ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

TITLE: IVOR JONES – POW, BURMA-THAILAND RAILWAY, SECOND WOLRLD WAR

INTERVIEWEE: IVOR JONES

INTERVIEWER: DR JOHN MITCHELL

SUMMARY:

DATE RECORDED: MAY, 1990

RECORDING LOCATION: MELBOURNE

ACCESSION NUMBER: S01405

TRANSCRIBER: SUSAN SOAMES

TRANCRIPTION DATE: APRIL 1991

START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A

> Identification: An interview with Flight Sergeant Ivor Jones. The first two tapes were recorded in December, 1989, and the third and fourth tapes in May, 1990, both in Melbourne. The interviewer is Doctor John Mitchell.

My story in this instance starts with being drafted into ... well not drafted, but I think we chose to be members of the Dunlop Thousand which were chosen from many units in - Australian units - in an camp called Makasura in Java. We were a little bit different, we were a group of Australian aircrew, who served in RAF squadrons in Malaya and we asked to be transferred to Australian Commander. And we probably chose the best or we did choose the best possible and that was Weary Dunlop or Sir Edward Dunlop, I should say, but I think I'll refer to him as Weary because we always do.

We started off from Java. We entrained at Batavia in early January in 1943, then down to the docks and to an old freighter. It was an Australian freighter that the Japs had probably bought for scrap iron I think and we were boarded there 600 to a hold and off we went to Singapore. It was fairly uneventful except it was terribly crowded with one latrine for nearly a thousand men, just an old latrine at the back of the ship. You had to start off early in the morning and just keep in the queue all day.

We arrived in Singapore and then out to Changi and we were there for ten days. This group, now know as or was called Dunlop Force or Dunlop Thousand, was unique inasmuch as it was the only group of POWs to be sent up the railway commanded by a medical officer. And this did cause some trouble in Changi where the commander there, Colonel or I think he might have been acting Brigadier Callaghan or ... I think that was his name; Black Jack he was referred to. He wanted to take Weary away from the command of that Dunlop Thousand and put a military officer in charge which Weary stopped that smartly because he had a special warrant from Brigadier Blackburn, who was in charge of the Australians in Java, saying that he was to command this thousand men. And that was it, fortunately for us.

Now, in our group we had four wonderful medical officers, now I'm one of the majority of POWs who think that the Australian medical officers were certainly outstanding amongst all the other nationalities - the Dutch, American, British. The Australian medicos were - and I'm not being biased - they were more caring; they were skilful; they adapted themselves far better to the conditions than the majority of the other nations. Of our officers, they were absolutely outstanding. Without them we would have been completely annihilated. However, we had Major Arthur Moon, Ewan Corlette and Tim Godlee. Tim Godlee was the medical officer of the 2/3rd Machine Gunners. And both Arthur Moon and Ewan Corlette were part of the 2/2nd Casualty Clearing Station, who came to Java and had set up a hospital in Java. They had previously been on the waterfront at Tobruk. So we were very, very fortunate in having these wonderful medical officers. If you went all over the world and tried to get four together, it would be pretty impossible task and having such a leader as Weary, whose objective always was the men under his command, he was a very, very compassionate man, a wonderful surgeon and a wonderful leader. We were very fortunate that we had a man who cared so much for his fellow men. And under him were three other doctors of the same breed.

We moved up to the railway after ten days in Changi, which we thought was a home from home. They had uniforms, they had all sorts of things. The food at that time was pretty good and we thought, 'Well, this looks pretty good'. But, however, we entrained at Singapore, in cattle trucks. I think it was thirty or thirty-five to a cattle truck and we were five days on the road up to Thailand. I might say at that stage, most of the thousand men, thousand-odd, were reasonably fit. They had been chosen in Java, anyone that had the usual beri-beri and all those problems - dysentery - they certainly weren't picked to go. And so we started off as reasonably fit blokes. When I say fit for the ... we wouldn't have passed as A1 but we could walk and we could do a bit of work.

So, we went in cattle trucks for, I think, four or five days, which was a pretty hairy sort of a trip. You couldn't go to sleep; you couldn't lie down; you just had to take it in turns to put your head on someone's shoulder and have a sleep. Imagine the latrine facilities. They'd stopped the train and all the blokes would get out and you'd see scattered all over the place and then the Japs'd say, 'Start the train', and you'd see them rush onto the train. It was absolutely the shape of things to come. The food arrangements were pretty basic. All in all it wasn't a very very good trip.

But we eventually arrived at Ban Pong, and we then fortunately got into trucks to drive us up the ... they had already started the rail from Ban Pong and I think we ... I think it went as far at that stage as Tamarkan ...

The other side. But, anyway, keep going.

... the other side, yeah. So, we were fortunate in this respect that most of the parties after us, you know, they started off in A Force, B Force, I think they went up the Burma side of the railway. C Force, I'm not sure where that went. D Force was Dunlop Force and there were other parts of it too that weren't in the Dunlop Thousand but they were grouped around our area. So, the following groups had to march and that was shocking. We used ... they used to march for our camp at Hintok and the poor devils, in lots of cases it was the wet season, but something like 300 kilometre march and shocking conditions, very little food. So by the time they got, for instance F Force, by the time F Force got to their destination they were in pretty bad shape anyhow. And they had the biggest losses on the lines, percentagewise but that's just a matter in passing. So, we were fortunate that we did get driven in trucks up to our destination. We did camp a couple of nights on the way up at various camps. And the people there, they were English troops, and they seem to be pretty well organised, like, you know, down towards the Ban Pong area. They'd been there for some time and they seemed to be in pretty good condition.

Then we went to ... up ... followed the river and our first camp was at Konyu, known as the Konyu River Camp. And we started to build huts. We didn't have any, we just slept on the ground whatever way we could and we started to build huts. And it was there in that camp that we saw the medical skills of Weary Dunlop and his team because a namesake of mine, Jones, Private Jones, he had ... what happens when appendix, you know, breaks, and what's the word? Peritonitis, he got peritonitis and they operated in the jungle, made a bamboo - no cover - they made a bamboo table and they operated in the jungle, at night, because it must have been pretty urgent, and the Japs did provide one of those lights, gas lights, but we had fires all round to light up the area and I think there was a mosquito net to sort of

cover, to try and keep the mosquitos out. And they operated. We were all there. It was right in the jungle. We weren't allowed close of course, but we were there waiting. Anyhow, they operated on Private Jones and he came through with flying colours. I don't know where he is today but ... That was our first example of the skills and dedication of the doctors and again the orderlies. The medical orderlies from 2nd CCS, they were a very devoted band. A lot of them were - some of them were ministers of religion or training - a lot of them were out of the Church of Christ. They would train ... some had been trained I think and others were in training and they were very ... oh, the work they put in was amazing. And the whole of the CCS were very, very lucky, having them in our group. It was ... I don't know, it was just an act of providence.

So, we arrived at Konyu River and I was telling you about the operation. Well, we were busy building huts and we thought this was going to be it and all of a sudden, everything changed. We had to start and haul our stuff up the mountain to the - what they called a road - then we could get all our stuff up to Hintok, what is known as Hintok Road Camp. The Japs had found out where we were wasn't the right spot. There had been survey pegs, I think we actually found them, but the German's had used in about 1910. They were asked to survey ... do a survey about a railway then but they ... even the Germans said 'No, it's impossible, the loss of life and the conditions would make it impossible to do it'. So that was a long time ago.

And we arrived at Hintok, and a party had gone up a couple of weeks earlier - part of our party - and they had started to build huts. But we used leaky old tents which we put up and I know you were allowed a metre, that was your space, and that was your living space for the rest of the three and a half years, that metre. But we came up to Hintok, and it was in the dry weather and everything was ... set up camp, even to a little hospital in the gulch, which we ended up I think we called it Cholera Gulch wass the medical area. And the people we had, we were very fortunate also in having a couple of very good officers in Major Wearne and Major Woods, they were very, very ... of the officers, they were, you know, outstanding. And the hygiene, the water supply, everything ... healthwise the Australians were so far ahead of anyone else. For instance, the latrines, which are very important, they dug latrines and then sort of encased them in bamboo and made little areas to sit on and have a bamboo flap, whereas the British and others, they just have an open sort of pit. But ours ... still you didn't keep the blowflies out, probably kept them in, but it was certainly 100 per cent better than some of the camps. The water supply, they found a spring and then they did a reticulation job in bamboo and brought it from the spring and into the camp area and they just put a plug in it and we were able - coming in from working on the railway, in the heat you felt terrible - pull out a plug and have a shower, which was really something. And apparently the water was all right because we drank the water. They must have checked it because we did ... we had, in that camp, we had drinking water, which was really something, that, you know, obviously wasn't, at that stage, wasn't infected.

But all in all the first month we settled in. We worked out on the railway each day, working long hours, but the speedo period hadn't started and we worked in gangs, drilling into rock and blasting and clearing and building embankments. And for the first - as you probably would read in Weary's diaries - the first few months, it was quite a time before we lost anyone. And this went on. We weren't getting enough food; the health was deteriorating because of the lack of vitamins. You had beri-beri, you know, pellagra and the worst of the lot was the ... what as known as Changi balls, you know, where your ... the scrotum would

be raw. And if they get eggs, the eggs used to come up by river, and there was a fund that the officers were paid, they were paid by the Japs, and Weary made compulsory payment by the officers into a fund and anyone else that had money, so that they could purchase duck eggs, because it's amazing what happened if you ... even if you had three or four duck eggs and you had this beri-beri and pellagra and all that it would start of clear up. I then of course the supply would go again and you'd get an onset. But there was the usual cases of dysentery, malaria was pretty rife, but they seemed to be able to cope with the medical side and with the expertise we had our losses were minimal until the speedo started. Then they'd send sick out to work, they were absolutely horrific conditions and our boots, our footwear had run out and we were mostly had trench feet. I, at one stage, the only part with skin on were the heels and used to sort of come in, walk in on your heels with sticks. And I can remember no matter what time you got back from work ... you know, it took a long time at times because of the slowness of your travel, also the fact you working long hours - about sixteen hours a day - and there'd always be someone there. It would be Weary, sitting on the log waiting, and he wouldn't go to be until the last man was in. And I know we had Condy's crystals - someone had some Condy's crystals - so you'd put your feet in Condy's crystals till they went brown and if they really bad they'd try and get you on the heavy sick, what is known as the heavy sick. But mostly they were so demanding that eventually they had to give away a little and they had to send men out that, you know, weren't ... certainly weren't fit for work.

