of 1916/17? After Mouquet Farm you went up to Ypres. Then you had leave in England, and you came back to the Battalion again. Then you were down around Flers during the winter, weren't you?

Yes. We were in Flers from practically September 1916 till the 11 April to that big attack at Bullecourt. We were never anywhere else - always down sweeping the roads - they'd leave us without equipment. We were getting killed down there just

the same. That's how we were put up that winter. We used to have a fire in - we used those big Nissen huts we were staying in. And they put one in there - that was another narrow escape - they put one in there one day right up the end of it.

A shell?

A shell came there, and I'm up here. It killed ten. Ten got killed - I tell a lie: ten wounded and killed.

You were sleeping in it when it came?

Yes, sleeping down there. I was sound asleep when it hit the hut. Jeez, there were some moans then. We were camped right near a Pommy gun - a 9.2. You see, they were shelling for that.

How did you keep warm during that winter?

Oh, I forget about it now. We'd be wrapped up with things over our heads, and that - pullovers over us.

And they made you work on the roads, and so on.

Yeah, sweeping the roads to let the transport come through.

The roads would be all muddy, wouldn't they?

Yeah, mostly. Some of them were pretty fair. And they were all transport pulled by horses. They used to have the other trucks too, with rubber tyres on the big trucks - big rubber tyres. I got a ride on one of them one time, to Amiens - eight mile in one of them. Oh Gee, I was pleased when I finished the ride!

Why, was it rough?

Oh yeah. I spent a few days in Amiens.

What do you remember about the attack at Bullecourt? Can you remember going across the xxx?

Oh yeah.

What were you doing at that time? What were you taking with you? Just your rifle?

Just me rifle - no, my gun.

The Lewis gun?

Mm. They could get heavy. I used to only put forty-seven in a pannier; if you put fifty in it would jam on you. There's three stoppages - one, two, and three - on a Lewis machine-gun. They would stop it from working.

Forty-seven was what it had to have, wasn't it?

Forty-seven was the most you could have, yes. And your gun would get red hot too. I fired two there at one time. The gun

would get hot. My rifle got hot on Gallipoli - on the barrel. It would get hot there. I was firing there for about an hour or so.

I know you could burn your hand on the Lewis gun if you were firing that continually.

Oh yeah.

What happened when you got up to the wire at Bullecourt? Can you remember getting through the wire?

Oh yeah, I got through the wire.

How did you get through?

I think it was partly knocked where I got through. There were a lot who didn't get through - a few of us got through. Stanton and Orr got through, but they got killed.

They got killed in the second wire, did they?

Yeah. I didn't like Orr, he was a pompous kind of a fellow; but Stanton was a gentleman.

Do you know what happened to them; how they were killed?

No, I don't know, to tell you the truth. I don't know where they were - they were hit some place. All the officers, they got it.

What do you remember about Bullecourt? Can you describe what you were doing from when you went through the wire?

I got into the trench.

Did you see any Germans there?

Yes, oh yes; I seen some Germans, yeah, and I ducked back. Two of us got through - back - then we got jammed a bit, I think, getting back through the wire.

This was trying to get away?

Yeah. I remember it well. Your heart was in your mouth - you didn't know, you know.

What time did you start to go back - roughly? I mean, did someone come along and say ...

It took me three or four hours for me to get back.

That's what I would have thought. You crawled most of the way?

Crawled all the way. And one fellow - I can remember him well - he was in a shell hole there, and I might have killed him. His left arm was hanging there, and I cut it off with my jackknife;

and I think he died right there on me then.

He was Australian?

I think he might have been dead then. I forget his name. Oh, it was a shocker that; that and Pozieres.

There were four of you from your platoon that got back?

Yeah.

That's all?

Oh yeah - all in our platoon.

How many in a platoon?

Sixty. Four of us.

Only four out of sixty got back?

Yeah, I think it was only four of us.

When you were coming back, did you come back on your own, across no-man's-land?

Yes, practically on my own all the way. I'd stop, you see; it was in the daylight then, getting back. See, I'd stop, and as soon as I could I'd run and jump into another shell hole. Some of them were full of water. Crikey, I was a mess when I got back. Thirty-three percent were left out of that.

It was just as well.

Do you remember any incidents during the fighting at Bullecourt?

No, not that many, no.

Where did you go? Did you go on to the second line, or did you stay?

I stayed in the first line, I think; I didn't go to the second line to tell you the truth. That's how I wasn't caught. Those who went through, they got caught. They had saps - they didn't know they were there, you see.

They had tunnels, I think, didn't they, too?

Camouflaged over. They were a good soldier the German.

You were up against very good soldiers there.

Oh yeah, good soldiers. One bloke with me, after he got back he said, 'I was in the hands of one of them' - that's right too. And the Hun said, 'How old are you?', and he said, 'Eighteen'. He said he gave him a kick up the tail and said, 'Get back'. And that's true too. If it had been me I would have thanked God

too. He was a good fighter, a fair fighter. I had a few surrounded there at Pozieres - eight of them, you know. They all stuck it out themselves; they'd kicked away from their own unit - the Huns - and they came back.

What's the story there? There were eight Germans that were cut off from the rest of their men?

Yeah, must have.

And they were on their own?

On their own - eight of them.

What were they doing?

To tell you the truth, I didn't know they was coming - I was in supports - I didn't know what they would do when they came back through our supports, or around the front. They came back through - I reckon they must have surrendered, myself. Our artillery gave them some stomach for their quarter.

(Break in interview)

I've got some questions that I'll ask you, and we'll see what details we can fill out on things. I was going to ask you, firstly, about the voyage over on the ship. What do you remember about that?

The Ulysses - six weeks - just to Egypt - went through the Suez Canal.

Did you go up to Alexandria?

I went to Heliopolis camp. The others were the 1st Division - the other three divisions. They were out Mena Camp, where the pumas are.

Did the ship that you were on stop at Port Suez, or did it go right through to Alexandria?

Yeah, it went right through the Suez, round to Alexandria. Beautiful trip through. I swam across the Canal. Very few could swim across it. I was a pretty powerful swimmer.

It's a fair way across it, isn't it?

Oh yes, in places. It goes through two lakes.

Lake Timsah is one, isn't it?

Yeah.

When you went across to Egypt did you suffer from seasickness? What kind of a trip over did you have?

Alright, not bad - as far as I can remember. It was seventy-one years ago, or more.

(Unidentified voice): Were you seasick, Bill?

No, never. The only time I was seasick was going to Gallipoli; and it's only two days sailing to Lemnos Island from where we left - Alexandria. And I got seasick there, and one of the sailors gave me a biscuit ... No, I'm telling a lie: it was going from England on leave, you see. I'd had too much food.

This is across the Channel?

Across the Channel. We went the long way. You can go the twenty-two mile - that's Dover to Calais. Or you could go from Le Havre to - oh, I forget the other one. Then you've got one from Southampton. There were three - no, four - there's Dunkirk isn't there?

Yes, that's true. And which one did you go on? The one to Southampton?

Calais to Dover.

And you were seasick on the way across?

Yeah, very sick: it was about an hour. Gee, I was pleased when I got to shore. He gave me a biscuit to eat, the sailor-bloke, to try and stop it. That's the only time. Even going through the Great Australian Bight - you can get seasick going across the Bight there. I got a touch of it there, going across, if I remember rightly.

Did you go to Albany first?

Albany, yeah.

Did you go with the first convoy, or the second.

Second. The first left in October, and we left about 2 or 3 December. But we all got to Gallipoli together - the four brigades.

(Incidental conversation)

Did they have any concerts on the ship going over?

Yes.

What kind of concerts?

Oh, piano and singing, and reciting - things like that. And the band; they had the band.

Was this the Brigade band?

No, the 14th Battalion band. Every battalion had a band. The 13th had one, the 14th, 15th and 16th; and the 13th was the best band. They were a beautiful band; they were from New South Wales. Ours was just a band.

And what sort of things would they play?

They played overtures.

They were quite good were they, at classical music and so on? Did they play any of the ...

I forget them now, to tell you the truth. Just ordinary ... as far as I can remember, David.

(Unidentified voice): Probably 'Waltzing Matilda' and all those.

Did they play 'Waltzing Matilda' or 'Australia Will Be There'?

No, I wouldn't ... 'Australia Will Be There'?

Yeah.

'Waltzing Matilda' I suppose ... No, that came lately in the Second War, didn't it?

Yes. Did you do any of the reciting?

No (laughs).

You didn't play any instruments, I suppose?

No (laughs).

I suppose they were given mostly of an evening, were they - on the ship?

No, mostly in the afternoon. You used to have to do a bit of guard work on the ship. Two on and four off; two on and four off. It was a long time.

It was a couple of hours, was it?

Two hours.

(Unidentified voice): Two hours on and four off. You'd do that for twenty-four hours.

What kind of training did they get you doing on the ship?

Exercises, that's about all.

Physical jerks?

The lieutenants and that would explain everything to you.

(Incidental conversation)

The friend that you had on the ship going over was ...

Frank Evans. I've got his photo; I'll show it to you.

What was the situation with you being a bugler? Were you appointed a bugler when you first joined up?

As soon as we had a bugle. But after Gallipoli we finished with the bugle and played it no more.

And Frank was a bugler too, was he?

He was a bugler. He's dead now.

What were the duties of the bugler? What were you required to do as buglers?

First of all, I was small, a bit small those days, and they wouldn't put me into the 14th at the time, so one bloke told me to be a bugler. Anyhow, I got in but I couldn't blow a note. I soon learned it though.

Why was it that they allowed you to get in as a bugler? I mean, why did it make a difference if you were a bugler?

No, it didn't make any difference. In the 14th then, you see, you joined in as a bugler in the 14th, after we came out of the Broadmeadows Depot. They formed the 14th then - formed it in September 1914, I think it was.

Yes, it was about that. Did you learn to play the bugle?

The corporal taught me, and I was pretty musical then, in those times, and I got on all right. There were about sixteen of us; two to each company. No, eight; two to each company. There was eight (companies) then - there was sixteen (buglers).

That's right - eight companies.

Five of them were killed on Gallipoli - five or six of them were killed on Gallipoli - and I reckon I'd be about the only one who's left.

And Frank was killed at Pozieres.

Yeah. I had a brother killed there too.

And what were the duties of the bugler? What did you have to do?

Get up of a morning and blow reveille ...

And the Last Post, I suppose.

Last Post at night - at half past nine would be the Last Post, I suppose. After reveille you'd go then - get them to fall in first. The Battalion would fall out, you see.

This would be the morning role call?

That's right.

And what about lunch breaks? Did you have to signal those?

We didn't have to blow at lunch, no - not until Retreat - that would come at sunset.

What time would you blow that?

Sunset.

So whenever the sun went down you blew retreat.

Yes. It used to be a minute or so difference every day, you see - longer.

They sound lovely, don't they, the bugle?

Yes, they would. A good bugle player was good.

Why did they stop using them on the Peninsula?

You weren't allowed even to take a photo with you. Oh no, that's the whole trouble, that they made a mess up. We never got anything at all of the Gallipoli campaign. You weren't allowed to have a camera. You were dead guilty; you were up before the Colonel if anything happened there regarding that.

What happened with the bugle though, on Gallipoli? Why did they stop using the bugle there?

No bugle was ever played on Gallipoli: you weren't blowing them in the front line, or supports, or any part of the trenches. A bugle was only at the place when we were going through a course. I went to a course, I think it was six weeks. You'd have the bugle there playing, reveille and Sunset, and the First and Last Post.

What was the First Post called? What's the difference between a First ...

I'm just trying to think when you asked me that question.

That's okay. When you arrived in Egypt you went out to Heliopolis?

Heliopolis, yeah.

What was it like out there?

Good camp, in the desert.

Just near Cairo, wasn't it?

About eight miles from Cairo, that's all. You'd go by tram there. Well then, if you had any piastres, they'd give you a ride on a donkey out there. Pay him a piastre to drive you in.

Eight miles on a donkey?

Yeah.

That would be a bit rough, wouldn't it?

Yeah (laughs), you're right there. The cow would be behind me whacking him on the tail. You wouldn't do the whole eight miles now, come to think of it, before xxx xxx.

You used to go in on the tram too, I suppose.

Yeah, when we had leave. Nice trams they were then - beautiful electric trams.

How many people could you get on them do you think, forty or more?

About the same as these; mostly all soldiers were on it, and there might be a few civilians. Well, if you didn't get that you could go by train too, from Zeitoun.

There was a station at Zeitoun?

Mm.

Heliopolis was quite a nice ...

Had a beautiful hospital there - a big one. I suppose it would still be there - it was a beautiful big brick place.

END OF TAPE TWO - SIDE A

START OF TAPE TWO - SIDE B

You were camped with the New Zealanders, weren't you?

They were camped right near us, the New Zealanders. And the Light Horse were too. That's like when we were in Egypt.

When you went into Cairo where did you go?

Anywhere - into the Wazzar. Have you heard them talk about the Wazzar (laughs), where the bad women lived?

What was it like in there?

I didn't worry much about them. They were in alleyways, and everything like that - dirty, they were. But when you got into Cairo itself, into the city, it was nice. You couldn't go into Shepherds, or the other places: they wouldn't allow you in them places.

They were for the officers, weren't they?

Yes, for the officers.

Where would you go - what cafes and so on?

I forget now (laughs) to tell you the truth. Whether we had enough money or not, I wouldn't know. We were only on a shilling a day coming out of our pay.

Did you go to any concerts?

Yes. At some of the places they had entertainments there. People - you'd go in - everything was outside, see, with the weather, and in the evening they would have concerts. Some of them would run on there own - and you were supposed to pay them, you see - you'd sit down. But if you didn't pay them it didn't matter because they'd still get something. That used to be put in the evenings sometimes.

They were Egyptian bands were they, or were they French or English?

On piano - mostly piano, if I remember rightly.

Did you have any trouble with any of the Egyptians, or the gyppos as you called them?

