ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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START OF INTERVIEW

Identification: Interview with Mrs Norman Eadie (Matron Butler) who is the widow of the late Lieutenant Colonel Norman Eadie of the 2/2nd CCS, Number VX14845, who was one of the Australian Medical Officers serving in World War II and whose work on the Burma Railway we're particularly interested in. Mrs Eadie has her own war record as she was a trained nurse and joined the Australian Army as SFX3061 and she became matron to the 2/3rd AGH. First of all she will talk about Norman Eadie then about herself and hopefully tell us about some of the Australian doctors who were on the line.

Well Mrs Eadie, maybe to start at the beginning. When was your late husband born?

On the 12th October 1893.

And whereabouts was that?

In Bendigo.

Good and could you tell me something about his earlier life, the schools he attended, whether they were at Bendigo and so forth?

No, his mother died when they were quite young. Father came down, who was a doctor also, down to Melbourne and Norman went to Scots College. And I don't know quite the reason why he left there but he then wanted to go to Caulfield Grammar and he stayed at Caulfield Grammar until he finished schooling.

More or less up until matriculation.

Yes and he was a very keen sport person. Won the senior cup which I've got there. I don't think ... anyhow he went to the university. His father always wanted him to do medicine but he wasn't really interested in medicine. He wanted all the family had been doctors and I think the father thought he ought to be. So he did engineering. And he just ...

Was that at Melbourne University?

Yes Melbourne University.

Did he finish that?

He finished just as the war began I gather. This is all long before I came into the picture. But when the war broke out, from, I think I'm right in saying, from the University he went straight into the army. Enlisted, went to Puckapunyal and was put on guard duty when it was raining. And he was on duty at night and I presume he got pneumonia from being wet. And I think he only lasted there a month and they put him out of the army medically unfit. He then started through his father helping him, what is called, it was known as Eadie's Engineering Works in St Kilda. And then, towards the end of the war I think he had just over a year of this. He went then

into heavy artillery, heavy ack-ack, which was ...

Yes it was artillery.

Artillery. And he then was stationed up on the north head, no I'm not wrong, it wasn't Sydney it was Queenscliff in Victoria.

At the Garrison?

At the Garrison, that's right. And well then the war ended and I think his father wondered what he was going to do. And still with the idea that he'd like to do medicine he said to him, 'What about doing medicine?'. He said, 'I'm too old to go back to the University', so the father suggested that he went back to Scotland where they all came from. Where his father was sent home in a sailing ship by his father who was also a doctor to go and be educated in Scotland ...

That's an interesting story isn't it.

And that was why the father wanted him to go there. And that's what he did. And he graduated in Edinburgh, at the Medical School in Edinburgh which I presume he thought was second to none. It had a very good name in those days. Medical School of Edinburgh I think it was called. It wasn't the university.

And that was in 1926 was it, Mrs Eadie?

In 1926, yes. And then he went down to the Golden Square Eye and Ear Hospital in London and he worked there. I think it was for about a year. And before he came home he did some work in the Vienna and the Berlin big hospitals. He came back to Australia. I think it was 1929, probably the end of 1929. And he then went back to Bendigo. I think his uncle was still one of the doctors up there, because his two uncles were doctors and his father. And Doctor Jack Eadie was up there so his father thought it was a good idea to go back to where they started all of them. And he had just begun as a specialist in ear, nose and throat in Bendigo when his brother Clive, who was older than he was, who'd been to the First World War married whilst he was over there and he was going back to Scotland. I don't know the details about that but he was going back and he wrote to Norman and he asked him if he would come down and do his work whilst he was away. The father was very against it. He thought that it would never work. He didn't think, that family should keep away from that sort of thing. And that's what it turned out to be as a matter of fact. And Norman came down and finished up by ... Well Clive came back and he wasn't allowed to ... he'd had it all put into legal rights that he wasn't allowed to practice within so many yards of where he was in Collins Street. And the sister that Clive had was so annoyed with Clive for doing such a thing. I don't know whether you want this there.

Oh yes.

But he, she said I'm not going to work with Doctor Clive I'm going to work with Doctor Norman. And Norman finished up by

marrying her.

Oh right.

That was 1934. They had a lovely home out at Lower Plenty overlooking the Yarra which Norman built the house. And the son was born in November of 1935. This is all only what I've heard since I was married.

Perhaps if I could interrupt Mrs Eadie. For anyone listening to the tape that Mrs Eadie is Norman Eadie's second wife. I think people would gather that anyway.