But all through this the medical part of the camp was amazing. But, again, due to the leadership of Weary, he fought the Japs every day, he tried to get medical supplies. There was a pool of medical supplies at Tarsau, but I think it was pretty hard to get a reasonable share. It was under British administration down there and he really had to fight like hell just to get very, very little, you know, too late. But by sheer ... his sheer personality and striving, he'd go down to Tarsau and bring it back in a pack, you know, he did everything possible. He tried to get extra money for ... to buy eggs and other stuff, a bit of ... We had a pea called Katjang Idjoe, it was like a pigeon pea to look at, but apparently Weary found out about it and it was very nourishing. And when we could get those, we had that in our rice ... I don't know the spelling of it, Katjang Idjoe.

I don't know that one, well not by that name anyway.

No, it was a pea and very ... you know, it was hard but when it was cooked it softened up and it did help an awful lot. See this is where our losses in Dunlop Force, were probably the lightest on the river, even though we did get cholera but compared with some of the other groups, the percentage was a lot lower. And this I feel, was due to the ... there were other skilful doctors, there were wonderful doctors, the F Force doctor in charge, can't think now, but he was a remarkable man ... again he was the ... he sort of took over command of F Force because the officers in charge were so weak, I mean I've got to be careful, I'd say, but they were because I know this from ... Alec Kelly will tell you, he'll tell you all about F Force, which is a very important one. And ...

That was an RAF doctor, was it, Ivor?

No, no it was an Australian Army doctor, Major ... I'll check it after. Anyway, getting back to our own people. It was the efficiency ... I suppose I'd learnt a lot too, to cope. Just imagine on the waterfront at Tobruk they'd have to be pretty versatile, wouldn't they? But they

were and they improvised. We had a very, very good dentist. Well you know Jock Clark and, again, he was - not only as a dentist but as a general - he did everything and he ... he carted stuff up the mountain; he did hygiene, he dug latrines; you name it, and Jock was there. Again, see we were ... I should have mentioned that earlier because we wouldn't have a got better bloke than having Jock in the unit.

I'm glad you've raised that about Jock. I was going to ask you later.

He had a little peddle machine, you know, with a drill and at that early stages he was able to do some dental work. When the speedo came on of course, every ... it was the only people left in the camp weren't fit to be treated for dental problems. So, we're coming now to the speedo part of it where - this happened in the monsoon and it was just - they had to get this rail through in a certain time and they were going to do it. Didn't cost ... they said it didn't ... they weren't worried about how many men died. And this was where Dunlop and the medical officers and the medical orderlies absolutely did things beyond the call of any man's duty. And also they had volunteers working in the cholera tents. One of my mates, Stan Woodlands - he got a MID, he was one of our squadron - he volunteered and he worked in the cholera area.

But this was a time when deaths were occurring every day. You'd hear the last post, you know, it got very emotional, even though in the state you were, you were sort of numbed. You worked and you came in and you'd pushed your food down and you flopped and you got up again next morning and you struggled out there. And this happened day in and day out. And it was a case it got very, very close at stages where you didn't care whether you lived or died but if something happened you'd sort of ... your mates'd have a go at you or say, you know, 'Don't drop your bundle', 'Pull your finger out', and that's when mateship stood out; it was amazing really. And no man ever died alone, he always had his mates or a couple of mates with him holding his hand or giving ... consoling him in some way.

So, when the cholera stuck us, it was pretty ... it was pretty horrific. I know I was in hospital with ... in hospital in a tent, with malaria and it was a pretty bad attack and one night the bloke on one side of me started to vomit and they carted him out. He was dead by morning: it was cholera. And the next night the bloke on the other side did the same thing and Ewan Corlette came the next morning and he said, 'No, you're not right yet,' he said, 'but get the hell out of here'. And out I went. So, this's how lucky you can be, you know. All you'd do you had to touch something and brush it against your mouth and you were gone. And that was like a nightmare, really, that whole time. It's sort of ... it's a black area still, it was just ... impossible.

We had a British RAF group just over the creek from us and there were about 500 there, and by the time they left two months later, there were about 200. They just died like flies. They were badly officered, I don't know ... we weren't allowed to go near them because they were in a different group. We couldn't help them and some of them were from our squadron, you know, RAF ground staff. And that was terrible. You'd go out in the morning, you'd see them ... they weren't even buried, they'd just be lying in the mud. But the difference between leadership and discipline and having officers, doctors who cared about the men under their command. Didn't always happen, but in ... with Australian, as I said, to begin with Australian doctors, their record is amazing. So, whether it's ... I've often wondered you know, all the universities overseas and Australians go overseas, don't they, to

better themselves in their skills but the ordinary run-of-the-mill Australian doctors were just outstanding.

> Well, that's good to hear, Ivor. And you were saying of course that intensity during the speedo, now how about once the line was completed? How did you get on then?

Yeah. Well, the line was completed I think, in our section, about October. And by that time the blokes were ... there were a few of them that were still on their feet and could walk but a lot of them were just absolutely done. And the Japs then started to send boat loads down to Tarsau. Tarsau acted as a staging camp and a sort of a hospital camp. I was sent down there, I had amoebic dysentery, and I think I went down in about October, I've got to think now. And we got down to Tarsau, it wasn't a very well run camp at that stage. It was partly Australian, partly British but mostly British. The morale was pretty low, the hospital wards were, you know, not as clean as they could be, it's very hard to keep a bamboo hut clean, but they weren't the best. And then - it shows you how morale can lift - word came round, 'Weary's coming down', 'Weary's coming down to take over'. And it spread round the camp like wildfire. And he arrived and my God, inside a couple of days, he goes through the wards every morning, check 'em out and they had to be cleaned, the kitchen smartened up, the diets - everything - everything that he'd done in a jungle camp, he implemented in this so-called hospital camp. And his administration, that's where we saw his genius as an administrator too because it was a big area and he was able to get things in order and fight the - I could use the word Poms - but he did, he had to fight them to get some sense of order. And I know because I volunteered - then I had amoebic - to work in the wards. Because they did, they needed volunteers, they were short and that's where I started my career as an orderly.

> Was this before the speedo, was it?

No, this was after the speedo.

> It was after it.

I'd actually had amoebic, which was sort of quietened down and there was no Emetine or anything at that stage, so you couldn't be cured, you just had to watch it. If you were lucky, you lived, if you had it badly, well it was pretty hard to survive. So, I saw a lot then of the efficiency side of Weary. You know, he's so quiet and, well, he's gentle really; he can be very fiery too if he's fighting for something. But I saw the transformation under one man, what can happen to a camp, you know, to a camp. And not only that what I'd ... at another camp, I think it was Tamuang, the same thing happened there. All of a sudden, it was just like a wind rustling through, 'Weary Dunlop's coming'. And it happened in two camps that I was actually at and I didn't go down to the Nakom Patom but apparently he and Sir Albert Coates between them made that into ... as efficient as it could be under the circumstances.

But there you are, see, two Australians again who were chosen to do this job and someone must have acknowledged - well, I'll use the word - his greatness to put him in charge over their own people. Has that gone xxx.

> No, that's fine. Do you want a breather?

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A

START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B

Continuing on Tarsau, it was there I was diagnosed as EH Positive, I think it was called, for amoebic dysentery. But I worked there as an orderly, became ... actually I was a ward master there at one stage, I got elevated to ... But Tarsau, really was wonderful after the ... after being through the speedo period, where it was, like I said before, it was like a nightmare, the latter part of it and to be at Tarsau, to have a little bit of peace and quiet and although it was working, it was totally different. And it did enable us to sort of gather a bit of strength. We had a concert party there, which I was a part of and we had some very good concerts and, you know, it was very enjoyable.

I remember at one stage, there was a rat plague - this is before Weary came down - and of course they were very scared of bubonic plague, because there had been some cases of it further up the river. Weary came and he organised a rat catching squad and God the rats. They pulled up boards, they chased them, they didn't have any dogs but I've never seen so many rats caught in such a short time but it helped to ease the situation. So, Tarsau was, for me anyhow, I worked part time in a .. first time I'd ever got into a kitchen, you know, that was as a cook's offsider I think, but I did work for a part time as an offsider in the kitchen and I think that helped me to build up a bit because you did get a little bit extra food. Then we moved down to Tamuang. Every place you moved onto ... oh, it was going to be so much better, you know, it was more or less a palatial camp and you were going to enjoy it, it was different. Anyhow, we did go down. We went down by train and ... or river, I can't remember now, it's shocking. And we did go to this camp and there were new huts and there was this big hospital camp and I was in charge of a ward, the night duty, for a while. And as a matter of fact, I had Syd Sanders as a patient, in the ward I was in. I can remember Syd being a patient, he wasn't very well either.