No, never had any trouble whatsoever. They burnt down the Wazzar, you know.

Where were you when that happened?

It was on Good Friday 1915 when it happened, and I happened to be right in the main street, and all behind was all the brothels, as we'd call them. They were behind the main street; all old, rotten places they were. I never went into any of them; didn't admire any of them.

(Unidentified voice): Did thy burn them all down?

As much as they could, Ted: they were brick. And the firemen came along - they are burning down the brothels, see - a lot of men got venereal disease. They burnt them down; and the firemen came up, but as fast as they put it on, they cut the hose. They cut the hose. They let it burn. Anyhow, that ended our leave. No-one got any more leave. That was on a Good Friday, and never had any more leave. Oh, the dirty rotten people they were in them dirty brothels - shocking. That's the eastern part of the world.

What other entertainments did they have - any cinemas?

I never seen a picture show there, to tell you the truth. You had to make your own fun, as the saying is.

What sort of things would you do?

Oh, I dunno.

I suppose you'd want a rest if you'd been working all the time. You'd go to a cafe or a bar or something?

Go to somewhere, might be a concert on and get in there, or something like that. But you'd only go in a small number of times: I wouldn't have been in to Cairo, I suppose, more than a dozen times.

Was that before you went over to the Peninsula?

Yes. Well then, when we come back from Gallipoli we camped at Serapeum. Well, that's 100 miles from Cairo. We had no leave from there - it was no good getting leave from there - there was nothing there - just a bare desert.

(Unidentified voice): Were there any hotels in Cairo, Bill, to got to?

Yes, Shepherds and another - they were two big (hotels) - they were all for the officers - Shepherds and the other big one. I can't think of (the name of) that? But as regards the shops, you could get drink or anything like that in those.

Did you buy anything in the bazaars there?

No, I don't think I bought anything. Oh yeah, I bought cards or something and sent them all home.

Postcards.

Postcards.

Did you go out to the pyramids?

No, to tell you the truth. I seen them from a distance, but I didn't go. I worked that after, and I've read all about them since. They are wonderful things them - they can't guess whether it's 4,000 or 5,000, or how old they are. That told you how long it took to build them. Talking of thousands of years - here were only talking ordinary years - 100 years is a long time here. A few of the soldiers got in to see the pyramids. They tell me they were beautiful to look at them, from a distance. But I never got inside of them, to tell you the truth.

What about going on the camels? Did you have a ride on a camel?

No, not one.

They were a bit fearsome, weren't they, the camels?

No, not one ride on them. Plenty of rides on the donkeys - plenty of them. If I had a spare piastre, or something, I'd be on one of them; and the little Arab running behind.

He'd be hitting the donkey on the backside with a stick.

Oh yeah, with a stick they'd have, and whack him. He'd stop sometimes - in Ismailia - they were stubborn things.

The donkey would stop and the driver couldn't ...

I suppose it would still be the same there now. A lot of tourists go to Egypt.

It probably is much the same in places. What about Ezbekiah Gardens? Did you ever go in there?

Yeah - Ezbekiah Gardens.

What was it like?

They were lovely.

Was it a sort of botanical garden?

Yes. They had that concert there - there'd be a concert on all the time there, doing the cancan, and all these other things.

Dancing?

Dancing - cancan dancing and all that.

Was the band an Egyptian band?

Egyptian band, most of them, yeah.

It was a brass band, or a jazz band, or what?

It was like a brass band, and a piano and that - just like olden times out here.

What friends did you have at that time in Cairo? Who would you go into Cairo with? Frank Evans, I suppose.

Yeah, mostly - and different ones.

Can you remember any of them?

No, to tell you the truth. I have forgotten all them I went in with. Charlie Little was one who comes back to me. But he got killed on Gallipoli though.

(Unidentified voice): Where was Eric Welsh then, Bill?

He didn't come till 1918.

Do you remember much about the Prince of Wales?

Yes. I shook hands with him here in Bendigo.

That was after the war, obviously.

Yes. Here in Bendigo, in 1920 - shook hands with him. His hands must have been tired with shaking hands. About one hundred-odd soldiers there shook hands with him. He's been dead and gone a long time now. Yes, shook hands with him here in Bendigo.

You saw him in Egypt, I assume.

He was in Egypt when the war was on. I don't know whether I seen him or not in Egypt, to tell you the truth. May have, but I don't know.

He did come down to Tel-el-Kebîr camp.

Never in my time.

This would be after.

Could have come down.

1916.

I think he did come down now that you mention it.

He was on a horse.

Yeah.

I'll go through the march down to Serapeum again with you - the big one from Tel-el-Kebîr.

Tel-el-Kebîr was just a march - Tel-el-Kebîr to Serapeum - sixty-two miles - something like that. March three quarters of an hour and spell a quarter.

Where did you spell?

Just in the desert.

Just out in the desert?

Yeah. And they had to have transport to carry our blankets - we just had one blanket, that's all.

They'd be carts?

Have to use them of a nighttime.

(Unidentified voice): How long did you go for, Bill - all day?

Yes.

(Unidentified voice): Eight in the morning till six at night?

We'd go practically all day, Ted. It was shocking. We'd spell for about two hours at midday: when the sun was at its hottest we'd spell, I think. Egypt is a wonderful country. I never seen it rain while I was there.

On the march that you did, I think much of it was to do with how well you conserved your water, wasn't it? You had your water bottle.

You had your water bottle, yes. You had to curtail yourself with that.

You were following a railway line down, weren't you?

Well, I couldn't say - I don't remember seeing a railway line, since going there. I don't, honestly, and I did the march, and I honestly didn't see a railway line. Someone must have seen one - I never. All I seen was xxx right from the start. We pulled up at - well, there might have been a railway at Ismailia. That's where we stayed one night, and - I told you before - the New Zealanders fed us that night there. I don't remember seeing a railway line there - it was all pure desert.

Yes, it was most of the time, I think. Some of the men refer to the fact that there were trains going past some times with empty wagons, carriages and so on. They couldn't understand why they were marching and these trains were going by with nobody in them.

How was the going - I think it was the last day that ...

It was terrible the last day - up to there in sand.

How deep would you go in it?

You would go down a fair bit - over your heel. xxx xxx. I know we were supposed to have 120 rounds of ammunition, but I had none when I got there. I'm telling you the truth - and neither did anyone else, hardly.

What did you do - throw it away?

Threw it away. If anything happened to any of us, some were coming in two days later after us. Some of the xxx they got nothing done to them. It was over - they tell me it was because - either it was in Bean's History or not, but I should have got Bean's History and read it. Did you ever read Bean's History?

Yes, I've got it.

Good isn't it?

Well, it is; it's well written. It doesn't mention that much about Egypt. It deals mainly with Gallipoli, and then France; but it does mention the march. Of course, other histories mention the march - the Battalion history.

Your right, I did see a train with the Tibby's Chocolates, they used to call them, the 8th ...

8th Brigade.

... 8th Brigade, yes. It was supposed to start - it was right in some book - it was over the officers in the mess there - they were all drinking whisky or something else - and they bet one another their unit would go to ... That's right too. Tibby

was the man that had the train, and he shifted everybody by train - all his battalion - four of them. Tibby's Chocolates they used to call them - 28th, 29th, 31st, 32nd, I think it was.

It could be; I'm not quite sure.

No, I forget them now. Tibby's Chocolates - he was a good soldier.

What else did you throw away as you were going down there? Did you get down there with most of your gear?

When we got there - on the march?

Yes. You threw away your ammunition, but you didn't have ...

I only had my rifle. Oh, it was a shocking turn out that.

You had punishment duty, didn't you, or something? Weren't you required to go on guard, or something?

Yeah, I had to go on guard when I got there. Nearly forgot xxx xxx. On that march I was told to guard, two on and four off.

That was at the end of the march?

After it, when we finished the march, the same day we were put on guard, and I had the same night.

Was that as a punishment?

Two hours is a long time standing on guard.

What do you do?

You just stand there like a donkey (laughs).

It would be pretty boring, wouldn't it?

Oh Gosh. In fact, I did one lot going over on the ship - that was on the Ulysses - four hours on there, and eight off. Well, that was terrible. Four hours there in the daytime, or in the nighttime - I forget now.

Just standing there and not moving?

Standing and not moving - oh no. Oh, you'd move a bit sometimes; you'd get out of the way a bit.

The flies were really bad in Egypt, weren't they?

Flies? Yeah. Yes, they'd give you something for the corner. Wonderful history, you know, in Egypt. It must have been a wonderful place thousands of years ago.

Did you get any photos of the ones from the 16th Battalion?

Yes.

(Incidental conversation)

The chap in the photo up there, he's Tommy Mew isn't he?

Tommy Mew, yeah - M-E-W.

Where did he come from?

Elmore - I think so.

So you knew him before you went away?

I knew him, yeah. I was with him, yeah. He went right through, you know, to sergeant major, and then he gets killed in Australia.

That's right, on the train.

On the train. His legs both - dangling down, you know, outside, and he ran into a platform, with the train going about forty miles an hour. Died in the Kyneton hospital. He was a wonderful fellow, Tommy.

Do you know when that photograph was taken? 1916 wasn't it?

I think it was taken in France.

I think it was taken in 1916. (This turns out to be correct.)

How often would you go swimming in the Canal?

Every day. Every day we went down there - walked down.

What times would you go - before breakfast?

After breakfast. Get down there, and then go back for tea. We'd walk back home for tea.

So you would spend all day down on the Canal?

We'd spend four or five hours anyhow, from after dinner.

They gave you the afternoon off did they?

You had the officer down with you - oh yes. You were looked after - oh yes, it was beautiful - beautiful weather.

Was the water warm in the Canal?

Yes, lovely.

Is it salty?

Oh yes, of course, it's coming in from ...

From the Mediterranean down to the Red Sea. A lot of the fellows have told me about the ships going up through Suez and swimming out to get things from them.

Oh yes, I heard about that, but I never.

You didn't go out?

No, no, I never.

It was a bit dangerous, wasn't it.

Yes. They wouldn't let us go out.

The officers?

No. We never went out, anyhow. I didn't see any of our mob go out either.

This is the whole battalion?

Yes. But we're down there practically every day, in every afternoon swimming. We'd have a bit of physical training in the morning, and that.

What would you do all afternoon down there?

Just swim and sit down and lay about - at our leisure. That's where Bill Jacka was left in charge of us - Albert Jacka's brother. He's dead too.

Bill Jacka was in charge of your group down on the Canal there?

Bill Jacka was, yeah. He was in charge of our platoon.

What number platoon was that?

14th.

That's D Company?

D Company.

Do you remember the Anzac Day anniversary that was held on the Canal?

Yeah, we had one there. We had one there in Egypt, on the Canal there. We all had a parade and the minister - the chaplain - he gave us an address that was very nice - there was prayers and one thing and another. It was very nice that day down there. It was down in Serapeum, right in the heart of ... back in 1916 though, that was. We didn't go to Gallipoli till May, did we?

That was when you were back from Gallipoli.

Yeah. We went then to France.

They had water sports on the Canal that afternoon, didn't they?

Water sports? Yes, I believe so, but I never seen any of them.

Didn't you go down and see them?

I didn't see them, no. To tell you the truth, I didn't see any of the sports.

They used to get these very bad dust storms, didn't they?

Yeah.

What were they like?

Khamsins, they used to call them. And they were supposed to go for fifty days, the khamsin - that's fifty in Arabic. See, I can count Arabic - [tarak, arabah, kamser]; and un, deux, trois, quatre is French. I can count in three language. It was easy to learn the language, I reckon - the Egyptian.

What were the dust storms like?

They were awful - you couldn't open a tin of jam.

You were telling me about that. How long would they go on for?

For three or four days at a stretch - it could be longer. I remember them: by gee, they were awful things, rushing into your eyes too, you know. That's out at Serapeum.

What would you do while they were on? Was it possible to do anything but stay in the tent?

Stay in the tent.

Did you used to play cards and so on?

Yeah, cards, anything like that - or two-up if you had any money.

What kind of card games would you play?

We only played Euchre. There were other games too, which I forget now, but Euchre mostly.

(Incidental conversation)

Do you remember anything about the Light Horse and the Turks at Serapeum?

Which?

At Serapeum there was a clash of some kind between the

Light Horse and the Turks out in the desert.

Yeah, there was some turn-out once there, I believe. That's out at Ferry's Post.

What did they feed you on down there at Serapeum?

Oh, we had the cooks there - we had good meals - you know, you expect what army meals are. They had plenty of vegetables. Egypt was a good country for vegetables, you know: they've got the water there and everything ...

Along the Nile.

... along the Nile. Well, when we were doing that three-days march, we stopped near one place there, and they were right down below, about thirty feet - a canal running through, a small canal - and we were sending down our water bottles to get filled, and they were charging us a piastre, or five piastres - it got up to ten piastres. Oh, they're cunning them bloomin' Arabs. They're cunning with water. That's when the tanks ran out of water. Oh yes, you know, you'd be sipping it, going through at 95 degrees all the time, up to a 100 - might be a bit more - all the time. And everyone got chaffed in here - oh yes.

That's round your groin. You had a new uniform, didn't you?

Yeah; I had new boots too. New boots - oh gee, I put up with a bit in that. But I finished. I was put on guard for being a good hero (laughs). A lot didn't finish.

I know they didn't.

Oh, don't make no error about it. There was a bit of a rumpus over that, I believe.

How many in your company finished it?

In our platoon, I'd say half of them finished in our platoon. About half, yeah. Some of them were big strong men, you know; and young: they'd go through it. You only had your fighting order, that was all you had. You didn't have an overcoat or any of that; you just had your fighting order - and your rifle.

(Incidental conversation)

Perhaps if we go on to the Gallipoli period, and we go through that to some degree. One thing that I'll probably refer to in the book is your mention last week of the six weeks that you spent on the beach moving stores or something. You were wounded at the end of it, weren't you?

I was wounded in the ankle - in the foot.