Yes I'm his second wife.

So it's asking a lot of you to remember ...

I only came into the picture after I came across Norman again after about 1949 because he worked in our hospital.

All right, and coming back to the mid thirties where was he practising?

In Collins Street.

In Collins Street.

He had his own rooms there. And then he, when the war broke out. I've forgotten the name of the doctor but another ear, nose and throat doctor took over this practice and he went up to Puckapunyal and on 25th May 1940 he left Melbourne and they called into Adelaide and on 27th May we set sail and I was on that ship.

Can you remember the name of the ship?

Yes the Stratheden.

Yes and where did it ....

I was told, none of us knew where we were going. We'd only had six days warning that we were leaving. But the reason we were going in such a terrible hurry was that the Queen Mary in the big convoy that was heading for the Middle East was the second half of the 2nd AGH personnel were on that convoy. And they were too frightened to put that convoy through the Red Sea because Italy was still not in the war and they were down in Eritrea. So they diverted that convoy and they went onto England. And they realised they didn't have a full medical complement so doctors and nurses were rushed and in six days we were on the ship. We had three doctors here from Adelaide on the ship. Do you want me to tell you who were the doctors?

Who were they? Though it's mainly the POW's?

Yes. Doctor Allan Lenden and Doctor Malcolm Coburn and Doctor John Dwyer. And they were the three South Australians. And then we eventually after seven weeks on the ship arrived in England. Do you want me to go on to talk about over there?

Well what port, what camp was that?

Well the 3rd Australian General Hospital was formed. We were given a six hundred bed wing of the King George the Fifth sanatorium which was at Milford, just a mile out of Goddelmin. And that was given over to us and we started then. Our soldiers all that contingent that was still on that big convoy they were down the Salisbury Plains. We really didn't have any battle casualties there. We had lots of people who never really should have gone to the war. Malcolm Coburn was examining a patient on one occasion and happened to see that he had a sinus that had to be strapped over for a ruptured ulcer still in his tummy. And he'd got away through the examinations here in Australia.

A1 for active!

Well anyhow they were down in Salisbury Plains. And I had to send two of our sisters down to the Tidworth Military Hospital to have a representation of Australians in our Australian set up because that was nearer to Salisbury Plains than we were up in Goddelmin.

And in 1940 the First Convoy was ready to leave to go back to the Middle East. That one, that left and joined up and was there in time for the Italian campaign in Tunisia or Africa, the desert. Then in January another convoy left and Norman was in that convoy and he went on a hospital ship with two of our sisters. And then when he arrived in the Middle East he was made the CO of the 2nd CCS. I never saw him. We just knew where our old sort of friends were and when I arrived out in May of 1941 all the sisters, nursing staff were transferred to 2/11th AGH which was a two hundred bed, forward surgical unit. It was a wing of the Greece Hospital, very lovely hospital, and it was given to the Australians as a gesture because the Australians had sent those men to fight in Greece. And we, the Government paid three shillings a day for every Australian who was in that hospital a day. But other than that we were fed and had the whole building to ourselves.

And then, Norman, well we never saw him until ... 27th November all our troops came out of Tobruk because we were getting the Greece and Tobruk casualties in Alexandria. And we were then bound, with Colonel Stenny, at that stage as our CO, the nursing staff, we were bound for Syria to go to Beirut. And we were in the staging camp at Gaza and we knew we were going up to a winter in Syria. And we'd left Australia with summer uniforms and by that time the Q-store had winter materials and I had bought, or been issued with the winter material. I was having an overcoat made for Syria. Colonel Stenny went up with two of our doctors to go up and see our new hospital which was a school in Beirut. And he told me that I could go up and collect two of the personnel and one of our sisters, one of the South Australian sisters had red hair and in the heat she got little cancerous marks on her hands. And she had already gone up to the [Hadasa] hospital, a Jewish hospital in Jerusalem having some x-ray treatment. And I was to go up and collect her and at the same time have a fitting for this coat. I'm

telling you this because it was the end of my career as far as the Middle East was concerned. And on the way back, I went, well first of all. We only had one car which Colonel Stenny was in up in Syria. And Jeff Morris, you would have known Jeff Morris.

Newman Morris was it?