But Tamuang was probably the best camp we were in as POWs because it was obviously a transit camp for working parties going back up the river to do maintenance work. And the parties from Japan were sent from there. If you had anything wrong, amoebic dysentery or anything like that, or cholera, if you'd had that you were out, they just gave you a backhander and said, you know, 'Stay where you are'. But it was a camp that you did get a chance again to sort of gather strength. We all were ... the ones that did survive, were able to ... well, they were in better health. Well, I wouldn't say good health but certainly better health. And I remember at that stage in Tamuang, they took all the officers away and sent them to a camp ... it was getting to ... this was 19 ... probably late 1944 and I think the Japs, I think by that time the war in Europe was, you know, had certainly gone our way and the Japs were probably getting a bit scared. But also I think, that's when they formulated the idea of that they'd eliminate us, as if the troops came through Burma they were going to gradually wipe out the POWs as they came through Burma. And I think they were going to land on the coast of Malaya, I think that was the part of the plan too, the 14th Army, that's right, under Slim.

But there again, Tamuang was ... it was ... I've sort of almost pleasant memories, you know, you don't have many pleasant memories. I remember we had a quartet party there, we weren't allowed to sing, so we used to get down as far away as we could to the perimeter of

the camp and quietly rehearse but doing pianissimo, it was good news because we probably learnt better that way. You know, we had concerts there and we had ... Weary had gone down to Nakon Patom but we had quite good doctors there. I remember I worked with a ... I think he was Portuguese, something like Pavillard or something?

Yes, there's a similar name to that he wrote.

I was thinking of Pavlova, that's the way I can remember it. But he was writing a thesis on amoebic dysentery and I was in his ward and I had to help him you know with the ... And he had artists there painting the different, you know, ... what do you call it? The different types of ...

The ulcers was it?

No, no the ... what do you call it? The faeces; the actual motions, the actual bowel motions, painting them, the different colours and at one stage we actually had Emetine and I was giving Emetine injections. We used to put it in a spoon and heat it over a flame and put it in the what's her name and give the injection, so there were a few, quite a few that recovered from amoebic, in that place. But he was an interesting character, and then gradually the sick had been moved down to Nakon Patom and it became just an ordinary transit camp and there were too many orderlies so I had a job on the water point, on a well, winding up the well and handing out ... rationing water out. So that was a good steady job.

And then ... but it was ... it gave you a chance to have a breather. You know, if we'd have gone on like we had on the railway in the speedo time, I don't think there'd have been anyone left, it was just ... No human body could have stood it, it would have to be the real tough and lucky ones. There ... I'm just trying to ... I remember in that camp, the Japs had an idea of breeding ducks. So they got a lot of young ducks and they gave so many ducks to each hut. The officers were there at the time, and they were mostly Indian Army officers and they hadn't done any work, you know, at all, they just sat around and played cards. And so the Japs gave them these ducks to look after and of course every night there was a tenko and the Japs would come along and the bloke in charge of the hut ... so many men and he had to say so many ducks ... and they didn't worry about if there's one bloke missing but if there's a duck missing. This tiger, they called him the tiger, he was a Jap Warrant Officer, ooh, he was a ... he was a brute. Used to come around on his bike and if they say, you know, 'Tenko', you know, they have to say in Japanese, how many men. 'How many ducks?', and let's say there'd be a couple missing and the bloke'd get a belting. And anyway I think all the ducks eventually died of pneumonia so we ... the Japs had visions of eating well, you know, on duck but ....

Did you eat the duck once it died?

But knowing POWs they'd have to be very quick to get their share. That's just one of the funny incidents, But ... Tamuang, then Ewan Corlette came to me and said, 'There's a party going out up the line', it was up, I think, North of Bangkok, a place called Nakon Naiyek. And he said, 'We haven't got any of the regular medical orderlies to go or a doctor, will you take over as the medical orderly?'. So there was about, I don't know, a couple of hundred men and we took off, we went by train to one side of the river at Bangkok because the bridge had been bombed. By this time the B29's and Liberators were bombing, you know, Bangkok

and regularly at Tamuang we used to see them going down in droves, you know, they'd see where they'd bomb and the back aid come and I remember Colonel Harvey, Bill Harvey, have you heard his name?

Yes, he was with the British.

The British, a nice bloke, a hell of a good bloke. He came over and he said, 'Oh, Ivor gee, he'll know a bit, he'll know what sort of planes they are'. And he came over and said. 'Do you know what planes ...' I said, 'No, sir, the most modern we ever saw were nothing like that'. And then they came right over, there was a Jap camp not far away, and they came right round over that camp, circled it, machine gunned it, but most have known about our camp because we didn't cop any machine gun. When the boys did hear planes coming, you could hear them from ... as soon as they'd get overhead, especially at night time, you'd hear just a great noise and the hut would be cleared and in a matter of seconds they'd just shoot straight out the back the bed, through the attap and they'd be away doing about a hundred yards dash in nine seconds. But their nerves by that time were pretty ragged.

But getting back to ... I was saying that there were parties being sent out on work parties to various places. There was a work party going out to dig tunnels in the - ammunition tunnels - in the hills for a Japanese division, at a place called Nakon Naiyek and the party going there didn't have a medical orderly or a doctor and Major Corlette asked me would I go and act as medical orderly till we got to the camp and there would be a doctor there of course.

Well, there were about 200 in the party and we were about ten days on the road getting to the other camp. And on the way at Bangkok the bridge had been bombed across the river and I remember we had to go across the river in barges. And we eventually were then billeted down on the wharfs in godowns, which are warehouses. And we did have some sick, some of them had got malaria, so we had to make up a temporary sick bay in this big godown. But that afternoon there was a hell of a commotion. The Japs start running everywhere and we could hear planes coming, you could hear them in the distance. And then we heard bombs dropping. But the Japs would not let us out of the godown and we could hear the bombs coming down, they do a pattern bombing, you could hear the bombs gradually coming right along the waterfront and the Japs eventually opened the doors and we ran over the road where there was a clearing. And we just got over the fence and onto the clear ground when the bombs dropped and instead of dropping on the godown where we'd been perfectly safe, they dropped all around us and we lost about five or six men were killed in that bombing. And one chap lost his leg and the Jap's did operate on him and bandaged the leg up and sent him back to us, so we had to look after him from them on to the Nakon Naiyek. But he was a terrific lad, he just ... he didn't complain and eventually we were about halfway through the march and they did take him by truck, the Japs did concede and take him by truck to the camp and when we got there he was in the hospital or the sick bay. But it was quite an eventful trip because the bombing sort of made everyone very jumpy and the Japs were ... well they panicked on the slightest noise and we were ... the last part of the journey, we had to march about fifty kilometres in the night. We marched at night, marched right through the night and part of the morning. And we eventually got to the Nakon Naiyek, oh I think, about midday, after marching all through the night and then half the day. So we were pretty exhausted when we got there because we weren't in the best of nick but we were very pleased to see the camp and we did get a feed of rice and I think we might have even got something extra, I don't know, but we were very glad to see

this camp. And it was in charge ... all the officers had gone to other camps, they'd all been segregated and we had a young warrant officer in charge of us. He was a school teacher and he was very good, very strong, one of the best officers that we'd struck. He stood up to the Japs; he was a pretty good type. I'd love to have you know, met him again because he really tried his heart out you know, to make things right for us.

Now, that was an interesting camp, it was in a paddy field, there was no water, so we had to dig wells in the paddy field. And we had to drink the water out of the paddy fields. Now, I often wonder, I think that's where we all got our hook worm because we had nothing else to drink. We did have a doctor, who came from up near Shepparton. Anderson, I think, Doctor Anderson and he was quite good. He had ... as again he was an ordinary, I think he was a regimental doctor, one of the unit doctors but he was very good. And it wasn't a bad camp really, I think, by that time the Japs must have realised that, you know, the war was ... the end was getting close. But we still had to dig this great big ditch around the camp and we knew what it was all about and they had machine guns posted around us and in the area there was lots of Japanese units, even cavalry units. And our work was to ... I know at one stage we were digging a well and we just had to go down like a mine shaft, no ... it was just straight dirt and rock. And rock and to get the rocks up, you had to tie the rock on a bit of rope and you had an area, oh to move about ...oh, I suppose a metre and a half, and they'd pull the rock up, just by hand and you stood underneath it. Of course if it the rock dropped, you'd just been crushed to death, too bad but that was the method they had of digging it. But we had a reasonably good Jap guard and believe it or not, we thought it was a good job, so that's how your values can be not very good judgment at times.

And then I was in charge of a squad, we were digging tunnels in the hill for ammunition to be dumped there. But looking at that camp, on the medical side, we didn't lose many men by that stage. I suppose that having survived the railway they were getting pretty toughened and there was quite a lot of malaria. But I don't ... I think there might have been three or four deaths in a period of six months. So, the health possibly wasn't getting any better but it wasn't getting any worse. I think their bodies had become accustomed to the diet and probably all the wogs they had, the fact they were drinking that water must have been our body had been conditioned to all sorts of wogs, I don't know.

And how many in that camp, Ivor, roughly?

Oh, roughly, about three or four hundred, I suppose. But we were there ... we even had one Jap who let us swim in a dam but we're stupid, fancy swimming in native dams and things like that. I suppose we got to the stage after over three years, we just didn't think. But I think of the survivors when we got home, I think the rate of hook worm, I don't know whether you've heard of it but what the percentage was, but it must have been very high. Because there were hook worm clinics out at the old Caulfield Hospital and you had to go there and get like doses of ... dry cleaning fluid, that's what it tasted like and salts. But that's by the way but that's were you ... hook worm I suppose you'd get through your mouth and then they used to get up through your feet. And what we ate and what we drank there, it doesn't bare thinking about. But we were working ... medically as I said, in that place, there was some pretty sick blokes there, but the actual death rate wasn't very high.