Right ankle.

Yes, right ankle. Did I tell you about Beachy Bill?

Yes, I've heard of Beachy Bill.

They reckon there was a battery of them, and they used to run into a tunnel.

END OF TAPE TWO - SIDE B

(TAPE THREE CONTAINS INTERVIEW MATERIAL OF PERCY BLAND)

START OF TAPE FOUR - SIDE A

I thought I'd start today by asking you about early Bendigo. Can you tell me something about your family background?

I was born in Axedale - that's fourteen miles away - but we came to Bendigo and kept the Brian Brew Hotel, just before the war - about 1913.

What was the hotel?

Brian Brew.

Where is that?

Out over ... from the McIvor highway. It's on the main road.

Where does it go out to?

Out through Swan Hill.

The main road to Swan Hill?

Yes.

So your dad was a hotel keeper?

Yeah. He died in that hotel. About two or three hotels there. He died there.

When you arrived at Axedale, were you on a farm out there?

Yeah.

He was a farmer out there was he?

Yeah. I was only young when we come in. He made a few quid and went into hotels. Made a business out of it, I think.

How many were there in your family?

Six.

That's six children?

Six children, and they are all dead bar me. They are all dead;

I'm the last one.

Were you the youngest?

I was the third eldest - but they are all dead. There's Rene, Bill, me, Reg, Jack, Alley.

Alley?

Alley - Alice.

Alice. So three girls and three boys.

Yeah, that's right.

Where did your mother come from?

Axedale - born there - over 100 years ago.

Were they early pioneers of the Bendigo district?

Yeah, they were pioneers out there. They must have had a ... I can hardly remember, to tell you the truth - they must have had a hard time, early, when they went there. They had to come in fourteen miles to do any shopping or anything like that.

She helped in the hotel did she?

In the bar.

She was a barmaid?

Yes. They had a maid later.

You would obviously have to have them in the hotel.

It was a good hotel; it's still a good hotel.

It's still there is it?

Oh yeah. It's just been taken up again. It's a beautiful brick place. It was built when we were going in there.

You were the first people to go in were you?

New people in the new pub, right when they made a new pub.

Did your father build it?

No, they built it.

He worked for somebody did he?

Who?

Your father built it did he?

No, no. It was owned by the brewery first, and he bought it off

the brewery.

Did your father go prospecting round here for gold?

No, never looked - not in my time anyhow - I don't remember him ever looking for it. He looked as much as I did, and that was hardly any.

What happened to your brothers and sisters?

They're all dead.

Did they all stay in Bendigo too?

No. There's two buried out here at the Bendigo cemetery, and three, I think, are all buried in suburbs of Melbourne. They've been dead a few years now.

Where did you go to school?

Gravel Hill.

How do you spell that?

G-R-A-V ... (laughs) ... -E-L - Hill - H-I-L-L. It was built on a hill.

Where was that - at Axedale?

No, I didn't go ... My sisters went to school at Axedale. I didn't go to school at Axedale anyhow; they mightn't have either.

You must have come into Bendigo fairly early then.

Very early, yes.

It must have been a few years before the war.

Yeah - come in about 1910 I'd say - two or three years before the war.

What was Gravel Hill School like?

A good school - 600 kiddies go there now. I saw that in the paper the other day. It was a good school; turned out some good chaps like me.

What was early Bendigo like? How much has it changed since then?

It hasn't changed that much. I don't remember it changing. Of course, new shops and everything else has gone up - new homes and all that, of course, and parks - since before the war. That's 1914. God knows how much has been done to it since then. They're still building; Bendigo is a big place now - 64,000 people - when they go around Long Gully and Ironbark - stacked till, say, out to there, and nearly out to the McIvor Highway.

Bendigo has got a lot big area.

When you finished school where did you go then? You were working for a watchmaker, weren't you?

Yeah - watchmaker then.

Where was that?

He was in the arcade. The arcade has been burnt down and a new one has been put there, but not like the other one.

How old would you have been when you started work?

Fourteen.

So you didn't go to school for long.

No. I went from when I was about five till ... I went as far as I could go. It was a higher grade then - I forget the name we used to call it then - but they call it now the ...

Matriculation is it?

Yes, matriculation.

You must have gone to school at Axedale as a boy somewhere.

Mm.

You must have been to a small school out at Axedale.

There must have been, yeah. I think we were. Yes, that's right. xxx xxx. I must have gone to school at xxx. My memory's a bit blank on it there.

Your dad had a farm out there, did he?

Yeah, a good farm. And I've known other people in it are still in it since we left there - like their young ones would come back. Peterson is their name: my grandfather was a German. It's a Danish name, but he was a German. Schleswig-Holstein they came from.

One of the men who was a POW after Bullecourt spent time up there. They were on a farm up there.

Your Fitzpatrick, but that's not a German name.

It's Irish.

Are your family from Ireland originally?

My grandfather - they must have come out from Ireland, but my father was born here and my mother was born here, down at Axedale. They were born here, so it must have been lovely when they came here over 100 years ago.

It would have been rough.

My father is buried there, and my mother is buried in Bendigo.

What kind of a farm did they have out at Axedale?

Wheat. A good area out there it was - still a good property. There's people still in it and like it. My grandson and them are still in it and running it.

How many acres would it have been?

A square mile - 600 odd acres. A square mile is 640 isn't it?

Yes, I think it is something like that. That's a lot of land isn't it?

Yeah.

I suppose as a boy you would have spent a lot of time on the farm then, wouldn't you?

Yeah.

Helping with the various jobs.

Oh yes. The Campaspe River; that was a mile or two, and we used to cart water from there when we were kids.

How would you do that - in a bullock cart?

No, in buckets.

In buckets?

Yeah.

What, sort of over your shoulder?

Yeah. Oh yes, we used to have to travel there. You'd see the rats when our tanks got a bit empty. The place is still good down there. I was out there not so many years ago - still a good home. I like Jack's xxx funny thing, but I never go there now.

What made you go into watchmaking?

My mother's brother was a watchmaker, and she had ideas to see me a watchmaker.

So you got very interested in it through him?

Yeah, I liked it. Oh yes, I made a lot of money in the depression days - on the side, yeah (laughs). Mend a watch for five bob - that was rich then. Things were tough in the depression days. In the thirties it was shocking, although we didn't starve; we lived pretty good; the Fitzpatricks lived

pretty good; we all lived pretty good.

(Incidental conversation)

What was the watchmaking shop like?

It was a good shop - xxx. Oh, it was a good shop, my word it was. He employed a man there too - there were two there, besides me, in the practice. My mother had to put down twenty-five pounds for me to serve my apprenticeship.

That's a lot of money.

Yeah, it was then. I don't know where she got it from. Oh, she must have had a quid. That was so I didn't break my indenture papers, you see.

You had to sign on for so many years, did you?

Yeah - five years - five or six years. I forget now. Six years.

You started that when you were fourteen?

Yeah.

What was the name of the watchmaker?

Isbrand - I-S-B-R-A-N-D.

What kind of a fellow was Mr Isbrand?

He was a hard boss - oh, he was strict, but he was good. When I went to war he cried nearly. I was still there with him. Yes, he didn't want to loose Billy. He's got sons and grandsons here kicking around Bendigo I suppose. I wouldn't know any of them of course.

What kind of hours did you have to work?

Oh, when I first went there it was half past eight till six o'clock.

Was that five or six days a week?

Six days. We used to work Saturday morning, from eight o'clock till twelve - every Saturday morning - off for an hour at dinner. And we had to work till nine o'clock Friday night. It was forty-eight hours a week - fifty. I worked fifty hours then, when I first joined. And now what do they have - thirty?

(Incidental conversation)

You were working for Mr Isbrand when the war started.

Yeah.

What prompted you to join up?

Adventure, to tell you the truth - just adventure. I was always fond ... I had the idea to travel around the world when I was young. I travelled around as a salesman. I've seen a good bit. I've been everywhere, but I haven't been to America. I've been to Africa.

What happened when you joined up? Can you remember the time? What did your parents think of you going?

I forged my name. Tried to get in - no - I went there. xxx xxx. I had two other brothers; they both joined up after.

This is Reg and Jack?

Reg and Jack. Their both dead. He was a smart fellow, John - Jack was his name, not John - Jack - John Fitzpatrick.

But he was called Jack.

He died early in his forties. He died at forty-three years of age. And Reg just died about three years ago. He was a man up around his late eighties - or seventies - or beginning eighties.

When you joined up how old were you?

Eighteen - just on eighteen. I'd been eighteen at the end of January. I joined up on 10 September 1914. I never regretted going to war - never regretted it.

You used your right name though, of course, didn't you? You just put your age up, didn't you?

That's right, I had to put my age up to nineteen.

You didn't get your parent's consent?

No (laughs).

Were they unhappy about you going, or not?

They were down hearted, that's only natural, but they got used to it in the finish when the others joined up and the three of us came home. Jack died from war injuries.

Were they also in the 14th, or were they in other battalions.

One was in the 7th and the other was in the 24th, I think. I was in the 14th of course.

How actually did you join up? What did you do to join up? I mean, where did you go?

xxx had a place to join up. You got to go before a doctor; Dr Eadie was my xxx; I had to go and see him; he examined me - passed me fit.

What did he do when he examined you?

Oh, he examined me in a second - did nothing - patted me on the shoulder. Didn't do nothing, no (laughs) - 'Goodby and good luck', he said. He was getting so much ... passed me. Dr Eadie: I can see him now. He was lame, he walked with sticks. I think he must have had polio when he was young - something like that. They used to call it some other name, didn't they, years ago?

(Incidental conversation)

After you had your medical you then went down to Melbourne did you?

Yeah.

More or less straight away?

Straight away. Went into bell tents at Broadmeadows camp.

Who else joined up with you at that time?

Three or four of us.

Who were they?

They're all dead since. Evans was one. They got him. He got killed at Pozieres. I forget the others.

Did Tommy Mew join up with you at that stage?

Yes, he must have. He was an original like me - poor Tommy. Went right through the war and got killed coming home, when he come back here. Right through the war he went; finished as a sergeant major, Tommy. He come from Elmore.

What was his background? Did he come off a farm?

I don't know what his background was, to tell you the truth; I've got no idea.

You went into Broadmeadows, didn't you?

Broadmeadows; that was the only camp going there. They had one out at Seymour; they had a camp there. Broadmeadows we went to; that's where I went.

They had another camp out at Seymour later on, did they?

Later on. Yes, they had a big one at Seymour. At Seymour and around that other place - I can't think of it now.

Puckapunyal.

That's it.

Can you describe the uniform that you had? What were the details of the uniform that you wore?

Uniform? The same as they have now - slightly different now, but the same as in the Second World War. They had the same as what we had - khaki tunic - puttees.

What were the puttees like?

Oh, we got used to them.

They were cloth, weren't they?

They tied them around your leg, over here. They were about from here to there long; they wound round and round, right up to there.

They were about six feet long, were they?

Yeah (laughs). Yes, I was always pleased to get them off my legs.

Why was that?

Oh, they'd ... I don't know.

They were uncomfortable, were they?

Yeah, uncomfortable. Some used to do them up this way, and some would do them down that way.

Start at the top and go down.

Up and down.

(Incidental conversation)

When you were in Egypt you had your hat turned up on the wrong side once, when Monash inspected you.

At Tel-el-Kebîr. Yeah, it was on the left side, and it should be on the right side. He went and chipped me about it. I told you, didn't I?

What happened then?

xxx xxx. I remember now; he let it stay as it was. Fancy him picking me up though, like that: he must have been keen. That was Monash; that's when he was a brigadier. He was a fine soldier, Monash. He was a good soldier. He finished up in charge of our company.

Yes, he did.

He finished up in my ... a full-time general.

Yes, he was. One side of the hat was turned up, wasn't it?

Yes, always one side turned up.

Was it always the right side?

It would be on the right side, I suppose.

You had your left side turned up?

Yeah.

And it was cocked, it was sort of at an angle across?

Yeah. Oh yes, he chipped me, the old ...

What did he do?

He was inspecting us - that's what you call it - inspecting the 4th Brigade.

He was going up and down the line was he?

Yeah, he was up and down. He picked me up with my hat anyhow.

What did he say?

(Laughs) xxx - never said a word. That could be xxx of it. Say yes sir, no sir. Oh, he was a good soldier, Monash - had to be - of German descent.

Yes, he was.

Big man - oh, big man. About six foot, and he'd weigh about fourteen stone I reckon. He was a big man, Monash. He lived to a good age.

You had to wear boots, didn't you? You had those brown boots.

Yeah.

What were they like? Were they comfortable?

Oh yeah, I was easy with them. I used to wear a size six, now I'm wearing a seven. I must have grown in the foot. Size six I was then.

That's not a very big foot is it?

Now I'm wearing a seven.

(Incidental conversation)

When I was here the other day you were telling me something about the landing as such, on the Peninsula. I think you had a meal or something before you went ashore.

We had a meal at sea, and [Chung] was the name of the boat. We had a meal on it before we landed.

What happened before you went ashore? What did they get

you doing? Can you remember the time before you went ashore at Anzac Cove?

Oh the ship?

Yes.

Exercise. Oh, they kept you busy on the ship. We were six weeks going over to Egypt, to Port Said. It's a nice journey through the Suez Canal - Suez to Port and back - Suez on end and ...

Alexandria or Port Said up the other.

Alexandria is the other end. I enjoyed that ride on that.

I suppose you'd be all at the rails looking at the country.

Yeah, that's right. Seeing the Arabs, and that's the first time we'd seen them. Singing out at them, and they'd sing out at us - cheeking them, and they'd give us something in their language. I wouldn't know what they were saying. I can remember that now, travelling down the ... Yes, it was twelve hours - not twelve - I forget now. It was a good while. Had to go slow. I swam in there, did I tell you? After Gallipoli we swam - December 18, I think, when we finished at Gallipoli. And then we went to France in May 1916. Well, we camped on the Canal there at a place called Serapeum. We used to go down there and have a swim, only from here - oh, it would be a mile away I suppose - a mile or so.