Yes well he was with us as well. One of our doctors. Well he was the senior one who was left there whilst the other three were away. Colonel Nove was the other one and Sullivan, Major Sullivan with Stenny. And they sent an ambulance to collect me for this journey up to Jerusalem this Sunday morning. And the boy said to me, the driver, 'We'll have to go back to where the men were staged because the truck we were supposed to be going in had to have something done to it'. When we got there - we weren't supposed to be travelling in an ambulance because we weren't with sick people - and when we arrived there a man got out from underneath the truck who said, 'It's not roadworthy, you'll have to go in the ambulance'. So we went in the ambulance and I went up and I went up to get Sister Campbell at the hospital. And fortunately for her she was told she had to have another treatment. So she didn't come. We left at 3 o'clock that afternoon to go back to Gaza with two of our boys and as we were leaving the driver said to me, Australian driver, 'There's an RAAF boy who's just heard he's got a brother in the 7th AGH which was at xxx which was on the main road, or off the main road rather to Gaza, but it was deviating on our trip and he said to me when I was ready to leave, 'Will you give permission to take this Air Force boy to see his brother?'. And I said, 'Oh yes, if it was my brother I'd want to see him, we'll go'. And it wasn't until we turned off that main Gaza road when I remember the driver saying 'I hope it doesn't rain' and I said, 'Why?', and he said, 'We haven't got any windscreen wipers'. And I also remember saying, 'It's very black over there by Gaza'. Well I don't remember anything more but we had a terrible accident. We ran into a truck which was loaded with, an Arab truck, tipped up which was loaded with stones and I finished up with nine fractures. And I really shouldn't be alive. Really, I had a fractured spine, and a fractured pelvis and I had all the bones in my face.

Really, where were you treated?

In the 7th AGH where this boy was. And I remember when I became conscious somebody said to me they felt sorry for the relative that was with us the day of the accident. And I said, 'There was no relative of mine'. And they said, 'Oh yes, he was, an Air Force boy walking the road all night long in front'. And I felt so sorry for that boy and he may never have lived the war and he obviously realised that it wasn't till we left the main road that we had the accident. But I was unconscious, I didn't know anything about that. But to get back to Norman.

Well maybe just before because this is really your career now, if I could interrupt you. I didn't want to interrupt you until now. But I presume from there you ultimately came back to Australia?

I came back on a hospital ship in February.

> Well look perhaps you could give a few words on what your capacity when you were over there. You went over as a senior nursing sister.

I went over as matron. I went over as matron.

> Where were you appointed matron. Maybe you could fill in that story?

I was made matron here in Adelaide. And as the matron that was going to England.

> And you went over as matron for the 2/3rd AGH and stayed in that position ...

Until we got back to the Middle East and then I with all the girls that had gone to England with the 3rd AGH and there were about 20 South Australians including me and there were 18 Western Australians and 5 Victorians I think it was and 2 Sydney girls. I think about 47 of us altogether. And we went to Alexandria then as the 2/11th AGH and that was how that, so we became a different unit but still all the nursing was compact. We were still one unit as far as the nursing staff was concerned.

> Well that's good that's clarified that. Now I'll give you a chance to get back to Colonel Eadie again.

Back to Norman. Well this is a funny thing because I think we probably knew that Norman was about. He was one of our doctors in England. I'm going to tell you a funny story about this and he ... I was lying there. My whole head was in plaster. I'll show you a photograph afterwards and I had a Heath Robinson arrangement with Palestinian money, silver coins melted down and formed my whole jaw. They could swing it three quarters of an inch. My nose was flat on my face. My [malor] bone was up underneath my eye. All my teeth were smashed and apparently when I regained a little consciousness all I wanted to say I wish my tongue would touch my teeth. I was told I would say, 'Oh my beautiful teeth have been broken'. And the sister who was specialing me said we used to feel as if we could murder you, it was the only thing that wasn't going to kill you, and it was the only thing that worried you. But I looked an awful sight as you can imagine. Horns here imbedded in the plaster to be hooked up to my mouth. Whilst I was lying there ...

> Really, you had a remarkable recovery ....

Everybody used to come and see me. I even remember Tom Porter came to see me. That was Sir Tom Porter who finished up here Mayor of Adelaide. He went to school with me as a matter of fact. He went to kindergarten, in a private school the little boys used to go to the kindergarten. And he came to see me and I felt lots of people came to see me just to have a look at me. But to make the story why I'm telling you this is Norman came to see me. And I remember thinking that was nice of Norman

Eadie to come and see me because I really didn't know him. And then the next thing we heard of course was I went home on a hospital ship. And I, well I was off duty for seven and a half months and I eventually was made matron of Dawes Road Hospital in Adelaide.