But we went out to work one day and we got half way along the road, a few miles along the road and all of a sudden we were turned back, we had to march back. When we got back,

there were flags everywhere around the camp. Blokes had been hidden flags, there was an Air Force flag hanging - been made, you know, been made up - and we just couldn't believe it, we just couldn't believe it, it was shock. And it was over and we had then the Yanks sent over a transport plane with a couple Yanks parachuted into our camp, through the huts, armed to the teeth. And they sort of took over and then they dropped parachutes with food and ... it was funny eating even tinned food, you know, good food, we'd been eating ... only meat we'd got there was a bit of buffalo meat, which is like leather. But there ... and we found out we couldn't eat very much, our stomachs were ... shrunken, just couldn't take it. And we were there, I think, for three or four weeks before they pulled us out. Because it was a fair way a way from Bangkok and I suppose they had to get transport and ... But the Yanks offered to take all the Australians home but the Australian Government or the Army said, 'Oh no, we'll do it ourselves'. Well, the Yanks were home in America before we even left that camp. But you know, this is the pride or ...

Pretty disappointing to look back to that?

Mmm.

Disappointing to think about that ...

Yes. But the highlight there also was ... oh, one highlight, we had a latrine. We were in a paddy field and the paddy fields used to get flooded, the Thais would flood them, you know, for sowing the rice crop. And we had the latrine was all built up, instead of digging down, which if you dug down it was just water, and so it was built up. And they flooded the paddy fields all right and flooded the latrine and all the latrines and all the rubbish and everything came through ... we were sitting about the height of that table watching this stream of stuff go through the huts. See there again, you know, it's a wonder we didn't get typhoid and God knows what. Oh, I know, we'd been immunised, hadn't we for typhoid?

And then another time the ... I can remember that and there was a crowd of British in the next hut, off the HMAS Prince of Wales, and they saw the funny side. They were sitting and watching all this stuff go through - shit and what's a name - and they were singing 'Sons of the Sea', I'll never forget that as long as I live. I thought, what a beautiful sense of humour.

So, then the next thing, a few days later, Lady Mountbatten arrived in a jeep with about six ghurkhas, all on her own. And she drove into the camp and there was ... the whole camp was deserted, and she said ... just a few running around and she said, 'Well, where are all the boys, I mean that you've all been sick but I've never seen a camp so deserted, where are they all? In the huts?' And the camp commander said, 'Yes, Lady, they're not all sick but they just haven't got any clothes, they've only got lap-laps, you know, they're a bit shy about coming out'. She said, 'For heaven's sake, I'm a woman of the world. Tell them to come out'. Well, they streamed out of the huts onto the parade ground and gave her a great reception. She was a wonderful person.

Ivor, you mentioned about being a ward master, at one stage, now where was that and perhaps tell me a bit more about that?

Oh, for a while at Tarsau, and then I'd retained my exalted rank when I got down to Tamuang and then I lost it when the patients began to either go down to Nakon Patom or, you know, got better. That's when I became OC of the well.

> And how about your duties as ward master? What did you actually, can you remember?

Yeah, well you had to record all the patients, what they had. You went around with the doctor and took you know, when you say treatment, well there was ... gave the best treatment you could and ... in the amoebic dysentery ward, well, there was a lot of extra there because the doctor Pavillard or whatever he was, he was doing this thesis, he was fair dinkum. And ...

> He has written a book about his experiences, you know the book do you?

No, I haven't.

> Oh, I must get it to you.

Mmm, yeah. The biggest problem was the tenko at night and morning you had to stand outside and read out the figures. Now in dysentery, you know, someone had gone out for a .. gone to the loo, you learnt to xxx bother. The Jap'd check, you know, and they say, 'Ichi, ni' counting in Japanese, you had to count in Japanese and you'd be all right, you know, you'd probably counted yourself in, you know, to make up for somebody missing and all of a sudden they'd have xxx and you'd one too many and there'd be a hell of a row. But you always counted yourself first and then if necessary counted yourself last too to make for any leeway. That was a quite interesting. As a matter of fact at one stage, I said there was an English doctor, he was a champion runner, a miler, - very nice bloke - and I said something about, you know, 'I'd love to do medicine but I'm too much of a dim whit and I haven't been educated enough', and said, 'No, never mind about that'. And he sat down and he started to go through a few things and he was all out ... all out for me sort of having a go but ... but at my age of life and standard of education it would have been an impossibility.

However, it was interesting and you felt that you were ... you know, you were doing something. A lot of the time the patients they were ... their state of mind wasn't so hot, you know, a lot of them had dropped their bundle, I suppose, and you did try to do your best to ... to the best of your ability. That's where you saw physicians like Ewan Corlette, you'd watch him examine a patient, there was no take it to the lab and get an X-ray or get a test or what's her name, it used to fascinate me. He'd go right over the body, you know, tapping and all of a sudden he'd say, 'That's so and so, do this, do that, do ...'. And I suppose they had to go right back to the old basic principles of ... what would you say, the old country doctors had to do when they had no facilities.

Now is there anything else that you ... from there of course, we just went to Bangkok and home. But I think on the medical side or the psychological side, when we did get home, ... okay, we saw our people and they had so much food there that you couldn't eat it anyhow, but after a while you felt, I know a lot felt this too, we can't stand this we've got to go and see the blokes. We had to go and ring up one of our mates and go and see them, it just got too much.

People didn't understand I suppose. I don't suppose we knew what it was all about. But we did seek the company of our own blokes and we've been doing it for over forty years. I think the wives have had a special problem in this area that they've, in lots of cases, they've had to take second place to our POW mates. Now that sounds a bit crazy but I think they're only become conditioned in their later years. It must have been very frustrating when we were first married to all of a sudden wanting to go to reunion, wanting to go out and see the blokes and ... not that there was anything wrong in it, it was just that it became a stage it ... you had to go and see them. Now, I can't give any explanation for it but it just happened and it's been happening ever since. The most enjoyment that the people we still like to see most are our POW mates.

Well, certainly after such an experience, no-one could share it with you except those who'd been through it, that's well understandable.

See, that's where Weary ... people have said to me, 'Oh, Weary Dunlop, you're almost make a God out of him', you know, but there were other doctors who did just as good a job as Weary. Well I always say, 'Well, yeah that's right, for sure he did a magnificent job there but not only that, it's what he's done in the forty years plus since that's the big facto. He has not let up ... not only working for POWs but working for the whole community'. You know being into Third World countries and taking a surgical team to Vietnam and all these things. It's been an ongoing situation for him and it's till ongoing now. It's amazing, he doesn't stop, he ... I bet you if the POW group of three or four POWs and their wives at Nyall West, they wanted him to go up and talk, he'd go up.

Getting back to medical, as I've said before, the outstanding performance, certainly of officers, was the medicos were that far in front that it doesn't matter; they were terrific. Not running down officers but most ... there was some very good officers too but I suppose the doctors because of the situation, would call on all their skills and all their patience and all their dedication to do a job, which they did. But see most of the officers were grouped, they were grouped together, they weren't with the blokes, they didn't have to work on the railway or anything and see it wouldn't test their capacity to help the blokes because they were in a situation where, well, okay, we're here and they're there.

But with the doctors it was certainly a challenge which they took up and also I think men like Dunlop and Coates and Hunt and Hobbs set an example for other doctors. There might have been doctors who probably left on their own wouldn't have risen so much but they saw the example and also probably got a little bit of a nudge along the way and they performed. Well, that's my interpretation of it anyhow.

There's truth in that.

Also, the training - I'm only saying this naturally as a layman - in the universities in Australia must have been pretty good to produce such good doctors. You know, they were - I don't know - more earthy, more compassionate. I think they resented any one of their blokes dying, they took it to heart. Whereas a lot of the British, some of them were Army doctors, and I don't think some of them had read a book since they joined the Army, a medical book. It was just, you know, they used to walk around very regimental carrying sticks under their

arm and all this jazz but as far as doctors concerned I suppose you took away Aspros they'd be buggered.

But getting back also, I suppose, we talked about the doctors, now the medical orderlies, you know, the professionally ones, that we had right along the job, they were terrific too. They did fantastic things.

And they were predominantly 2CCS, I think you said?

Yeah, with us, yes. But later on we got blokes from other units. When we went down to Tarsau and then Tamuang and around we got and all of them were the same, you know, high standard. They might have looked rough and tough some of them but they knew how to treat patients and they were very, very good. No, we've got the highest regard ... that's why I think, POWs generally have got this very deep regard and respect for the medical profession. Sometimes, now ... this is ... they might get a young bloke, who's just new and they'll say, 'Nothing like the blokes we had'. You know, they sort of make comparisons and it must be difficult for these young blokes who are just coming out and ... to be compared with the old brigade who they've so high regard for. Now is there any other while I'm ...

Well, would you like to make it a break for another time Ivor? You've probably run out of time and energy.

Yes, all right.

You've done a long job today. Well, thanks very much, Ivor. We're not far from the end of the tape anyway.

Right.

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B

START OF TAPE TWO - SIDE A

Identification: ... interview with Flight Sergeant Ivor Jones. The interviewer is Doctor John Mitchell.

It's rather interesting on Colonel Coates being of an old Ballarat/Mount Pleasant boy and his family lived in the same street as we did. His father was the superintendent at our Sunday School. They were a very, very brilliant family; the whole family were just so brilliant that, you know, it was just out of this world. And you already know the story of when he did his medical degree, don't you?

Yes.

Yes, so, I won't ... it was just in passing. Just to say that he knew our family, we knew the Coates and he was a very, very famous Ballarat bloke. Major Hazelton was, I think he was the SMO at Tarsau when we went down there, that's before Weary arrived on the scene. And he was in charge of the hospital down there and I had dysentery, which they diagnosed it as EH++, that's amoebic dysentery, isn't it? I can remember the words strongyloids in that

... I can remember that very, very clearly. But just in passing and I was eventually they asked for volunteers to work in the wards and seeing that I had amoebic dysentery, at that stage it wasn't sort of really serious, just a ... I'd had a bit of treatment and I volunteered to work in the wards and I learnt a lot of things. Eventually, for some unknown reason, it might have been me rank being a Sergeant, I was made a ward master and that's when I noticed a whole difference in the hospital when Weary Dunlop arrived on the scene. It was just amazing. He went through the wards and the supervision at that stage - whereas we thought it was all right - it wasn't up to his standard. He went right through every ward and, boy, did he make everyone smarten up and they were cleaned up. And there were rats there and he had a rat demolition squad and he just went through the camp. And of course it was run by the British and their hygiene wasn't as good as the Australian, it wasn't nearly up to the standards and he went through like a bushfire and smartened everyone up and the death rate there became less the short time he was there. He really just showed his ability as an administrator as well as a surgeon. He was a magnificent administrator. He seemed to be able to put his finger on all the things that were wrong and he smartened up that whole camp. That was at Tarsau. Because there was a big influx of very, very sick people coming down from F Force and upstream Dutch and British and Australian and they were in a shocking condition. We thought we were bad enough but we realised that Dunlop Force were very, very lucky in the doctors and the medical staff we had looking after us. So, that's just a point that on Hazelton. I found him a very competent and very easy bloke to get on with.