END OF TAPE FOUR - SIDE A

START OF TAPE FOUR - SIDE B

Down to the Canal?

Yes - every day. We had what they called a khamsin - that's fifty days - (counts in Arabic). I could talk a bit of it there, in the finish. I could count in three languages - un, deux, trois, quatre - you know, the French. I could count in three languages one time; of course, it's all left me now.

What would you do when the dust storms came in?

Oh, they were shocking - sand.

Would you get warning?

Oh, your hand - you couldn't open xxx it was that bad.

Couldn't open your eyes?

They would be going for days - mm. Oh, that was awful - sand. They had the light railway going. We were a good mile from the Canal, now I come to think of it. When we got back we'd want another shower. See, it was 100 in the shade all the time - practically. It was a different heat to ours, if I remember

rightly. I never seen it rain while I was there - never seen any rain, before and after I was there.

The boats used to come up through the Canal.

All the boats would come up through the Canal.

Would you swim out to the boats to get things from them?

No.

Would the officers let you do that?

Swim out to them? No, I didn't see any in my xxx that swam out to them: they went past you like that. I've never seen anyone reckoned they did that; well, I never seen any in my company, or in the battalion. No, you wouldn't let xxx swim out to them, no.

It would be dangerous I suppose.

Yeah, dangerous.

You were a bugler, weren't you?

Yeah.

How did they teach you the bugle? Where did you learn it?

I learnt it myself (laughs). I was a good one in the finish. Didn't blow after we left ... that was only before we went to Gallipoli. Never blew it any more after that. Never blew it after the eight months on Gallipoli.

Wasn't it the case that you saw Kitchener on Gallipoli?

Yeah, xxx.

What was that story?

A big tall man he was, with a big black moustache. I can see him now; he'd be six foot one or two. He was a big man, Kitchener. I've seen Earl Kitchener.

What was he doing?

He was in charge of all the forces, the British forces.

What was he doing when you saw him on the Peninsula?

Going up into the trenches, and looking over the parapet to see what was going on. But I don't think he lifted his head up. Where we were, at Courtney's Post, we were only a chain away from the Turks. It was suicide to put your head up - suicide. Every morning you'd go out there, you'd go out to the toilet, or somewhere - whatever you had to do - and there was always two, three or four soldiers (killed) looking over the top. That was in the paper when Kitchener was there. He said to him,

'Keep your head down mate'. Kitchener laughed, sour faced. Of course, he was from the past; he knew nothing about the war. It was a different war altogether to the Boer War - different war altogether from all the other wars. They kill you whatever war you are in though.

How did they organise you just before you landed? I mean, you were at Lemnos.

Lemnos Island, yes.

What happened?

When we left Lemnos Island then we went by boat down within a mile of the shores. Well, then we got on small boats - pinnaces as you call them - got them and rowed them across. Well, I was up to there in water.

When you got out of the boat?

When I got out, yes.

Up to your waist. Were they shooting at you as you came in, or not?

One got killed - one man got killed.

In your boat?

He got hit in the head - yeah - he was dead - in our boat, yes. We didn't have many casualties. We had more casualties later in August 1915, round at Suvla Bay. That's where we got butchered up there, like we did on 11 April 1916.

'17, at Bullecourt. Do you remember what the actual Peninsula looked like when you first came up to the Dardanelles?

It was full of hills, you see; just like any other place, where you'd have the beach - or the sea and there you've got the beaches - just the same - sand.

What did they get you doing once you landed? Where did you have to go?

We finished up where they called West Gully after - down near West Gulley. That's where we started from. Then we went there for what might have been six weeks - xxx there. It was good: I used to go down and have a swim every day. Go down to the beach and have a good swim - good weather - June and July.

You were wounded down on the beach, weren't you?

Wounded, yeah.

What happened then?

They carted me to Egypt, to Heliopolis - that was the place.

Heliopolis - the hospital.

What was the hospital like?

Big place - great big place - beautiful.

What do you remember of your time there? They had you in bed I suppose?

Oh yeah, cane beds - good beds - they were all right. Better than lying on the ground.

I suppose you were glad of the rest.

Yeah. We got used to it, lying on the ground there. When your young you can take it, you know. You wouldn't last two minutes now, at my time of life - you'd be gone. You wouldn't even get to the shore.

What happened to you at Heliopolis, when you were in hospital there?

Just ordinary routine hospital - bandage you up every day, of course, and one thing and another. From there they put you into a light duty camp. Oh, it was a good spell. Of course, the Battalion was out xxx xxx.

Where were you wounded?

Down here.

Oh yes, that's a bad wound, isn't it?

Mm.

That would have bled rather badly I suppose.

Oh yes. I was pleased to get out of the Peninsula.

That was a shell from Beachy Bill wasn't it?

Beachy Bill, yes. They had a battery of them, they say, and they were in a tunnel, so a chap was telling me. A bloke out of the 21st Battalion; he was telling me about it; he was a lieutenant. He had a dog by the throat. He was telling me one day about it. They were hidden in the hill, and they come out to fire, and then they run back for cover. See, we didn't have much artillery there, only xxx. Oh, we had the gunboats - all the navy was there.

What were you doing when you were wounded?

I don't know what I was doing. Standing at my post in my trench.

You spent some time down on the beach ...

Oh yeah.

... unloading supplies, didn't you?

Oh yeah, that was the best job in the world - three weeks there. I was the only one who could swim, and I used to have to swing over the xxx. A lot of it would go down, but a lot of it would come to us. Well, there were about six of us in the boat unloading it, and then they put it under xxx. We used to pinch it, you see; drop it down and I had xxx, and bring it aloft. We xxx got bacon, raspberry jam - oh, xxx to live with - plenty of potatoes. We never seen them things, we had mostly rations out of tins - xxx and all them.

What was it?

xxx was one name of them. I can't get the right pronunciation of it.

How do you spell it?

I don't know.

Beautiful - made in Canada.

What were they - potatoes?

Just like bully beef you call it, in them tins - call it bully beef.

You were unloading all these stores mainly for the officers ...

Yeah.

... and you were stealing some of it from it and dropping it over the side into the water.

Yeah (laughs). There was no gaol there. We lived well.

And how would you retrieve them - of a night time?

Oh, in the middle of the day you'd be going down, like a diver. You had to go down a few feet and come up again. Of course, I was young; only about nineteen. It wouldn't be more than a metre out there.

There was a pier going out, wasn't there?

A pier going out? Yeah. The end of the pier is going right out in the finish, looking over what they call xxx xxx, over the road from it - a mile or two - two or three or four miles away. Could see it from where we were.

What about the attack when you were up at Quinn's Post and Courtney there? There was a big attack by the Turks there in May, wasn't there?

Courtney's Post, Quinn's Post and Pope's Hill. Pope's is named

after Pope of the 16th Battalion - he was a colonel; and Quinn was a major; and Dick Courtney was a colonel.

Of the 14th?

He was only there for a fortnight. He was an old man, and he's grey. He was only there a fortnight or three weeks; he stayed down below; he didn't xxx, where the trenches were, where we were. He went there and he must have xxx Courtney, and he xxx say how long, before. Never seen him, xxx top.

Poor old Dick: he went to England and he used to just xxx soldiers over there.

The Turks attacked in May, didn't they? You were telling me a little bit about it when I was here before. In May the Turks attacked, didn't they?

Yeah, 18th and 19th.

What happened then? What did they do?

They come right up while I tried ... They come right up to us. Well, they were only - as I said before - only a chain from them. But the xxx xxx further down the right, half a mile down the road, they came up and xxx formation. Though xxx mowed them down. Well, after that, the next xxx, they called for an armistice, xxx the Turks. That's where Jacka got his VC - killed seven of them.

You buried a couple of them, didn't you?

Yeah, two with them - there were two or three of them - buried them, yeah, too right we did.

What did you do with them. I mean, what was the story then? Do you remember that time?

That's when they attacked us. They attacked us and they; they were going to kick us into the sea.

Where did you bury the Turks?

Just down a bit; just down the hill a bit xxx. xxx xxx. Take xxx spot where xxx. Take them out somewhere where we buried them. That's what Jacka got his VC for.

Did you see him at that time, or shortly afterwards?

No. He was in B Company and I was in D Company. He was over the road there from me, away from where I was. I'd stay there all day and wouldn't fire a shot - just shift down the trench - go to sleep or some other thing.

One of the officers was killed looking over the trench, wasn't he? I think you told me one of the men was killed.

Oh yeah, oh yeah.

(Incidental conversation)

What happened to the officer who was looking through the glasses? He was sniped, wasn't he?

He was sniped, yeah. I'm trying to think of his name ... I'll tell you who died - Wadsworth.

This is recently?

The one in the 14th who was a colonel: who was that?

Colonel Wadsworth.

Yeah, he died.

When?

It was in the paper - twelve months ago. How long since you've been here?

(Break in interview)

... Wadsworth, was he?

His father was a tailor.

He was a clerk in Castlemaine.

Yes, he was a clerk in Castlemaine - xxx finished up after the war what he was doing. I know he had the band; he used to be drum major of Castlemaine Military Band. Yes, he died, I think. I thought of you when I read it. He's living out at Burwood.

I've got a good picture of him.

It was in the paper; I read it in the Sun. There's only four left now.

(Incidental conversation)

There was an attack by the 6th Reinforcements on the Peninsula.

6th. They were up to the 8th - landed on the Peninsula.

I mean there was an attack at one stage - I think it was August 8th ...

August 8th 1915.

... when the 6th Reinforcements took part.

That's right; and they are the ones that got knocked. All their brand new uniforms - a funny old thing. There were twice as many men killed as what there was of us.

That was because the didn't ...

END OF TAPE FOUR - SIDE B

START OF TAPE FIVE - SIDE A

You were telling me a bit yesterday about your early days over at Axedale.

Good old Axedale.

What made your dad give up farming? Why did he become a hotel keeper?

He got sick of farming. In fact, he wasn't in good health at the time. My mother carried that pub on mostly. He died a young man - fifty three - my father.

Why did they call it Brian's Brew? Was that his name?

No. His name was John Joseph Fitzpatrick. He is buried at Axedale.

Why did they call it Brian's Brew?

Oh, I've got no ...

No idea.

That's named after the Brian's Brew in Ireland. That's where it originated from. That's as Irish as Paddy's pigs.

I don't know anything about that.

Oh yes, it comes from Ireland that name. I think it's a county or something up there. Oh, Brian's Brew, yes: that's well known in Ireland. If you didn't know anything about Ireland ...

How do you spell it?

Don't ask me; I forget now. I must have a look at that one day when I pass through; go and have a drink or something.

(Incidental conversation)

I smoked one time, but I give it away years and years ago. I have a beer occasionally. I have a xxx and I'll have a counter lunch and have a beer or two - couple of beers.

Did you have a pipe or smoke cigarettes when you were in the army?

I gave my cigarettes all away when I was in the army, to tell you the truth - or tobacco. I didn't smoke; used to give it away. I'd give it away for a biscuit or something.

The army would issue you with tobacco and so on, would they?

We used to get an issue - oh yes. I know a particular name of one was 'Flag' - F-L-A-G. I know that one. I used to give mine away - I didn't smoke until I came home. It never worried me.

A lot of the fellows used to smoke, didn't they?

Oh yeah, everyone smoked.

They had a pipe I suppose.

Yeah.

How many cigarettes or ounces of tobacco would the army give you?

I've got no idea - a packet - a small packet. Then they'd give you Woodbines. I remember that - Woodbines.

An English cigarette.

Yeah. No, I never smoked in the army - a most remarkable thing. I think I was about thirty when I started smoking - twenty eight - and I gave it away years ago.

I was going to ask you about the early days, before you went away with the Battalion. After you saw Dr Eadie you went down to Melbourne, didn't you?

I went to Melbourne, yes. That's the way you went into camp.

Did you go down on the train?

Yeah - I got a pass down. Oh yeah, they'd put you down in the train - they couldn't get you there quick enough - out to Broadmeadows - in the bell tents - ten or twelve to a tent. All your feet to the centre pole on the ground. By gee, they were rough days those in the army, before we went away. But you seemed to enjoy it - you were only young - I was only eighteen. You know what you could do when you were eighteen; you can't do it now.

(Incidental conversation)

What did they get you doing in Broadmeadows? What were those early days in the camp like?

Physical instructions and all that, and route marches. We did one from Broadmeadows to Melbourne - to the city - the 14th Battalion.

That would be with all your gear would it?

Yeah, all our gear and ammunition - no, we didn't have the ammunition. We had the ammunition when we did that damn march in ...

In the desert.

... in the desert. That's where I slung all mine away; so did everybody sling it. You couldn't carry it - three days marching - by Gee. Some of them were coming in two and three days after. I finished, and for being a good boy I was put on guard.

You told me that. Where did you keep you ammunition? Was it in little boxes?

Yeah, little boxes - in clips - ten in a clip. You only had things on your ... put them in their ...

In front of your chest?

You could carry about 100.

100 in each box?

No - the whole lot.

All together?

Yeah. Might be 120. I forget now; it's so long since I was there.

And they were in clips of ten?

Yeah.

(Incidental conversation)

Were they in clips of five, or clips of ten - the rifle ammunition?

Clips of ten.

You would just drop them on the sand would you?

Oh, just sling them like that. Everybody did the same. Nobody was court-martialled and nothing happened. It was caused, I learnt in Bean's history, through all the generals and the heads getting together at a - how this Tel-el-Kebîr/Serapeum march came on. One started betting the other. And we did the Serapeum to Tel-el-Kebîr ...

You went all the way in to Melbourne on a route march?

Yeah, all the way. Come back by train. All the people clapped us marching through the city - oh yeah.

You'd feel pretty proud.