> Maybe if you could tell me a little bit more about Hazelton, if you would please, what he was like as a person?

He was a young bloke. Very ... you know, looked a bit like a film star. But he seemed to be, you know, to me he seemed to be very efficient, very reasonable bloke to get on with. You know, he was always ... you could always see him if you wanted to, if you could talk to him, which wasn't always the case with some officers. But, no, I found him a very, very pleasant bloke and I think he was doing a good job down there, he was under the British regime there so it wouldn't be the easiest job in the world.

Now, the other one I mentioned was it Phil Millard?

> Yes.

Yes, yeah. How I remember Captain Millard, he was near us, I think it could have been down Konyu, or one of those camps, there Hell Fire Pass because he was D Force. And I know the word got around very smartly about doctors. If they were good, you soon knew about it and he was one that came through with flying colours. He came ... he took Ewan Corlette's place or practice at Orange, so he couldn't have been there very long because he followed over pretty smartly, didn't he? He might have been one of the later reinforcements or something, I don't know. But the ... I've sort of not met him personally but sort of had contact with him a couple of times and he was terrific bloke; young and you know, enthusiastic and very, very ... like the majority of Australian doctors you, could talk to them. Some of the British doctors they wouldn't even ... some of those permanent army doctors, you couldn't even talk to them. They were running around dressed up like soldiers and I don't think they - I shouldn't say it - but I don't think they're very up to date in medical work. That's only my opinion, I think that other people had the same idea.

Now on the Dunlop Force doctors, Major Moon - Arthur Moon - of course, just having Dunlop was ... I don't know it's hard to explain. We were with a RAF Squadron in Java and we're with our squadron, and whilst we had quite a very good doctor, the adjutants and the RAAF administration officers didn't like Australians, and they were giving us a pain in the bloody neck because, you know, they weren't giving us a go. We got on all right with the flying blokes because we had been flying with them but there was a couple of adjutants, they were just a pain in the bum. So, when Dunlop arrived from ... into the camp at ... I'll think of it in a minute, he arrived with troops from the Middle East 3rd Machine Gunners, 2/2nd Pioneers, 105 Transport and some engineers and of course his own CCS almost in tact. So, they went up to the railway as a unit, you know, he had all his top CCS blokes who had been in Tobruk. So they were very experienced and we were very lucky having Weary Dunlop, the other doctors, Arthur Moon, Ewan Corlette and Tim Godlee was MO of the 2/3rd Machine Gunners. And Jock Clarke had been in Tobruk and he was a terrific bloke, not only as a dentist but as a man and he could virtually turn his hand to anything. And it became apparent when we went up to Hintok. He was ... he worked his guts out actually, old Jock.

So, Tim Godlee, he left us at Konyu. He took a party mainly of 2/40th Tasmanians, and people from ... they were from Timor. He took that party further up the line with another ... no, he wasn't another medical bloke, Tim was the only medical bloke. So, Tim left us early in the piece. We came over from Java, he was with us right up to Konyu, and then he took off and I didn't strike him again till Tamuang when we struck him again there. He was always the same fatherly, you know, typical pre-war G.P., you know, who, again, he was like a father to all the blokes, he was a good bloke, and a good doctor.

Corlette was superb, so was Arthur Moon. And Jock Clarke, besides being a good dentist, he didn't have much to work with. He did have a little ... he had a foot driven drill and he used to do ... he did some fillings up there in the time possibly prior to the speedo, when there was a little bit more time but when speedo was there, there was very, very little time for any dental work, to my knowledge. Although what he did, he was, I don't know, he was terrific. But I think he had a pretty good general knowledge of medicine too because I think he helped in lots of ways, especially when the cholera came. Anyhow he'd be able to enlarge on that.

So, our own doctors were, well, I think if you ... at the time you'd looked all over the world and say, 'I want four doctors', you couldn't have got four better doctors to handle that situation. That's just how lucky we were. And our casualties were a lot less than most of them on the railway. We had a ... it wasn't because we had an easy section, because it was pretty hard, all the cuttings. It was just the work of the doctors and the orderlies.

Now, going through the other ones, Vic Brand, I only know - since the war I met him - because he was the first doctor I had after the war when I went to live at Bentley. He had a practice down off North Road. He was a great bloke, sympathetic, sort of ... I'd say a very compassionate man. Our squadron had a further interest in it in as much as when Vic was cornered with his wounded, in an ambulance, the Japs were between he and sort of getting out, you know, he couldn't get out of this pocket. I don't know the full story but I know he was trapped and in the end he had to release the brake of the ambulance and let it roll down a hill. Now, I just don't know the full story but our squadron dropped, the

Vildebeests, went out and dropped medical supplies to him. But there was a story that probably you'd read it in the history of the 2/29th they'd have it.

I've got it in the car. I'll get it later.

It was just a story, you know, it's nearly fifty years ago, but I know that he got an MC, and what he did was pretty good - terrific. Now, Major Andrews I met when we arrived at Nakon Naiyek, can't even spell it, Nakon, I suppose N ... Naiyek, Nakom Naiyek. He was the MO in charge of the camp. At that stage all our officers had been separated from us. I think this was part of the, in retrospect of the plan to eliminate the whole lot of us, you know, if the 14th Army came down from Burma. There's no doubt about it that they were going to ... as they came down they were going to progressively wipe us out. Because you know the story of the ... what do you call them? We had to dig the ...

The ditches?

The ditches, the ditches around the camps and they had machine guns mounted and the officers were, I would say, three or four kilometres away from us. We never saw them because they were pretty well kept to themselves. The Japs wouldn't let them communicate with us. And that's when they put that particular camp, Nakon Naiyek was ... the CO was a warrant officer, he did a magnificent job. I wish I knew his name, he should've ... I hope he got a decoration because he was good. Anyhow, Major Andrews was a doctor there, and he did a good job. He was as far as I can remember, you know, quite competent, with what few medical supplies he had, I don't think the casualty rate there was very high at all, I think we lost very few at Nakon Naiyek. And that's all I can remember, that he was like the I'd say ... I don't know, 99 per cent of Australian doctors; he was very ... he was compassionate and he was a good doctor.

But that was the time that from Tamuang, we didn't have any officers and apparently they were short of medical orderlies and properly trained ones because Major Corlette came to me and he said, 'Look, would you act ...' By that time down at Tamuang, I'd worked in the wards there for a few months but as more trained orderlies came down from the other parties, the blokes who'd been volunteered gradually got replaced. And he said, 'Would you go and act as medical orderly for this party?', which I did and I had a Red Cross band on. And the Jap in charge, on the - we went part of the way by rail - and he sat next to me and he started calling me 'Captain'. So, I thought, 'Well, I'm not going to argue the point with him'.

Take it when it's offered. (laughs)

So he thought I was a fair dinkum doctor. So, I had sick parades every night and I didn't lose any blokes from disease, you know, from malaria. There was one bloke I'd diagnosed as blackwater fever and it was right. And he got shunted off into a truck ahead of us and eventually got to the camp. But the tragic part was that down at ... they counted us down in the godowns on the docks and our own planes bombed us. And the Japs kept us in the godowns until the last minute and then we all had to go over the road and disperse, you know, at the side of the road and the bombs didn't hit the godowns but they hit the area we were in and we lost about four or five killed, and one bloke lost his leg. Now, the Japs amputated the leg and then sent him back so I had him for the rest of the journey. He was

terrific. Talk about the work stoicism, you know, that was personified. He was just a ... 'Cause you could write a book what I didn't know about amputations. We did the best we could and we'd marched I think for about ... I don't know, for about thirty miles I think and we had a few breaks, you know, we slept in a field, in a rice paddock at night. And I had two or three with dysentery, so I put the dysentery ones down that area. And then some with malaria and I had to work them out and I just used commonsense. Except we had a - I might have told you this story, I hope I haven't - a Dutchman, most of them ... a lot of them were a pain in the bum and he came, they said this Dutchman - this's while we were on the march - he was rolling his eyes round and carrying on like a two bob watch. So I thought he's ... guts and I told the Jap guards, you know, this man's very sick - [biyoki]. And eventually they took me into ... there's other Japs sort of on the other side of the road, they must have been sort of going there in like a column, and there was a Japanese doctor there who could speak English. Well, he gave me a very funny look, I said, 'This man's got appendicitis'. And I all I do, I wanted to get rid of him on a truck and so he gave me a bit of a look and he said, 'Righto, put him on the truck'. And off he went to the Nakon Naiyek, which was quite a few miles down the road and probably went under Andrews but it was quite an experience. And going up and down the line, I was singing songs, they're starting to flag a bit, so I was at the end of the column and I was singing the 'Legend of the Lost' and they'd all start singing. And I reckon I marched twice the distance because I was up and down the lines. You know, they'd call this someone down here, someone, 'Come on, Sergeant, someone here's crook'. It was quite an experience.

I think on your previous tape, you said it was a ten-day march or thereabouts?