They were drinking in the mess, and that's where they started betting one another. There was only one sensible brigadier general amongst the lot, and he was at Tibby's Chocolates. Well, he entrained his men - they didn't march. He was the only sensible man amongst them. All of us mugs walked. Some walked to Ferry's Post.

That was where the New Zealanders came out, wasn't it?

Yeah. We mixed with them - they were a good lot. We had a meal with them once, on the second night. They had a beautiful meal - well it was stew - it was beautiful. That was a stupid march - that was a stupid thing. And for being a brave soldier I get guard over it, two on and four off. Two hours on and four hours off for twenty-four hours. I went to sleep standing up, and the officer caught me - he chipped me. He said, 'I'm sorry Private Fitzpatrick' - this was at Broadmeadows again - standing up and went to sleep. I was only a boy of eighteen.

You used to do it on the boat going over, didn't you - guard duty?

Yeah. Four on and eight off there. Four hours on and eight off. Oh, they were treacherous ones them - I fell for them. I was unlucky in that: lots never got it, but I got it. I'll never forget it: from twelve midnight till four AM in the morning was one shift - all on your own - in a big ship, all on your own down below deck.

You were on guard duty down below deck?

Yeah, on guard duty down below - on the Ulysses. It was a beautiful boat then, but of course that would be scrapped by now. It was a 28,000 tonner. The 14th and 30th Battalions was on that boat going over. That's how big it was. We had one end and they had the other end.

Which end were you?

I don't know which end it was now.

You were all in hammocks, I suppose.

Yeah, hammocks. I used to sleep on the floor; I couldn't sleep on them. No, I couldn't honestly: I'd sleep on the floor. But they didn't have them hammocks going over: it's coming home we had them. We all slept on the floor going over.

There weren't hammocks going over?

No. I don't remember having hammocks, to tell you the truth; but I remember having them coming back, and I couldn't sleep in them, and I slept on the floor. Of course, I got seasoned too - I was a seasoned man at the game by then.

Where else did you go for route marches at Broadmeadows?

Oh, we'd go anywhere. We went for some decent marches.

I suppose you went down to the rifle range, and so on, too.

Shooting, yeah. I was a good shot - I'm not kidding - I was a good shot. I was an excellent shot.

How accurate were the .303s?

Accurate as anything - I'll say they were accurate.

Over what distance?

200 or 300, up to 1000. You went to 900 - you went no more. We had a few of them, but mostly they would give us 300 or 400 - didn't give us any further - ten shots practice. But we didn't have that many of them, though. No.

They had a fair recoil, didn't they - the .303?

Yeah.

And you were also on the Lewis guns?

Yeah.

What kind of a gun are they?

Air gun - no water, just air. Panniers they used to call them. They'd take fifty, but you only put in forty-eight. If you put fifty they would jam - there were three positions.

The three slots for the ...

Mm - three positions. We used the one and two mostly - never used the three - mostly one and two. I used to instruct on that when I come back a xxx. I went to a school over there: I was three months in the school.

How did they train you with it? I mean, what was the training like?

We had trainers there, and there would be a sergeant in charge, xxx instructors. They'd train you. They were men out of the battalions who had got these jobs. I was there three months - it was a good spell, not being in the front line.

What were the various parts of the Lewis gun?

One - two - three.

What does that mean?

I forget now.

You mean a number one on the Lewis gun, and a number two ...

The number two is the one you used mostly. They were heavy to carry too, on your shoulder. And I was a small man compared with some of them. They got red hot after a pannier had been got rid of. You couldn't do more than two or three - they got red hot. You see, a rifle gets red hot. I remember on Gallipoli when the Turks attacked us on 18 and 19 May. We were firing at

them, and the barrel got red hot.

And you could only fire two or three panniers out of the Lewis gun and it would get red hot.

It would get stinking hot, yeah; my word it would. Some might have done four or five; I never did more than three.

Was it the case that with the Lewis gun there wasn't a recoil?

Yeah, you'd get a recoil. When you were carrying them any distance they got very heavy.

When you fired them they actually sort of pushed back into your shoulder?

Into your shoulder, yeah, that's right. Carried them on your shoulder, when I was number one - and they got heavy. And my number two, he'd relieve me.

He'd help carry it?

He'd carry it for me. I was a small man too: if I'd have weighed ten stone I'd have been lucky.

What did the number three do?

xxx. I forget now, exactly.

Machine-guns: I fired at them at xxx, when they came at us in March 1918. I remember it well. That's when I used the gun I like best. They forced us back six kilometres. We were retreating then and we dug in and held on.

You were always having to take the Lewis gun to pieces, I think.

Oh yes.

Were they a good gun?

Yeah, they were a good gun. But as I say, they got hot.

What would you do when they got hot?

Stop.

You'd have to stop?

Indeed - can't do anything.

How long would it take them to cool down?

God knows how long - I forget now. You might spell for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. But you didn't stay that long firing them. I've gone days and days, and weeks and months, and never used it. It was only mostly when they were attacking you;

that's when you used them. Well, then we had the maxim machine-gun - they were beautiful. And I think there was another name for another machine-gun.

The Vickers?

Vickers, that's right. They had machine-gun battalions.

In the end. I remember that.

They had one to every division - five divisions.

When you went away on the Ulysses, did you march from Broadmeadows down to ...

No, we went by train.

And you marched through Melbourne, did you?

Yeah, marched through Melbourne, and right up Swanston Street; up the main street - that's Swanston Street - and then we went over the bridge and halted there, and had lunch - bully beef, of course. Then we marched to the platform and got in the dog boxes.

What is a dog box?

(Laughs) Like a small guard van. Some of them got lousy in those dog boxes. I got lousy before I left Australia. I had to toss everything out - it was right at Broadmeadows camp. The whole lot of us in the tent were lousy - greybacks.

Greyback lice?

Oh, like a greyback, like a flea. I've never seen any since. We had them in France, and they'd lay their eggs right down there.

The seam of your trousers.

Yeah, right inside. But I never got that lousy in France. I reckon we got more lousy in Broadmeadows than anywhere. I don't remember much in Egypt before we went to Gallipoli: I don't remember having much trouble there. We were in Bell tents there.

This is in Egypt?

Yeah. I can see the place now - Heliopolis.

What happened with the Battle of the Wazzar?

Oh, the Battle of the Wazzar. That was where all the prostitutes were, you see, and a lot of men got diseases. Thank God I didn't worry about visiting them. A lot of the men got VD - venereal disease. And they decided - a Good Friday it was - Good Friday 1915 (laughs). I can't help laughing now. That was when the fire brigade came - turning on the hoses - then they cut the hoses. They burnt them down properly - you couldn't

burn them much more - they were only brick and mortar. It was awful. It was where all the prostitutes were. But it never worried this man. I had enough gumption not to try and see them.

You were down in Cairo when the fire started I suppose?

Yeah, I was sitting down in one of these alleyways. Like a warren it was in there: lanes here and there, and little short ones.

I didn't tell you, one time when I was on leave. My pass finished at twelve midnight. Well, we were camped in Amiens then - somewhere near Amiens - about ten or twelve kilometres away. I walked in and a redtop grabbed - see, it was right on twelve. And he jugged me - oh yeah, put me in. So the next morning the guard came round - it was under guard - it was a guard tent - and there was a Chinaman in there. There's all the nations in the world in there. I was lying on the concrete - blimey, I never forget that night. Anyhow, they came and picked me up - the corporal did, from the 14th - and took me back. Jacka was the Captain then - VC - and I told him what happened. He said, 'I've got to punish you, Fitz' - he called me. I says, 'Yeah'. He said, 'I'll give you duty in the cookhouse'. He did the biggest turn he did in his life - I lived like a fighting cock, helping give the tucker out - roast beef and that. That's what Jacka did for me, oh yeah. I was a Number One then too. He always called me Fitz.

He got a big head in the finish you know, Bert did. He was a good soldier - oh yeah, very good soldier.

What kind of characteristics did he have that made him a good soldier?

I wouldn't know, to tell you the truth. xxx xxx. I suppose training - xxx out at training. He was a good officer - treated his men beautiful. Oh yes, Bert was a very nice man, but he got a bit of big head in the finish.

You were telling me also that at one stage you were gassed.

Oh yes; I was in hospital for three weeks. Got gassed at Villers-Bretonneux. Yeah, they were gas shells. Not quite three weeks - that's telling on me now I reckon. I had bad lungs with it for a long time. Jacka got gassed himself: he never come back any more; and that was in May 1918. That was the last we seen of Jacka. We come back and he died in 1935, Bert Jacka did. He had another brother called Bill Jacka, but Bill wasn't in the race.

I told you about all the swimming we had at the Suez Canal. By gee, we did a lot of swimming there while we were camping, at Serapeum.

You used to wash your shorts out in the Canal, didn't you?

Yeah. They would dry while you were swimming. And you'd have to walk back a damn mile and you wanted another one when you got back. Oh, every morning that happened - every day. We didn't do much training there.

What would you do during the day?

Physical instructions and short marches: they kept you fit. But it was an easy life. The officers didn't care much: they wanted an easy time too. We were very fortunate with all the officers I was under. I never struck a crook one - not one.

END OF TAPE FIVE - SIDE A

START OF TAPE FIVE - SIDE B

What was the aftermath of the battle of the Wazzar?

All our leave was stopped - that was the end of it - we never went any more. A week or two after we sailed for Gallipoli - sailed for Lemnos Island and stayed there, out in the bay - Lemnos Bay.

You actually were stationed on the ship?

Yeah, all the time. They put us in boats to let us have a look at the Queen Elizabeth I - it was a big war-boat.

Battleship.

They let us have a look around the ships and all that, but otherwise we didn't do anything else, only talk a bit. They'd give us a few instructions and things like that. I really forget, to tell you the truth.

You were on the Seang Choon, weren't you?

Seang Choon, yeah. That was the best boat I was ever on for food.

What would they give you?

We had roast beef for dinner - roast lamb - and a fowl we had one day. My word, we had good tucker there. Roast beef, roast mutton - I suppose it wouldn't be lamb. Oh, we had good meals in that joint. Bacon for breakfast - we always had bacon for breakfast - boiled it they did, the bacon - there was more fat than ... (laughs).

Where would you eat on board the ship? In a big mess I suppose.

Yes - big mess down below - two steps down below - and in forms they were, with tables about that wide. It would hold about eight or nine one side and eight or nine the other side. And the orderlies - you had to take your turn, you would, when you were on those ships. The orderlies would go down to the cookhouse and bring up the tucker and give it too the men.

We had a strike going over on the Ulysses. Oh yeah. All the ship - they were giving us rabbit all the time.

What do you mean?

Rabbit to eat.

So you went on strike?

Yeah, we refused it, and one of the heads went up to the cookhouse - marched to the head.

To the captain?

Captain - and then they went and seen the head - the brigadier, or whoever was in charge. It was all altered. Carried it down on their shoulders. Yeah, we had this rabbit all the time, xxx. That was on the ship; that was going over.

On the Ulysses.

Going over.

They were feeding you rabbit all the time?

Rabbit all the time - you got sick of them.

What did they do afterwards?

We got meat and everything afterwards - we did well. I remember we had German sausage one meal. Yeah, we did well - we did well. We only had boiled bacon for breakfast, you know; rough it was.

Would they give you porridge?

I couldn't tell you now. Mostly what we had, when we were in France or anywhere with the cooks, everything was boiled, like stews. Ham and beef and mutton - it was all boiled.

When you were up in the front line as such, and they'd bring up the rations ...

They'd bring up the rations.

... what would they be? What would the rations be?

Oh, not bad - bully beef.

It would be in a tin, would it?

Yeah, it would be in a tin - I forget now.

It would be cold, most of it.

Oh yeah, cold.

What about those army biscuits?

I used to like them; I used to get a good meal out of one of them. I'd get the stew and I'd break it up and put it in my stew in my dixie, and mix it all together. It would be nice.

The water would soften them I suppose?

Yeah, good as gold. I'd always put mine in. You'd get a good feed from one of those biscuits.

How big were they?

Oh, about that big ...

About three or four inches across.

... and about that wide.

That thick you mean?

That thick - no, only about a quarter of an inch thick - it would be five-eighths of an inch. It would be a good half inch I suppose.

They were about four or five inches long, and about two or three inches wide?

Yeah.

What were they made from - oatmeal?

I suppose so. They were alright to eat anyhow - I ate a lot of them. We used to have bread, you know - bread (laughs). It was frozen.

This is in France?

Yes. We used to have that for breakfast of a morning, when we were out spelling in camp. We'd have that for breakfast in the morning - bacon and a biscuit - and bread. We used to get a bit of bread, but it was very tough. We'd eat it though - you'd eat it. I never pushed any tucker back.

They used to give you rum too, didn't they?

I never drank it - gave it away, to tell you the truth. I had a taste of it and didn't like it, and I used to give mine away. I'd give my issue away. We never got that much of it though.

When would they give it to you?

Up in the front line, when it gets hot, sometimes. But it had SRD - Seldom Reaches Destination.

That was on the side of the bottle?

Yeah.

What did it really stand for?

Seldom Reaches Destination - that's all I know. Most of it, I think, came from Canada - what we had. It might even have come from Australia, (a some of it).

You were telling me that you used to ride the donkey into Cairo?

Yes, drive it all the way - two or three times I did that - and the little Arab would be running behind. You'd have to give him a couple of piastres. Ten piastre was equal to two shillings - I remember that. I had my pay books, but I don't know where they are: I was going to show them to you.

Did you all play two-up much.

Yeah, I always liked it. I always stuck my nose in that. I'll never forget it though - this Frank Evans, you know. The most remarkable thing: I'd been to two-up and I'd won a couple of hundred francs - I had a good spin - and Frank Evans, my mate, I said to him, 'Frank, do you want a few francs? I've got plenty here, before we go in.' But he wouldn't take a franc off me. And he was as white as a sheet - I can see him now. He got killed: got killed at Pozieres. He must have had a presentiment. Something happened to Frank - he got killed.

This is before you went into Pozieres - he was really white?

That was just the night before we went in. I wanted to give him a few francs - fifty or sixty - as many as he wanted. No. And I carried this money and I was always worrying that I would get shot with it. You know what happened to it? I went to two-up again and I lost the lot. I was a bit of a villain, come to think of it - lost the lot. I was a gambler. I used to do a fair bit of racing; I used to go to the Bendigo races a lot after the war - I loved racing. I haven't been going for a few years now.

(Incidental conversation)

You were down on the Canal when the Anzac Day ceremony was on? Remember, in 1916 they had a service?

Yeah, we had a big service.

What happened on that day?

Oh, just an ordinary parade, as far as I can remember. That's all we had. And we went down to the Canal and swam. In the morning we had a big church parade.

How often would they have those church parades - every week?

If I was out of the line it might be nearly every Sunday

morning. It was hard to get together, you see, when you were camped in the villages - that's all they were, villages. We were in a pig stye once - all the fresh straw about - it must have been a pig stye. That's how we got treated sometimes when we were out of the line.

What would they do at the church parade? They'd just have a chaplain and so on?

The RCs, they wouldn't go.

Who are the RCs - the Roman Catholics?

The Roman Catholics.

They wouldn't go?

No; they had their own. If there was a French church around they'd go into that. Oh yes, they were very regular. There was a parson to every battalion, I think. We had one - Gilligan. Do you know anything about him? He got killed on the 8th August 1915. He was a lovely man. They used to have a turn out - him and Jacka - down at St Kilda, but that's finished now. Gilligan: he got killed on Gallipoli on 8th August - 7th or 8th August. He was a lovely man. We always had a parson after.

(Break in interview)

He was a great man for his church. He's a deacon in the Church of England Church somewhere up there. His father was a minister - he's a good son-in-law. I bought him the last car, when I had the money - got to go around. You can't take it with you. I mean, no-one's ever come back with any anyway.

Not that I know of.

They used to have the YMCA in the army, didn't they?

Yeah, but the Salvos beat them. The Salvos were good.

What kinds of things did the Salvos do for the troops?

Oh, help them. You'd go down there and get something to eat with them. Oh yeah, they catered for the xxx; oh, they were good. Anyone could tell you about the Salvos; they were good-oh. I didn't run into such a lot of them, only two or three times I think, but they'd be around all the troops. YMCA: they were good. They were good over there, the YMCA. But the Salvos beat them, so they say. I got on well with both of them.

(Incidental conversation)

You were telling me about August 1915 and the attack at that time. What were you doing during that attack?

We walked around ... we were right in ... well, on the beach there. Then we marched in fours up there, then we went into trenches - they'd been made - and we hopped over the top from

there. And by God, they gave us hell. We didn't advance far. Durrant's Post; that's the name of the place. We were 800 yards from the enemy, they say it was. Two or three times I had to go out on patrol - I never met anybody. My word, I was pleased I didn't.

This was of a night time?

Yeah, night time.

What was that like?

It was dark; you had to be on your toes. The most remarkable thing: I hit a few of them. We never ran into anybody, but some of them did, some of the other ...

Australians.

Some of the Germans. They had their - what do you call them? I forget now. They had their mob going out in the ... How many would be in it? There was only about half a dozen. Yes, I had a few of them.

This is both on Gallipoli and in France is it?

We advanced, we didn't stop any xxx. When we left there - on 18th December I think it was, when we come off - and we never stayed where we were when the winter was coming on us and that. And we didn't shelter there; we never had any casualties at all - hardly any casualties.

What happened when the evacuation occurred? Did you know you were going to be taken off?

Yeah, we was quietly told. I was anyhow. I was told xxx xxx then. I think we had to put bags around our feet, or something, to stop us from going off. We were pretty late going off too. Nothing happened, not even ... They had the rifle with the water coming down - pull the trigger and shoot the ... see the enemy ... and nothing would ... say that we're going to ... I think they closed their eyes. I think they were pleased we got going off.

Just going back to the time when you first went away: you left Broadmeadows in the train, and you went down to Melbourne. What happened then?

Well, then we went down to Port Melbourne and got on board the boat there. They took us down in the train and got on the boat there. That was the 22 December 1915.

Did you march through Melbourne?

Yeah, we marched through Melbourne - and oh, cripes xxx.

Where did you go in Melbourne?

Just walked up the Broadmeadows-Melbourne main road - the

Sydney road. Well, then we marched down Swanston Street, and over the bridge - over the arched bridge - the Princes Bridge isn't it? - it's the big bridge there - then into the ...

And you had a meal or something.

Yeah, had a meal there and went over into the Botanical Gardens - we had a meal there - a counter lunch, you know (laughs), out of the bully beef tin. We didn't have any waiters on it though. Then we entrained home. Then we had a march from the station down to the camp. It was a good mile or more to march from there down to the camp from the station. Too right it was a fair march. Of course, I was young; I could take it. Wouldn't like to be doing it now, of course: I wouldn't last two minutes.

When you went away on the Ulysses you went down on the train to Port Melbourne?

Yeah.

What was the scene like when the boat was departing? I suppose there were a lot of families that came down.

Yeah, there was a lot there. No, that's a most remarkable thing: it was done very quietly. We didn't think we were even going to go until about January sometime, but they made us go on the 22 December to stop us. They wouldn't give us leave for Christmas, you see, so they put us on the boat. We went out in the bay and stayed there for two days before we sailed.

You were two days in the bay?

Yeah, two days in the bay before we sailed, I think it was - then we sailed.

Then you went across to Albany did you?

Yeah, Albany.

And you were in a big convoy, I suppose, going from Albany?

No. There was the 13th and 14th Battalions on our boat - the Ulysses - and the other boat opposite. There was only the Brigade, I think - the 4th Brigade. There was only the 4th Brigade - 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th. We only stayed on the ship at Albany; we were not allowed off the boat, of course.

What was the weather like going over?

Beautiful.

You didn't have any storms?

No, no. The only time I was on the rough was when I went across from Le Havre to Southampton, I think it was, by boat on leave. I got sick going across; a little bit sick.

A sailor gave you a biscuit, you were telling me.

Yeah, a biscuit. One of the men told me to have it.

When you arrived in London that time you went to Horseferry Road, didn't you?

Down there, yeah - Horseferry Road. Did you hear about when I was in debt in my pay book?

Yes. Tell it again.

I told you about the fellow that lent me five quid.

Jack Duxbury?

Jack Duxbury. xxx.

He lent you five quid, did he? What was the name of the five quid notes?

John Bradburys.

What was the one pound note called?

John Bradbury. I couldn't tell you now. I only had the five pound one. That's when my mother sent me ten pounds: they both come in five pound notes - big wide ones they were.

Who sent you those?

My mother.

These are Australian five pound notes?

I told you I went to the two-up and done my money. I gave it to Jack Duxbury, the five quid I owed him. Well, then I went to two-up and done it. Oh, I never had any luck. Never even had a feed out of it. I paid him his five quid back, anyhow.

You went down to Amiens, didn't you?

Amiens, yeah. I should have spent the lot, I suppose. I must have had money to go to Amiens. By gee, they had those different places you are barred to go to in the city now - different places in the area. They only had certain parts you could walk around in Amiens. They were all barricaded ... I forget now what they call them. You weren't allowed to go ...

The first night you were in the War Chest Club you didn't sleep well, did you?

No.

Why was that?

Damned if I know. Never slept - you could hear them walking

around - and I was broke, till I got some money in the morning.

You were worried were you?

Yeah. They charged me for a new tunic - in my pay book - they charged me for an overcoat and a new tunic. Some reckon they got it refunded back when they finished in the army. I don't know whether they got it back or not. It was all done in green ink it was, and Fitzmorris was the name of the bloke who signed it.

The second time I went on leave I went to xxx to Leeds. I had a good holiday there. That was through writing to ... A chap gave me the address of one girl. Did I tell you about it? She was a lovely woman. I went up to Leeds. And I was in one of the War Chest Clubs, and a bloke came up to me and another chap I was with, he took us on and took us up to his place. That's where we stayed.

What kind of a place was it?

Beautiful home he had - I can see it now. He had a player piano, and his name was Cummins - Joe Cummins. He used to write to me when I went back to ...

To France?

Yeah. He must have taken a liking to me that man. By gee, he meant a lot to me.

He was an Englishman?

Yeah.

This is near Leeds somewhere?

Yeah, in Leeds. He was good to me. The woman: she was good too, but nothing happened between us. She was a nice woman. She showed me around a bit too. I went out with her a couple of times. The English people treated me well: I can never complain about the English people - I was treated well. Jack Duxbury and I went to one of his aunties' place there, when we were on leave there together, the first time. Their name was Wolverham.

W-O-L-V-E-R-H-A-M?

Something like that, yeah. And we stayed there a couple of nights: they treated us well.

They put you up in the bedrooms, did they?

Yeah - double bed - we had half a bed each. He was a lovely mate, Jack. He's dead now, Jack Duxbury.

He came up to you at the War Chest Club?

Yeah, that's where he gave me the money.

You didn't know him before that, did you?

No; he only knew me by my colours. He asked me what company I was in, and I told him. And he asked me what platoon I was in. I told him I was broke, and when I told him he said, 'Well, I've got ten pound. You can have a lend of five.' And he lent me the five. I didn't spend it all - we stayed with the Wolverhams - we had 'buckshee' board.

I went and had a look around. I went through the Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, Tower of London - I went through all those places. I loved sightseeing. I can sit in the train and watch the country go by for hours.

END OF TAPE FIVE - SIDE B

START OF TAPE SIX - SIDE A

What was the house like that Jack Duxbury's aunt had?

Beautiful home, but I think it was rented. It was the same row all along, with the same houses. I think they were rented out. He was a nice gentleman - he was bald - I can see him now. He was a clerk, and he was too old to join up, so he'd be dead a long time now.

And these were Jack Duxbury's aunt and uncle that put you up?

Aunt and uncle, yeah.

And they were in London?

Yeah, they were in London - Essex - 353 Grove Green Road, Leightonstone - I knew that one.

Did you ever go back and stay with them again?

No. Went and seen them before I went to Leeds. They wanted me to stay but I didn't go any more, and I don't think I've heard of them from that day to this. I wrote to them once or twice.

Did you go and see any plays, or concerts?

Yeah, one at - a play or concert - up in Leeds, and we went into the box seats. This chap Cummins, he took us. He had a big job in Leeds; he was in a big position. He seemed to have a hold on the city. Wherever he went it was Mr Cummins this and Mr Cummins that, wherever we went. We had board for free with him of course - it cost us nothing. Treated us lovely - breakfast, dinner and tea - and he took us everywhere. He took us out to Bradford: that was ten mile out. We went out there in one day - I forget the other place where we went to.

I was staying there one ... I had the pass given to me to go on furlough for twelve days, like to London or any part you were going. They were a green pass, they were; about that big.

About six inches across?

Yeah, about that.

Do you remember what kind of work Mr Cummins did?

No. Food controller, I think; he had something to do with the food or rations. I forget now - he had some good job . They had a beautiful home. He'd never married, but he had his niece there housekeeping, and a cook. He was a comfortable man. I was writing to him, telling him I was coming over. But it never eventuated; I never went there. He'd be dead now many years.

You met some French people too, didn't you, in France?

Yeah. They were good. I started to learn French; could count up to 100 with them; knew a lot of words. They were good. I've forgotten their name. It was hard to understand one another: she couldn't talk English and I couldn't talk French, but we got on well together - she and her mother.

There were just the two of them in the house, were there?

Yeah.

The woman and the mother. The husband was in the army, was he?

Yes.

And they were very poor?

I don't know whether he was in the army or not, to tell you the truth. His name was never mentioned, to tell you the truth.

You used to take them coal, didn't you?

Coal, yeah. Cart it down from the school when I was there - take it down - treat them to coal - I don't know how many lots of coal I gave them. Oh, they had nothing - no. Bare beds - no carpets on the floors - nothing.

What would you do when you went to see them?

I never had a meal with them, but they were very good. I never drank then, in the army. I used to give my rum rations away. Never drank till I came home about twenty-eight years later.

I was going to ask you about Bullecourt today. You told me, when I was talking with you before, that when you started to come back from Bullecourt, from the trenches, to get back to the Battalion, you came across a wounded man in one of the shell holes.

That's right.

And he'd been wounded in the arm, hadn't he?

Yeah.

What was that story again? What happened then?

I helped him back to the Red Cross - ambulance. It was about eleven hours getting across that territory, jumping from shell hole to shell hole. That was a mix-up that was - by gee it was. One platoon - I don't know whether it was 13th or 14th Platoon - no 15th Platoon. We only had four come back out of sixty: only four came back. The rest were killed or wounded, or prisoners of war. They came in from behind us: they had secret saps. It's a wonder we didn't notice them - they came in from behind us. They had it both ways. That was on 11 April 1917. That's the biggest 'wipe' the 4th Division ever had.

How did you get across with the Battalion that day?

I got over with them alright. I had a lot of trouble, you know, dodging about. First of all the captain, he got killed, and the other captain too. Two of our captains got killed in D Company. They got killed going across. By jeez, there were a lot of casualties in our ... there were a lot in my platoon too.

You went to the first line ...

Yeah.

... and you stayed there, didn't you?

Stayed there, yeah. I came back after. A lot were pinched as prisoners: a lot of our blokes got pinched as prisoners. They didn't get me though, although I often wished while I was there that they did.

Why?

I wouldn't have had to fight any more. We had some more heavy fighting after 11 April 1917 we did. Take all the xxx in 1918, when we did that advance. They started on 4th July - no ...

August.

No. They gave us xxx before we had the August one. We hopped over: I had to have my gun, of course. We advanced to the second line, to the Reserves - march xxx get ambushed. We had very few casualties. That was 4th July.

Well then, we come out of there, I think, and then on 8th August we did the hop over six kilometres.

The wounded man that you wound at Bullecourt: what happened then?