Yeah, well we were on the ... yes, it took us ten days to get there, we weren't marching all the time of course. But we were partly by train, partly marched and, as I say, the only ones we lost was the by the bombing of our air force. And I often wondered what happened to that ... I haven't met the bloke that lost his leg. I sort of ... after it was all over he came down to Bangkok so, then I lost sight of him.

Ivor, can you judge what sort of operation these Japanese performed or remember how the person got on? How well it healed after?

Well, it apparently, from what he told me, they were very good, the doctors. Quite concerned and they apparently did a good job because he got back to camp before we did. We eventually got a truck ... we eventually had a truck that the very, you know, the biyoki blokes were put on the truck and they went forward with this other bloody Dutchman who put on act. I don't think there was much wrong with him. And apparently from what I can remember, what Major Andrews said that they'd done a good job, which after hearing some of my mates who also went on that trip on the party after us. We had to cross the river, the bridges had been bombed, and when we got to Bangkok we had to go over the river in barges. Now coming the other way apparently were wounded from up in Burma and they were just left lying there and so much so ... I've got a tape, my God I've got a tape. Yes, so Duncan Butler, who I'm sure I have a tape. Yes, the wounded, the Japanese wounded, apparently in this party, they were coming down from the battle area and Duncan said it was absolutely appalling. They were taken off the trucks and just left on the camping ground or what the ... not a camping ground, just the same area as our blokes in and they felt so sorry for them that they went around and the poor devils. They were just like anyone else wounded, they didn't have anything to eat, to drink; they weren't getting treatment.

And Duncan said it's the most appalling scene that he's ever seen, to see all these blokes who'd obviously been badly wounded and been taken days to come down in these open trucks and he said it was a shocking thing to see. But I will find that tape so that you can play it.

Now, yes going to back Hintok, as I mentioned before, we were very lucky in having almost the complete unit of the CCS with us and they also they were very, very highly trained, experienced orderlies and there was a big, quite a large percentage of ministers or trainee ministers. I know at least of three or four that were later ordained as Church of Christ Ministers. Or two of them I can remember as ... John Thomas, Des Tarrant, ... others I'd have to look up to find out and they were very, very good orderlies and they helped tremendously to get the result of the low lists of deaths as compared to ... not because there was quite a lot but in comparison to other camps, the death rate was much lower. And they were a big factor in achieving this.

Ivor, would some of those been conscientious objectors?

Yes, I would think so. Now, this mate of mine - who became a very close friend because later on we sang together - Duncan Butler, he was an ordained Church of Christ Minister, but he joined up as an ordinary Private in the Field Ambulance. He was on Timor, he was taken prisoner on Timor, and he eventually came up to Thailand on the same ship as we did, in a different hold. There was about 600 in a hold: we were in one hold and he was in the other with his party. And he was a medical orderly on the railway and he was at a Nakon Naiyek but by that time they had so many orderlies that a lot of them had to work out on the working parties. They'd probably take it turn about, you know, sort of working in the hospital. But it's rather interesting, when he came home he went back into the Ministry but he only stayed ... he couldn't come to terms with what he was doing as a minister and what had happened. There was so many things happened that he just couldn't work it out, so he went on the land eventually. He worked on the land and he had a pretty rough time but then he retired, he had a heart trouble. And I met him again up a Tathra, up near Merimbula and I was able to have ... about five years of wonderful ... I was to go up there for holidays and stay with him, it was wonderful to renew the acquaintanceship, he was a terrific bloke. But he didn't go to church but I noticed in his bedroom ... what do you call the thing you put the bible on? A lectern is it?

Yes.

Yes. And he must have read the bible every night. So, he just couldn't come to terms with the work of the church and the work of a Christian. That's my interpretation of it. He ... I went to his funeral in Canberra, and, oh, I've got the ... he wrote his own ... I'll let you have copies of it ...

Obituary?

Obituary. It's a magnificent thing really, I'll get it before I go and let you have it.

All right, thanks Ivor.

Good. Anyhow, that's just ... I don't know if that's of interest but it ... because it would just shows the change in people. And as he said to me, I quote his words, he said, 'You know, I'm glad I went through the experience'. He said, 'I walked with men'. And he said, 'I feel a better person by it'. I felt the same too. So, that's rather interesting isn't it to ...

Now, oh, getting back again to Hintok, the cholera where we saw then the skills of the medical officers and the medical orderlies. And also the volunteers from the other people who had no experience at all. One of our blokes, he was a wireless air gunner, trained with us in our squadron, a bloke, he volunteered to go down and work in the Cholera Gulch, that's where the cholera was.

This is Stan Woodlands?

Stan Woodlands, yeah. Stan Woodlands. And he got an MID for it. But there are instances of that happening, you know, people volunteering and doing jobs like Stan did. Stan died at a ... far too young. He was a terrific bloke but he had a rough time after the war. But a great little bloke; we were very proud of him. Then you know about the still at Hintok, for the distilled water so they could give the intravenous injections, which possibly would have been a factor in the recovery rate there I suppose of being able to have ... what's the word, the water? Not distilled ...

Sterile?

Sterile. Well as sterile near as possible. And it was interesting to see that going all day, all night.

I think Jock Clarke had a part in ...

Jock Clarke had a big part and Major Woods, Alan Woods, yeah. They maintained that. That's where Jock was terrific, he could do anything. And I know I had a couple times to one of our mates died, air force blokes, and we had to burn him. And I remember for Tom Young, trudging through the mud, the mud was ... Cholera Gulch, it was right in the wet and it was hard enough trying to get the thing to burn and I was walking through slush and mud and Tom said, 'You're worried you might tip him over'. Sort of it was so hard going, and that fire had to be kept going continually because the death rate there was pretty horrific. But that's where they were able to give these ... well, you could tell me this. Didn't you have to replace whatever was lost with the ... through the bowels and the mouth had to be replaced with a saline drip? That would be right, wouldn't it?

That's the idea, yes. That Cholera Gulch, that was near the river camp, wasn't it?

No, no, no. That was on the road camp.

On the road camp.

Yeah. No, just looking at this map you've given me, John. That's where the Cholera Gulch, just near the Crematorium, that's it. 'Cause we ... I had the ... I don't know, the ordeal of burning ... we had to burn the bodies and it was in the wet mud and it was called Cholera Gulch. It was a shocking place to have a ... it was just indescribable, the tents and, you

know, in the mud. But just looking at the map again, up through there where the tents were and the huts, those tents, I was right on the end tent. And they used to come through a fence to get their pap. Scotty Thomson had a point, what would you call it ... he sort of ... he used to ladle out the pap and they'd come through, get their pap and just go back and slide into the mud and arse over end they'd go and you'd hear the language, you've never heard anything like it. And they'd just have to hang around to see if there was anything when everyone else had been fed, if there was any pap left so they could get something to eat, otherwise they just went without.

Missed a meal?

Missed a meal, which was not so hot. No ...

How about Scotty's reaction?

Oh, poor old Scotty used to come in with arguments because they'd say, 'You didn't give me enough, you gave him more'. And by that time the tempers were getting a bit raw, that was during the speedo time. Yeah, that was up in that area. You could see Mount Hintok and the apes used to sort of swing through the trees up there, screaming and carrying on. And I can see it all now, the hills at the back. And it was up in that area that dear old Rocky McCale, knocked off a yak, the Thais were ... Oh, there's the cemetery there, good Lord, that's a job I had when I had dysentery. I trying to bury them up in the cemetery up in the rocks that was a ... But Rocky, the Thais were driving these cattle through, I suppose for meat for the Japs up country and Rocky said, 'You watch, I'll get one of those bastards'. And he did. Down went the yak, and inside five minutes there wasn't a skerrick of meat left and the Thais were running around in circles, the Japs were running around in circles. But we didn't know a thing and ... but I'd know because I had dysentery, and I got meat and went up in the what's her name and we found that little fire and we cooked meat and for me ... all it did was make the dysentery worse, it was stupid. But you can just imagine, haven't seen meat for donkey's years. So, that's the story.

But just getting back to the cholera that was an exercise, I think, you know, really, should go down in the history because of the results. I think 50 per cent recoveries which is amazing. They used to die of pneumonia, that's right isn't it? They might get over the cholera and then pneumonia would take over and then they'd died of pneumonia.

Secondly, yes, and they survive the first round, would you say xxx vicious. How about did you see treatment of cholera, the infusions?

I saw the intravenous needles. Now, I don't know whether needles ... in the end they might have been using bamboo needles?

Yes, they were ...

I've just got a feeling, yeah. I know that the needles we had were apparently pretty blunt. It was just a magnificent ... sort of ... the way they did it, the two factors, the doctors and the nursing orderlies who did the actual nursing. Now, what else was it? No, I saw ... getting back to cholera again, I can remember being in hospital with ... isn't it shocking?

Dysentery was it?

No, fever ...

Malaria?

Malaria. I can remember being in hospital with malaria and it was a pretty severe one because you didn't get into hospital unless it was knocking you around. And I can remember we were on slats in this tent, leaked like a sieve and, you know, mud and one night - I was only in one night - and the bloke on one side of me, I woke up in the middle of the night and he was vomiting and diarrhoea and they carted him away. It was cholera. And so that's all right I had a fever, I wasn't worried much about anything. The next night the next thing happened on the bloke on the other side of me. And Ewan Corlette he said, 'Come on Ivor, you're going to be ... you shouldn't be but you're ... out you go, you better get out and take your luck on the line or we might be able to get light duties'. He said, 'For God sake, don't stay here'.

And where did you go then?

Oh, I just went back to my own bed and then lined with the sick in the morning and I think we got a job around the camp. I think we had to volunteer to do something. We worked but I didn't go out the line that day anyhow, I think I went out the following. But it just shows the luck of the game. I reckon if I'd have stayed there another night with all the ... you only had to get a speck of the cholera germs and you're gone. However, that was something I'd forgotten about really until cholera came up.