God knows what happened to him, I wouldn't know.

When you found him what was he doing? He was in a shell hole, wasn't he?

In a shell hole, poor fellow. Could be there - could have got wounded and then come back again - you wouldn't have known.

He was hit in the arm?

Yeah. I bandaged him up too. I was never frightened, isn't that funny. Hop over: I got nervous going over the top, but once I got going a yard or two you could hear the bullets flying across you from their machine-guns xxx xxx. I think on 4th July we only had three or four casualties in the whole platoon.

What was it like at Bullecourt with the bullets flying across?

Oh God above - I hated talking about it.

I came back from Ypres.

You went to Pozieres first, didn't you?

Pozieres was the 7th and 8th August. We stayed there for ten days. We were only there for forty-eight hours and they relieved us then, for the night. Then we come back in again for another ... It was a terrible place. How a man never got knocked there, I don't know - or got killed. That was a shocking place. Half the time our rations never got to us. They were killed going up with them. We were right near the cemetery. That was a shocking place. I don't know where they got all the shells from - the Germans - but by gee, they were good with that artillery. They put the wind up me a fair bit at times. You were sitting in the trenches there - especially in supports. You'd get supports xxx. It wasn't so bad in the front line: the supports were there if you used to get it. I hated supports.

There were some Germans who were surrounded at Pozieres?

Yeah.

Would they be cut off or something?

Yeah, five of them.

What were they like?

Alright - they were good.

(Deteriorating quality of recording)

At Bullecourt you helped this wounded man back, did you?

Yeah.

We started to use the tanks then; the first time they used them. They only got to no-man's-land, and got no further. They were no good, but in 1918, by jeez, they were good then. The one we went in front with was called the Mudhook. They cleared everything out of the way for us - we had no worries. They got

rid of the Huns with the tanks. We hardly had a casualty - got a few later - I can see us marching now.

What about the estaminets in the French villages?

Oh yeah.

What were they like?

Alright - they were all poor people - all sorts of houses, mud huts, brick and cement houses. They were all poor people in the north of France. We were in the north of France where all the poor people and peasants were. In Amiens - it was barricaded up there. You couldn't go into certain parts there. They wouldn't let you go anywhere. It was out of bounds - much of it.

Did you do any souvenir hunting in France?

Never troubled me. I often went through our own fellows taking discs off them - off their necks. I never offered any money, or anything like that.

I was meaning more the French; like in the villages.

I left them alone; they had nothing. You could buy tinned meat and so on, in the villages, anything you could find to eat. In Amiens you could buy nice stuff there. But the villages didn't have anything much. I didn't see a damned decent house there, to tell you the truth. They kept you away from the towns as much as they could I reckon. I know some of them were in France and never went to Amiens at all - never seen it - never went there.

What about Albert? Did you go there?

We camped there. They had an angel up on top. She was hit with a shell.

Did you go into the Cathedral?

Yeah, went through with them, the one at Amiens: that was beautiful. That was all sandbagged up.

You went inside that, did you?

Yeah. Oh yeah, went inside them towns xxx. That was wonderful. Amiens is a big place. It was the capital of northern France.

What were the French farmers like?

Well, to tell you the truth, I never noticed many - I didn't take any notice. As I said, there were just the peasants there. I don't know what they were living on, what farms they had there. As I say, they kept us away as much as they could from the little towns and villages. I never noticed any wheat growing. There would be some parts where some of the Aussies went were the farms were, but I never seen any farms.

A few have told me about the farmers and the farm houses and the animals, and that kind of thing. They used to see them in the billets, of course.

Yeah, that's right. I suppose I saw them but I've forgotten about it. I saw as much as I could. I went down to Rouen once. That's where Joan of Arc ... they had the big charger there, on her horse.

A big statue.

A big statue of her - a copper one. That's at Rouen. I had a good look at that. But very few I know went about much. How I got there I don't know.

I was going to ask you about the time in France, during the winter, when you were in a hut, and it was hit by a shell. What was that story?

Well, I was asleep - it was two or three o'clock in the morning. It hit the top end, and I was down the bottom end. It killed three or four up that end - not too many. That's was all. Only four or five casualties - some got killed straight out. My blanket went up a bit.

Blew off you?

Boom! - when that shell xxx, that round one.

A nissan hut?

Yeah.

It blew your blanket off you did it?

The concussion of it, you see. It knocked half of the hut rotten. Yet there were only three or four casualties. Down our end no-one got hurt. I forget how many was there. I finished sleeping then.

You went back to sleep?

Stayed there - curled up into a floor joint - there was nowhere to go outside. That was called Melbourne camp - Sydney Camp, Melbourne Camp, Perth Camp.

Were they good, those places, to stay in?

Yeah, they were good. They'd been in enemy lines though, some of them. Oh yeah, the enemy had them one time - the Germans.

And they had a stove in them I suppose?

Yeah; all coal they used; never seen any wood. I got a lot of coal from the Aussies, at different places.

Marlene was one name - girl - Marleen. Some name like that. That was the one that was really good to me. That's the one I

used to take the coal to.

What kind of things did she do for you? What did you do with her?

Just at her place, her and her mother. I'd go there and talk of an evening, when I was out of the line. That all happened when I was at the school for three months. That's where I used to go every night; that's how I met her. After that I left and I never seen any more of her. But she was good to me that girl. Made a cup of ... Nothing on the floors. I used to take them coal and take them a lot of coffee. Take them over lots of things they could have - potatoes - take anything. It was all free. Doing someone a good turn.

Which story was that one, when you were on guard?

I can't think now; I got jammed up there xxx. Got jammed up by the xxx.

What was the aftermath of the Bullecourt attack like? That night, after the Bullecourt attack, when you got back to the Battalion, and the next week or so: what was that like?

We come out of the line then.

What was the feeling amongst the men?

Some of the men were pretty high - it never worried me much - it worried the heads more than anything else. Oh well, it worried a lot of us I suppose, to a certain extent. Oh, it was a terrible turnout that. They were lucky to get out of that scrape. Yet up at Ypres we hardly had a casualty. That was a nice village, a nice big town. Poperinghe - I was coming back to xxx at Poperinghe.

END OF TAPE SIX - SIDE A

(TAPE SIX - SIDE B IS BLANK)

TAPE SEVEN - SIDE A

(Very bad quality recording)

What is your birth date?

15th January 1896.

Do you remember when you were in xxx and you saw the riots on Good Friday?

I got that tattoo.

You got that tattoo?

Yes.

What was it?

A heart.

You got that tattooed in Cairo?

Yes, xxx. We all had one. I had another tattoo. I had it taken off before I got home.

When the riots started, what happened?

In Cairo?

Yes.

That happened on a Good Friday. It was shocking. All the brothels, burnt them down. Firemen came along and they cut the hoses so they couldn't put the water on.

How big was the crowd?

Hundreds.

And they were all Australian and English troops?

Yeah, all Australian and English troops. But it was a bad problem: there were a lot of people getting venereal disease. I never touched any woman like that to tell you the truth - it never worried me.

I've got a list of questions related to the stories that you have told me before.

What did you do at the Wazzar? Did you take part in the riot at all?

No.

You just watched it?

I just stood there and watched it.

And the fire brigade came.

And they xxx the hoses - cut the hoses.

What were the police doing?

I don't know, to tell you the truth. The police couldn't do much good - big crowd there - military police and that.

Where did you get your tattoo done?

In the Wazzar - xxx xxx.

They set fire to the buildings, didn't they?

Oh yeah. xxx xxx - stone and concrete - all kinds of... No

weatherboard I don't think.

What happened after that? What was the result of it?

I don't know. They stopped leave.

They stopped your leave, did they?

Oh yeah.

I was going to ask you about when you were wounded on Gallipoli. You were hit by a shell, weren't you?

Hit with a bit of shell, yes. And I've still got the bit of shell.

That's a dreadful piece of shell, isn't it?

I got that on 23 June 1915. xxx xxx.

They got that out of you? Where did that hit you?

xxx.

It hit you on the back of your right leg.

Yeah, on the right leg.

What were you doing when it hit you?

I was on the beach when it happened.

(Inaudible)

I can understand you keeping that.

Christmas 1915.

I was at sea when that happened.

'Heartiest greetings to the 14th xxx Battalion from the citizens of St Kilda. Boys, we are very proud of you.' Where did you receive that from?

xxx.

You were on Lemnos when you got the Christmas billies, weren't you? Do you remember the Christmas billies that you had after Gallipoli?

Yeah. We was on Lemnos was we?

I think you were. You may have been back in Egypt.

I thought it was Tel-el-Kebîr.

You may have been at Tel-el-Kebîr.

I think xxx. I'm sure two companies went to Lemnos, and two come to Cairo or Serapeum or somewhere.

When you were wounded you were on a working party on the beach, weren't you?

Yeah, on a working party - and maybe it was a good job too - diving in and getting all the tucker - bacon and raspberry jam. All officer's stuff. It was about ten o'clock at night; I was about the only one that could swim properly. You used to have to dive down about twelve feet, and come up again with something in my hand or in my mouth.

When you were unloading this material off the jetty - it was for the officers, wasn't it?

All for officers.

And you were throwing some of it into the sea?

Yeah; diving to bring it up. Oh yeah, xxx.

And there were about ten of you, were there?

Yeah; that covered it. Some of them couldn't swim a stroke. xxx dive and all. And they used to shell us in and out there too. Used to shell us from Beachy Bill.

Were those shells really dangerous? Was it dangerous unloading stores?

Oh yes, he got a few. He got me and got a few of us - killed a few. Killed half a dozen there, I guess, to tell you the truth. We were out of the company.

You were doing that for about a fortnight, were you?

A fortnight, yes.

Where did you learn to swim?

Here in Bendigo.

Where would you go swimming here?

At the baths, in [Bath] Lane. Oh, there were good baths there - six foot - good pool - concreted. Oh yes, that was up to date - a penny to go in if you were of school age - a penny or twopence.

You didn't go swimming in any of the rivers?

I swam in the Suez Canal dozens of times. Yes, I swam in the Somme River.

What about here in Bendigo, when you were a boy? Did you go swimming in the rivers here?

No.

You were round at Axedale, weren't you?

Yes. I think I swam in - xxx from bad feet. xxx xxx. They'd have a quid. A nice fellow xxx xxx - you'd like them. He's a gentleman.

I was going to ask you about the bugle. You joined the Battalion as a bugler, didn't you?

That's right.

Well, what was the story there? You found it difficult to join, didn't you?

Yeah; I was too small or something; I was only seventeen years and nine months, you see. I got into the 14th as a bugler - and I couldn't blow a note.

Who told you to join as a bugler?

Myself. I said, 'I'll get in' - they didn't want me, you see - you're too young for the 14th - but I got in.

You said that you'd be a bugler, did you?

Yeah. But as soon as Gallipoli came up, that was the end of the bugle, and I never blew the bugle any more.

Did your parents know that you were joining the army at that point?

My father was dead, and I forged my mother's signature.

What did she say when she found out you joined?

No, she never growled or nothing - didn't xxx. She was a patriotic woman, my mother was - oh, very patriotic. She xxx xxx Australian, of course. xxx xxx now. Well over 130.

You had to get a consent because you were under age, so you forged your mother's signature on the certificate.

Yes, on the certificate.

You went for a march into Melbourne, didn't you, when you were in Broadmeadows?

Yeah, a long march. We come back by train though.

Did you march all the way in?

All the way in from Broadmeadows, right into Flinders Street, right into the city.

That was as a route march?

That was a route march. That was when Dick Courtney was xxx. He'd be dead and gone now for years.

The Howard girls showed me a photograph taken of the 14th Battalion men from Bendigo that was taken on the steps of the Town Hall. Do you remember that?

No.

You're in it.

Am I?

Yes, we can see you in it.

I suppose I was in it.

What happened when you first landed at Gallipoli? Where were you sent from the beach?

I landed up there in water.

Up to your knees in water?

Mm. xxx to the left - that's towards what they call our direct gully, just before that - and the hill was that steep too.

Eighty or ninety degrees. Did you land during the daylight, or in the dark?

Mine was coming in the light, in the morning - first thing in the morning. Two companies landed first, and two companies after, on the 14th.

What were the food and the water provisions like on Gallipoli? Was it difficult to get water on Gallipoli?

Only for the first couple of days. They sunk holes down and got the water, all down Shrapnel Gully. That's what they called the valley; Shrapnel Gully. It was xxx in pumps at the bottom, and we xxx at the top, in their xxx at Courtney's Post. And we were there for six weeks. I used to go down to the beach and bring up water - fill up our bottles.

You'd fill up your water bottles?

There were three or four fellows killed too, coming up, by snipers. Oh yeah, killed three or four of us: not me, thank God; I'm still here.

The sniping was very bad, wasn't it?

Shocking. I saw General what's his name got killed: I saw him killed right in here.

General Bridges?

Bridges was it?

I think it might have been.

I forget now; but he died. I seen that happen, and I was about from here to that xxx.

What was he doing?

Walking; going up the trenches, I think.

How deep would the trenches have been at Courtney's Post?

Oh, we dug them down about six foot. Oh yeah, keep your head down - six foot. I was only from here to that corner - walking.

From the troops?

From the troops, yeah. That's at Courtney's Post.

Did you have to do any of the night patrols?

No, to tell you the truth; I don't think I did. There might have been one or two, but I forget now.

What do you remember about the May attacks, on 18 May when the Turks came over?

18 and 19 May we stayed in the trenches, but we weren't allowed to look over. No, not allowed to look. Some were beating up all the Turks because they charged us on May xxx, and our machine-guns just wiped them down. I can see it happening now - then the armistice came, 24 May. They made us come down the other end xxx - got to look at it, but I never. I never seen them carting in any of them.

This is during the armistice?

Yeah, armistice on the 24th.

Why weren't you allowed to look over the top?

Of the trenches?

Yes.

Oh well, it's only for your own safety.

So you didn't get shot?

xxx every morning there was two or three brought out dead - they'd get xxx. I kept my head down. I was up there of a night time and had a look around: you had to keep your eyes open then. I was there for six weeks - go down to the beach, every day nearly - walk down and bring back the water for the boys.

That was your job, was it?

Yeah. Six of us; six buglers. Eight buglers.

That's right, eight buglers.

Eight buglers, and six got killed. I think there's one still living, like me, named Bobby - he's in Melbourne somewhere - I forget his other name. He could be dead now; I haven't seen him for years.

You had a friend called Frank Evans, didn't you?

Yeah; he got killed.

He was killed at Pozieres, wasn't he?

He got killed in Pozieres on 8 August. He was the same age as me.

What was the tunnelling like? They were always making these tunnels, weren't they?

Yeah, underneath, you see. We had engineers doing that; we xxx to do that. Engineers, they did all that. Some of them they used to blow up. Whether they did or not, I don't know. xxx xxx. When I come back I got xxx xxx to relieve Courtney's post, back at the end of May.

That's right. 23 June is when you were wounded.

We went down on xxx Gully, and then onto the beach, just where xxx xxx rations for the officers.

There were two fellows killed next to you, weren't there - Bill Day and Snowy Walker?

Bill Day and Snowy Walker - they both got killed.

What happened then?

Standing up - and I've got my head down - standing up I reckon. It ran right through there, and the other one right through there.

Through the centre of his forehead ...

Right in the centre there; blew the top of his head off. And the other one got in there and blew it all over there - Bill Day. I warned them too: I said, 'Keep your head down'. He said, 'They're shooting' - I said, 'They're not doing any harm'. But they did have a look, and by jeez, they xxx xxx. They were trained infantrymen, xxx xxx. They were good soldiers. The Turks, they could snipe.

Bill Day was hit in the right side of the head - just above the eye?

Yeah.

It would make a terrible mess, the bullet.

Yeah, oh yeah - push everything in front of it - xxx push back in - .303.

And that was at Courtney's Post?

Courtney's Post.

When were Bill Day and Snowy Walker killed? Was that May?

In May - about 18 or 19 May.

Where did they come from? Do you know their background?

Yeah. One fellow come from ... the most remarkable thing. I was up from the xxx and I had to keep a place there one night. And there's a photo there, and it's a soldier's photo. And I said, 'Excuse me, is his name Day?'. He said, 'Yes, he's my brother'. I said, 'Well, I seen him get killed'.

And where did Snowy Walker come from?

I don't know - from the country somewhere. He'd be dead now, Snowy, of course.

He was shot, wasn't he?

Yeah.

Did you ever do any sniping?

No.

What happened in the May attacks? Did you get much warning about the Turks attacking?

We did the attacking on 8 August. We did the attacking and went around to Suvla Bay.

That's right. I was meaning in May, when the Turks attacked on the 18th. Did you get much warning about that attack?

No, not much warning. They come over; the machine-guns got them. They were about from here to your car away from me.

About twenty yards - thirty yards.

That's where they all got it.

That's about as close as they got, was it?

Mm.

And you were firing at them too, of course.

Oh yeah. I often think that if I killed many of them I'd xxx xxx murder xxx - killing people.

What about the navy at Gallipoli? They had the big ships, didn't they, back in the Dardanelles?

Oh yeah - Queen Elizabeth - because she was a queen. She was a big thing. Oh yes, they had big battleships there, and cruisers, and destroyers. See, they used that xxx: they were going to shell them with that. They didn't. The infantry landed; they landed before me, the 3rd Brigade. The 3rd Brigade was the first crowd to land, and we were the last brigade to land. They made a lot of mistakes in that landing.

You also told me that on one occasion a shell came over and landed between Albert Jacka's legs.

Yeah. That was a xxx. Where was it? - round on the left xxx there. Yeah, it landed right in here.

Between his legs.

Yeah.

He was just sitting on the ground, was he?

Yeah. He was a pretty good soldier, Jacka. He was only thirty-five when he died.

Was it a big shell?

No, I don't think it was a big shell; it was just an ordinary one. It could have been an 18-pounder.

It didn't explode?

It didn't explode.

Did you see that happen?

Yes, saw that with my own eyes.

Where were you living? You had a dugout, didn't you?

Mm. In the trenches you lived. I had a dugout down when we were in ...

Rest Gully?

Rest Gully. After that we had xxx xxx, and then in dugouts we made.

Did you ever see any aeroplanes?

Only one or two; that's all that come over. I can't remember any more. They used to drop xxx down.

What for?

I don't know - I never seen any. I know they dropped xxx down,

or something.

What happened on 8 August when you had to attack Hill 971? What happened during the Suvla Bay attack? What do you remember about that?

xxx xxx - we had to come around from the left. Oh, we charged - charged in daylight. That's was on 8 August 1915. Yes, I remember that one; we nearly wiped out 6th Reinforcements. They all had xxx, just joined them up, and they all had brand new uniforms on; and they seemed to pick them out and kill them. That was a big mistake. The xxx were safe to give us a hand - I can't think of his name.

Stockton.

That's it.

Did you go swimming out off the beach much?

Yeah, dozens of times. I used to love swimming. It was the only way you could get a bath.

Birdwood used to go swimming, didn't he?

He used to go swimming. I can see him now, General Birdwood - see him going in now.

That should never have happened, you know; that was only a waste of 8,000 Australians getting killed there, and it did no good.

On Gallipoli?

Yeah.

END OF TAPE SEVEN - SIDE A

START OF TAPE SEVEN - SIDE B

You used to take donkeys into Cairo, didn't you?

Ride them in, yeah - five or ten piastres. Had half a dozen rides.

I wanted to ask you about Bullecourt.

Hell of a place that. xxx xxx. Smoky air, Smokey Farm. Flers - Pozieres - Smokey Farm. I forget them all now.

When you were trying to get out of Bullecourt, trying to get back to the Australian lines, you were telling me that you found an Australian in a shell hole who had been wounded in the arm.

Wounded in the arm, so I helped him out.

What did you do?

It was about 400 yards - I'll never forget that. All I had to do was help him get there, and I bandaged him and got him back to the Red Cross.

He'd been hit in the arm, hadn't he?

Yeah, in the arm.

And you bandaged him up ...

Oh yeah.

... and helped him to get back?

Yeah. We were hours getting back too.

You'd have to crawl all the way.

Yeah, crawling all the way, in shell holes and every other thing. It's marvellous what you can do in youth. I'd never be able to do part of it now. Youth is everything.

What was your attitude to promotion? You were a private, weren't you?

I was a Number One Machine-gunner - never got xxx, no.

Did you ever want to get a promotion?

No. I just let me stay as a Number One. It didn't worry me. Jacka didn't worry me. None of them worried me. I just had my two or three men. Two or three even got killed at times, and you'd loose a machine-gun.

You went to a school, didn't you?

Anzac Corps School; went through the school there.

Where was that?

Up at [Avelor] near Albert.

What did they get you doing at that school? What was the training like?

Pretty solid. Oh yeah, pretty solid training there; they had instructors and all.

Did you have dysentery or any other illnesses on Gallipoli?

Had a touch of dysentery, yes - not bad though. I seen them coming - oh blood xxx. You'd have xxx blowing in a second - the flies xxx xxx. It was awful. I wonder what happened to [Bear], our colonel. Does anyone ever talk about him?

I don't know what happened to him. You used to have lice

too, didn't you?

Oh lousy, yeah - very bad. I caught them when I was here in Broadmeadows. I got them before I left here, and I had them all the time I was away, virtually, till I went on leave xxx - at Horseferry Road.

What about the billets? What were the billets like in France?

Oh shocking, some of them - rats running over you, and every other damn thing. You'd clean it out and have all fresh straw to lay there in, and pig sties, or anything we got into in some of those billets.

Once when you were in one of the Nissen huts ... You were in a camp in one of the steel huts and a shell hit the end of it.

In the bell huts. Did I tell you about the xxx wounded and killed half of them? That's near Flers, up there on the Somme. Yes, killed three or four men and wounded the other men, right at the top end of it - Nissen xxx huts. I see some of them down here at the ordinance - round curves.

Where were you?

I was up the other end.

You were asleep?

Yeah.

Did you suffer from frostbite during that winter?

In the feet, yes, I did; and I still suffer with them. Yes, my feet are very sensitive. They were crook there xxx we had there in France 1916, '17 and '18.

What was it like? What would happen?

They'd swell up. They used to give you whale oil to rub in them. But I didn't have it that badly, not like some of them; but it left my feet crook.

What happened with some of the other men with frostbitten feet?

They'd evacuate them if they had bad feet.

Your feet would really swell up inside your boots, would they?

Oh yeah. I had an eight instead of a six.

You were a six when you went away ...

Yeah.

... and you changed to an eight.

Yeah. You could see my feet walking around before you could see me.

You were telling me, on one occasion, that there was a man - a soldier you met - who wanted you to shoot him in the hand. He didn't want to go up to the front line.

Oh, he wanted to shoot himself. That's the chap got a sandbag around it - wanted me to shoot him. xxx xxx, you should see it now. I said it's all over because it was 8 August 1918. We marched about six miles to go over then on 8 August. I was in 8 August 1915, 8 August 1916, 8 August 1917, and 8 August 1918. I was in all the Augusts.

You also spent a night in the Amiens gaol, didn't you? What happened then?

I forget now. I got out xxx.

Did you ever play much two-up?

Yeah, played a bit of it. Well, every time there was a game I'd be there. I'll never forget, one time when the first leave came, I was overdrawn in my pay book, and I had a pass to London. And I went in to the pay officer in Horseferry Road - fellow named Ryan. I think he's still kicking around here now. He was a paymaster. He wouldn't give me a penny because I was overdrawn. He said it wouldn't do my job any good. So I come out of there and I strolled round the corner, to a pub there in Horseferry Road, and a fellow said to me, 'Want to sell anything?'. Well, he lent me five quid.

He was in the same battalion?

Yeah, same battalion. He's still going. He could be dead now; I haven't seen him for a few years.

Where did he come from?

Somewhere around [Chooka] - somewhere round that way. He could be dead now.

You were also blown up and buried by a shell at Pozieres, weren't you?

Oh yeah. That's that bit of shell that I showed you.

No, I mean at Pozieres. You were blown up by a shell - buried - weren't you?

Yeah, blown up, yeah.

You came back to Australia on leave in 1914, didn't you?

All of us, in 1914, got six months leave of absence to come

home here, (before the war started).

How did you feel about getting 1914 leave?

Good-oh. Yeah, one of the few. War was declared when we got to Colombo. Armistice was signed 11 November.

What did you do when Armistice was signed? You were in Colombo when they signed the Armistice.

Oh, we just stayed on the boat. They wouldn't let us have any leave.

Into Colombo?

Yeah.

(Break in interview)

Your brother and sister were born at the Brian Boru. I thought it was Brian's Brew, but it's Brian Boru - B-O-R-U, out on the McIvor Road. Why was it called Brian Boru, do you know?

That's an Irish name, isn't it? Oh yeah, it's the name of a town in Ireland, Brian Boru.

There were three of you were there?

Mm.

Two in the army and one in the navy?

Mm.

Who was in the army?

And they are dead. Reg was in the army - he's dead - he's younger than me. He's been dead a year or two - three years now.

What battalion was he in?

7th.

What was the other one?

He was in the navy - I forget what ship - chief petty officer.

What was his Christian name?

Jack - John.

Was he older than you?

No, he was younger: I'm the eldest. My two sisters, they were older than me, and I was the eldest of three boys.

What were your sister's names?

Rene and Lou.

They used to have these khamsins in Egypt, didn't they - the desert sand storms.

Fifty days a khamsin - (counts in Arabic).

What's that.

That's one, two, three, four. I used to be able to talk a bit of French when I was there, you know; understand them a bit. I was there for two and a half years.

What were the khamsins like? What would you do when the khamsins blew?

When they blew there was always the dust - the sand. It was supposed to blow for fifty days. My God, we were at Tel-el-Kebîr then - no, Serapeum. We used to walk a mile down to the Suez Canal and have a swim every day.

What would you do during the sand storms?

You might just have to close your eyes, of course. We'd be in the tent, you see - blow - blow. It wouldn't last more than two or three days: I never seen one that lasted fifty days. I had about six months in Egypt, I suppose. That was from December 1915 till June 1916 - till we went to France. We were camped at Tel-el-Kebîr.

What was it like there? What was the camp like down there?

Only tents - sand and tents.

Did you ever find anything in the sand? Some of them used to find old weapons.

I never; I never found any.

What was it like swimming in the Suez Canal?

Good.

How far across would it have been?

I'm just trying to think. I suppose it would have been 100 yards in some places - must be. I forget now. Takes big ships through. I only swam half way across it. I don't suppose it would be 100 yards: it could be 80 to 100 yards. It's hard to say. Oh yes, it takes big ships through.

You used to go on guard duty, didn't you?

Yeah.

Once, at Broadmeadows, you went to sleep on guard duty.

I did, yeah.

What happened then?

Oh, he chipped me.

The officer did?

He didn't report me. Stand up and went to sleep.

You went to sleep standing up?

Yeah.

That was at Broadmeadows?

Yeah, Broadmeadows. Going over on the ship I saw a lot of that, on guard duty. xxx hours xxx sometimes, some of that guard duty. We used to do four hours on and eight off. Them four hours was like a year, just standing there guarding. It was awful.

You weren't allowed to move anywhere?

No. Just standing and stopping anyone from going there. On the ship that was. I'm just trying to think of the ships I sailed on.

You went over on the Ulysses, I think.

Yeah, that's the one we went away to Egypt on.

You went on the Transylvania across to France.

Yeah. Went on the Transylvania across to Gallipoli.

To Marseilles, I think - to France.

To France, yeah; that's right. I had a bad xxx at Marseilles. It was a shocking joint there - big place. Only marched through it.

END OF TAPE SEVEN - SIDE B

10/93