Right Duncan Butler tape, we've ... Yeah, another interesting thing, Ernie Corrie, who was in the Dunlop Force, he was a medical orderly, I think with the ... or Sergeant with the 2/2nd Pioneers and he did a very good job when we got to Tamuang. I can remember he built up from his own plans or, you know, he just sort of ... the ideas he had for rehabilitation of patients, you know, with wounds and ulcers, it was physiotherapy - what training he'd had I don't know, in this area - but the ideas he had for rehabilitation were amazing. He had all sorts of ... what are those things they write in books, the word for all these weird and wonderful inventions? I can't think of it now, my brain's gone. Anyhow, he had all sorts of pulleys, weights on pulley, you know, for muscle restructure, to strengthen the muscles and the legs. Especially with ulcers, where they'd had very, very bad ulcers and try to build up a bit of muscle in the legs and the thighs. He did a wonderful job. I hope old Ernie got recognition with that because he did a very good job. So, that's just another of the things that happened; the weird and wonderful things that happened in the efforts to get the blokes, you know, right again. Now we've got to switch off now and I'll have a think.

Getting back to Hintok and cholera, there's an air force mate of mine named Bill Belford, a wonderful character, about six foot four. He must have been a magnificent specimen ... well he was when I first met him but the ravages of the railway and he got cholera. He survived cholera because he was very similar to Weary in size, another like a great big oak tree you couldn't kill. And he recovered from the cholera. I remember him as Tarsau helping people, giving people piggy-backs up from the river and helping them up and he was just like a great big gentle giant. And he was sent to Japan, he went to Japan. Now, Japan wasn't a ... anyone who copped the double dose of the railway and Japan were, you know, they had a

hell of time. It's a wonder they didn't all die of pneumonia with the lack of clothing and food because they did a winter in Japan with no adequate clothing and working in coal mines and doing all sorts of things. Anyhow getting back to Bill, he did survive. He came back to Australia and the next thing in 1946 and 1947, I think two years, he won the amateur heavy weight boxing championship of Australia. Now, that to me is an amazing feat. And Bill's still alive, a very, very low key bloke, very very hard to get him to a reunion, he won't come, he's very, very quiet, very reserved but he's a terrific bloke, helped a lot of people and he was a pretty wonderful character but as tough as old boots. And they tell me it was someone who saw the actual ... him fighting in this heavy weight championship, the bloke he was fighting he was saying now, take ... 'I'm sorry mate, I've got to ...', you know, he's apologising for the fact that he's had to hit him. Yeah, that's Bill.

END OF TAPE TWO - SIDE A

START OF TAPE TWO - SIDE B

Ivor, I wonder could you tell me a little about any operations that you witnessed please?

Yeah, well probably the most dramatic one was at Konyu River when we first arrived up where the railway was to be built, on our first camp at Konyu. We were only there for a little time then we had to move up to Hintok. But while we were there a bloke named Jones, Private Jones, apparently he got peritonitis, I think.

I think it was a perforated ulcer and then it went onto peritonitis.

Perforated ulcer ... I know it was a life and death thing and I can see it now. It was just an open clearing, there was no huts made at that time, everyone was sleeping on the ground, and I think they had a few tents for the sick. They built a bamboo table to act as a operating table and they built a fire, you know, round to give the lights and the Japs eventually loaned either one or two of those gas lights, and away they went. Now just imagine the four doctors: there was Weary Dunlop, Arthur Moon, Ewan Corlette and I think Tim Godlee was there at the time. I say there's four and they had an array of expert orderlies, at that time they were all reasonably fit. Anyhow they performed the operation, everyone was there, it was an amazing scene to see them all standing at a respectable distance of course.

The whole camp ...?

The whole camp virtually gathered there. It was the biggest audience any operations ever had I think.

Equalled a concert did it, Ivor?

Yeah. And, anyhow, it was done and successful and they even were able to put him on a special diet, much to the ... we were very envious of the diet, he had for a time were eggs and custard and all sorts of things. But I don't know what happened to him, whether he survived the whole thing, but he certainly survived that due to the ... you know, in those conditions, the mosquitoes - there'd be everything there - just how they did it, the precautions. They couldn't take many precautions, they had just had to go as quickly as

they could. But it was quite an experience and, as I've said before, I don't think any operation has been witnessed by so many people because the whole Dunlop Thousand were there.

And Ivor, that was in pitch darkness, was it ...?

Pitch darkness, yeah, yeah. They had to do it there and then. And he became, well, a hero. Just imagine, everyone was asking after the one patient, 'How's he going?'.

Another one I did see down at Tamuang - it could have been Tamuang or Tarsau, I'm not quite sure - I think it was Tamuang. I saw Sir Edward Weary Dunlop do appendicectomy and the only operation I've witnessed from close up and I didn't volunteer to have a look at any others. I was amazed at what happens. But Weary was instructing a young Scottish doctor, Captain ... I just can't remember his name, I'll look up the index and find out and let you know, but that was quite ... that was more sophisticated. They had a mosquito net around the bamboo operating table and it was very interesting to see the whole thing. But because we saw daily ... not minor operations, they were terribly painful, of ulcers where they were scraped out with a spoon, or anything they'd get and the only ... I'm just trying to think, the main drug they had was EUSOL, cause I can remember it, university ... Edinburgh University Solution of Lime, EUSOL is that right?

That would be right, Ivor, yes.

And that on and Ben ... aquaflavine, if they were lucky. No sulphanilamide, they'd heard about it. I think some used to get through occasionally with the Thai bloke Boon Pong, yes. He used to get some supplies because ... I think at that time and you'd be the authority there that sulphanilamide was a new drug then wasn't it?

Yes, that's correct.

And I know my mate, you've spoken to Ross McConchie haven't you? Yes, that's got it on the tape. So, it was the smell of the walking through the ulcer ward, it was indescribable, and to see these poor blokes there with the ulcers and largely they'd be doing something all day long. They'd be ... the blokes that really survived, I think, they sort of bathed them all the time, you know, if they could even get a bit of salt and rock salt but they were always doing something. But it must have been very painful, John ...

Oh, incredibly so.

Yeah, and I had minor ones, I was very lucky. But see Weary had ulcers almost the whole time at Hintok because he used to go down and lug up bags of rice from down the river because the Japs wouldn't let us have parties to go down and he and Jock Clarke and Bill Wearne and Alan Wood they used to do their share of slushing, especially during the speedo time. And I think I've mentioned this before, the log sitting. You'd come home and he'd be sitting on the log waiting for the last bloke to come in. And I think I have mentioned this before where he was waiting on the log and I had trench feet, and ...

You hobbled in on ...

Yes, that's right, yeah ...

You can tell the story again.

Yeah, I had a bit of skin left on my heals and I was sort of coming in on with two sticks, walking along the track and all of a sudden, a bloke came up behind me. A big bloke from the Pioneers, wouldn't be too big in those days. He didn't say a word he just picked me up and carried me in, and dumped me down near Weary. Weary looked at my feet and he said, 'Mmm'. He didn't comment very much. He said, 'All we've got is ...' - he gave another name - 'Condy's crystals'. And I bathed me feet in Condy's crystals till they went a dark brown and he said, 'I'm sorry, they just won't let us have any more sick, you'll have to go out tomorrow'. So that was it. You didn't sort of doubt his word, you knew that if he said something, that was it. You know, he wouldn't be bullshitting.

Ivor, I think you said that your feet were quite raw, the soles ...?

Yeah, they were quite raw ...

Exquisitely painful.

Yeah.

And what distance did you walk? Would you have to go over the escarpment down to the line, at that stage?

We did the longer way around to miss the escarpment because there's no way known you could have got up the escarpment. We used to the flat way, right round the back.

Was this before the ladder was built? Major Woods built a ladder?

He built a ladder, yeah. I know it ... I think I was working on the far cutting, which is, you know, the ...

The xxx cut in that area ...?

No, down the other end, near the Konyu cutting, the first of the cutting we did. Which there was the Konyu cutting and then there was a ... would it be near the pack-a-cards bridge, down that area. Anyhow, so much for operations. It was a new insight for me to see what you can ... what the surgeons could do to your guts and blokes could still survive.

Particularly under those appalling circumstances, yet amazingly their results were so good.

Yep, they were good. Yeah, well it gets right back to what I keep saying, that you know some people, only a few, a very, very few, you'll say what a wonderful man Weary Dunlop is. I say he's the greatest living Australian. And then they start to query, 'Oh, you know, so and so did this and you know, they didn't get the recognition', but I only speak from what I saw, what I know, and what has happened since. He's the greatest and that's it.

The greatest tragedy for me and the disappointment was the loss of a best mate who went back up the line to do repair work, maintenance, at a place called Hindato, I think, and he got cerebral malaria. A couple of my mates were with him and they said that the doctors said - and I don't know whether this is correct - that even had he recovered, he would have been ... you know, his brain would have been affected. But it was my great disappointment I wasn't with him, you know, to ... you feel a guilt complex about these things. That it wasn't ... in the cold hard facts you know it wasn't your fault but you can't help blaming yourself for not being there. But these are the things that happened. And I can remember, you know, everything about him.

And it's an amazing thing that since what 1945, since we've been released, there hasn't been a day of my life that I haven't thought about being a POW. Something ... you know, you think you'd go through a day but something will trigger something, a thought will trigger and all of a sudden you're ... you go back. I think I'm in command. I can sort of say, 'Righto, okay, now get that out of your mind and get back onto the right beam again'. But I spoke with other blokes on this and this is a probably a thing that Veteran Affairs wouldn't realised that there's not a day passes that you don't think about it. That something that happens to you in your ordinary day life will trigger off the ... bang, you go right back. And I know I've had dreams for years where the wars finished and I've been sent back, I've been on the railway station, saying goodbye to my family and I'm going back and I'm saying, 'Why am I going back, the war's over?' And I've been back the third or fourth time and I just can't understand it, I can't get back and I wake up and the ... so I suppose that happens with most of them but they've probably sick of saying to anyone, 'Look this is what's happening'. So you accept it and you just virtually get on top of it.

> I think in conversation you can tell me that actually physically going back on the line in '87, wasn't it, helped you to adjust to that?

'87, yeah. I'm far better now than I was three years ago. But it's still ... well of course, when you work it out, it's the most dramatic things that have ever happened in our lives. No-one, probably in modern history, have had the same sort of thing and I'm amazed that so many blokes are ... well, I suppose they wouldn't reckon we're still sane, but so many more haven't just gone around the bend with it. I suppose it could get you down if you let it get on top.

> I was going to ask you, Ivor, didn't you find those memories highly depressing, particularly in earlier years?

Oh, oh, look ...

> Because that would be the memory every time, wouldn't it?

Yeah, it was terribly depressing time. This is where I think I said, oh, when I gave my life story the other day, I said that it's amazing that the women the POWs in our circle, you know, Ross and Alec and all of them, the girls that we married that it's just amazing how they've put up with us because we must have been very, very hard to live with; probably still are but they've probably become used to it. But we were ... it's a funny thing, we've probably determined to succeed in what we were doing to prove to ourselves that we could do it. But I think it took it's toll and most of us at different times drank too much. I know I

did for a while and I sort realise now it was a pattern. Alec had the same problem and Alec hasn't had a drink for years. And of course, Ross, he's had a problem of, you know, psychological problem, he's on drugs. But we seem to have been able to overcome it, we haven't gone completely around the bend. I don't know, I've read all sorts of books about it and the main thing was that one book said you've got to get a section of your brain just working and you've got to put your thoughts into that section. They've got to be positive and you've got to try and all the other things that are coming in you've got to tell them to piss off now. I know it sounds a bit vague but that's ... I do that at night, I say, 'Righto, I'm in bed. Now don't buggerise ... go to sleep, never mind about thinking about things' and I do a few relaxation exercises, you know, your toes go to sleep, your feet go to sleep, your ankle and, you know, to up there and try. Well it works to a point. I don't take any drugs - any sleeping drugs - and I'm able to get through five or six hours sleep, which I find enough.

But a lot of the blokes have, really, they've had a hell of a time and I don't think people just realise what they have put up with and what the women have put up with. But, by and large, our little group have been pretty good and pretty lucky, so hope it stays that way.

> Certainly do. One thing, Ivor, most of the POWs I've met give me the impression they've done actually better than average in the world of business and commerce and, you know, making their lives. Now, that probably leads the community to think they haven't got problems so, it's interesting to hear that other aspect. But wouldn't you agree they seem to all made a particularly high success of their lives since returning?

Yeah, I think, probably two reasons for that. That having survived experiences, it made them tougher probably in ... you know, they were able to relate back to their experiences, and say 'What are you whingeing about this problem? Let's get stuck into it'. Also, to ... I know I had to prove that I could make it again. See I had a job when I left. I was the top manager of motor spares. I had the number one branch when I enlisted and when I got back I was lucky to get a job. They said, 'No you're not getting a job, I'm going to look after the blokes that looked after me'.

> Couldn't you challenge that in those days or didn't people do that?

They could do that because when you challenged, the people concerned are so gutless, that it was useless. I had to start right all over again.

> Oh, that's appalling.

Yeah, and didn't happen to all blokes but it happened to me. And I dared to defy the boss going to war. He told me I wasn't to go that I was reserved occupation and I more or less told him to get stuffed, I'd make me own decision and they don't like that. So, we had our problems, but you're right, inasmuch as ... you see blokes like Alec Kelly who finished General Manager of VACC Insurance. Top bloke, but he had a break down. Doug Cummins, cause he'd be a millionaire. I'll go through the millionaires now. Certainly Skipper Glary would be one, Deputy Managing Director of The Myer Organisation. Vic Ryan did very well as a lawyer and a top bloke Vets Affairs; he had charge of a tribunal, you know, sort of went all over the country and I would say very compassionate ... what do they call them?

What ... adjudicator or ...

Yeah, adjudicator and in charge of a panel. Ted Edgely, you'd only met, he was a millionaire, he got mixed up in rutile up the Queensland coast and he died fairly young but he was a millionaire. Of course, Norm McArthur, you know, with about fourteen or fifteen shoe shops.

He's the one in the country xxx chain?

Yes. He'd be a millionaire many times over. So, yeah, yeah they did pretty well. I don't think there's any abject failures. Poor old Gill with his leg had a rough time ...

Sorry, who was that?

Gill Sharp. But he's got a spirit. He's got plenty of guts and he settled up in Toowoomba all right. I spoke to him on Sunday, I rang him, and he's going all right. Again he's the only one who's divorced but he's got a very good second wife, she sort of keeps him on track. But all in all they've done very well. Jack Holmes is ... see Jack had a pretty steep ... oh, he had a pretty rough spin with spondylitis and other things. He was only an eighteen year old kid and he ... We had another one of our blokes came from Canada. God, he's a millionaire too. But they've all done pretty well.

No, you were asking me what I did before I enlisted. I was with a firm called Motor Spares. I was Manager of their Albury branch, which is one of the top branches and I was on ... supposed to be reserved occupation but at twenty six years of age I had no inclination to be a stay at home with the ... at that stage I had four brothers in the services. We ended up seven out of seven joined up. Six boys and one girl, we all joined up so I suppose it was a family tradition from the first war too. Anyhow I went against his wishes and I joined up as aircrew and after going to night school, I was eventually accepted. When I ... this prison, I used to often dream, 'Oh if I get back', not when, you know, you sort of had to be a realistic at one stage of it. It's no good saying 'Oh, I'm going to be immortal, I'll survive', you had to sort of say, 'Well there's a possibility that you won't survive but it you do I'd go back to Albury', I like the country life and ... Anyhow, when I got back after being in hospital and went to see the boss and he said, 'Well, you know, I'm going to look after the blokes that looked after me'. He said, 'You blokes that went to war, what did you do, you know, you ended up being taken a prisoner of war?'. Well, that really hurt. But I was at that stage, you felt a no no. You just ... I really felt that I wasn't wanted, I'd ... realised then I should have told him to do what his job and taken it ... but I stayed on until 1954, then I got a ... one of the people I used to buy from, I used to organise the supplies and sales for about eighteen branches, I think we had then, and ... for the particular department and this bloke said, 'Would you like to join our organisation? It's not very big but it's got potential and I promise that if you're satisfactory, within twelve months you'll be a director'. So, I went to the boss and gave him notice. Really he couldn't believe it and then he started, he said, 'Well of course, you know we had great ideas for you. We would have like you to stay on, you would have been one of the top executives, blah, blah, blah'. And I said, 'Yeah, well you're a bit late now'. That happened a lot, they always come out with promises when you ...

After ...?

After, yeah. Anyhow, I stayed with this firm until 1976 when we were taken over by Brown and Dureau, a big firm. And we had worked it up to a very, very profitable business. But unfortunately I didn't get much of a holding, the family had the big holding and when it came to the takeover I didn't do as well as I'd of liked. I should have been more protective of my own interests. I sort of said, 'Oh, well they'll look after me, no worries'. But it doesn't happen, you really ... in retrospect you've got to look after yourself, no-one else is going to do it. But I've got no ... I'm not bitter about it, cause I've got reasonable health.

Were they involved in aviation Brown and Duro?

Yeah, yeah. They had the agency for Pratt and Whitney engines, for Australia. But, oh boy, did the bloke in charge of this, was he ... I got diddled out some of the money but I went to a solicitor. He said, 'Yeah, you have, but they're just in side the law and it's a waste of time. They've got more money than you have mate, so you're wasting your time'. So, that was it.

They had problems within their organisation too.

They were taken over by Australian Paper Mills, eventually.

Just beforehand, so this might have been ....

Anyhow, I had my first taste of corporate, you know, businesses and I wasn't terribly impressed. So, I resigned at the age of sixty four and thought, 'Oh, I'll be able to get the service pension and what bit of money I've got I'll be able to you know, get along'. And I said, but Kath's always wanted a trip overseas. We went overseas, blew up a bit of money that way. Came back ... when I got back the ... about the second day I was back one of the firms that we used to represent, you know, manufacturers' agents, we had overseas and local factories. He said, 'I want you Jonesy, there's a job here for you'. I said, 'Don't be silly, George, I'm sixty four'. He said, 'We want a sales manager'. And I said, 'I'll do it for twelve months'. Well, lots of things happened, I stayed on for six years, till I was seventy. So, that enabled me to do a lot of things that I wouldn't have been able to do. But in the end I'd only work three days a week, I wasn't going to push myself right off for anyone and it worked out quite satisfactory because it helped me to keep my mind moving. I eventually resigned at seventy and he didn't want me to go then. And I found a replacement who took over as general manager and he's still there now. I think they've sold out to one of the big shows, so he'll do all right. So, that's the story of rehabilitation.

That's a remarkable achievement considering all your other interests and activities to ...

Well, I suppose it's not too bad for a depression kid because I didn't get much education, like the majority of about third or fourth form, that was it. And that's why I went back to TAFE to prove if I could get my matriculation or whatever it is, HSC, and I got two subjects, and I thought, 'Oh, well you're not such a dimwit after all'.

Certainly not.

So, I'd say I've been very fortunate. And that about sums it up.

Well, I'd say you've achieved that yourself. It hasn't been anybody else who has done it.

Ah, well you couldn't ... no you couldn't do it without the backing of your family. Kath's been ... I mean she's pretty sick now but, you know, when the chips were down she was very supportive. And the boys have been wonderful, I haven't had a ... one bit of a problem with them, no. Except Dave, I wish he'd get married but still that's his problem, isn't it?

END OF TAPE TWO - SIDE B - END OF INTERVIEW