That's a military hospital?

That's like Heidelberg only in Adelaide. It had just been opened, about a month, six weeks before I arrived. And I arrived there in July of 1942, that's right. And, well, by that time we knew our sisters were prisoners of war. The Japanese, of course, that had all happened. We didn't know whether they were alive or not. And we knew that Norman was there because the 2nd CCS had been caught. We used to say, well the theatre girls used to say wonder what poor Norman Eadie's doing without his cup of tea. Well I didn't even know he used to want his cup of tea I suppose. But the other end, I suppose I'm jumping about this but ...

It doesn't matter that's fine.

When I finished I, after a year I went into Kessigers as principal matron for South Australia. And the end of the war - the Japanese war wasn't over - I went over to see Miss Sage and General Blamey and General Canon whom I knew and see if I could work it to go over to UNRAR. And they eventually let me ...

What was that by the way?

That was United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation.

Thank you.

I went up to Berlin then. I flew over to England and then went to Normandy and then we went by truck all the way through Europe up to Berlin and I was there in, what day is ... what's Bastille Day, 14th of July. That's right, well I was going through France on that occasion. So that I got up there just after the war and that was another chapter of my life. But then when I came home I was still having really a lot of trouble. My nose was flat on my face and for years it was quite wide. It's cut there, fractured there. It used to be almost like a level there of swelling. And I saw Doctor Jay here and he was going to do something. I was getting giddy turns and he was going to put me into that whiz chair and I wasn't going to get into that. So I went over to Melbourne and I saw the head of repat in Melbourne Street and I said, 'I don't want Doctor Jay to do anything for me and whilst I'm over here' - I went over to see my sister - 'can I see somebody else?'. 'Oh', he said, 'You Second World War people are all the same, you only think Second World War people are any good'. So he said, 'Will you see Headley Summons?'. He said, 'He is a First World War and a Second World War', and I said 'Yes I will'. I saw him. I went down to repat in St Kilda Road because I was ex-army. The sisters were all there ex-army and they asked me into morning tea. And of course I was full of chatter about what post-war Germany was like. And this row of doctors were all sitting there and suddenly I looked and I saw

Norman. I said, 'I know you'. And he said, 'Yes', he looked awful, absolutely dreadful. You couldn't have believed it was the same person.

He'd just returned?

Just returned you see. Well the next, I didn't speak to him other than that. And I went back to Headley Summons and he said 'Doctor Eadie wants to see you'. And I said, 'Where's he?' and he said, 'He's in the next room'. So I went in and I saw him and he said, 'You'll be going into Heidelberg, Hedley tells me', and I said, 'I suppose that's what I've got to do have an operation on my nose, sinuses'. And he said, 'I'll come and see you'. And I said, 'You don't want to come and see me it was miles out to Heidelberg'. 'Oh' he said, 'I live out that way' and I said, 'Do you'. And he said 'Yes'. He came in to see me and he had heard all the information and that was all there was to it. And never thought any more about Norman. Neville Wilson asked me - the world has funny ways - Neville Wilson's mother and Norman's wife's mother were sisters. And so Neville was Mrs Eadie's first cousin. And Neville asked me to help him do a plaster one Sunday morning on the sportsmaster of Geelong Grammar because he'd had a very bad plaster put on. He said, 'I'll do it in my rooms if you come in and help me'. So I was holding the leg up and he said to me, 'By the way, did you know that Norman Eadie was widower'. And I said, 'No how I would know'. And he said, 'Oh well he is'. And I said, 'How do you know?'. And he said, 'Because his wife's my cousin'.

Then, we always, our original lot, we still do, only a few of us left have a reunion every year on the time of leaving. And Allen Lenden and Barb Dwyer came up to me one day or came into me and said, 'Better the girls going and any of the men we can collect for our annual reunion'. So I wrote to Norman and said, 'Would you like to come to our reunion, you are one of our unit?'. And he wrote back and said, 'He would certainly come but that wouldn't be the reason he was coming. He would like to come over and see me'. Well I won't go into details but he suggested that we got married. And I think we were both older and settled and I think we each respected each other and I suppose that was all it really was at that stage. But what I really am telling you this all about is because when we were engaged people would sort of suspiciously look at me - would say, 'Oh well they knew each other at the War'. And I used to say, 'We never ever talked to each other. Never even talked to me'. Norman as a retort would say, 'I never would have passed the matron without saying good morning'.

And Mrs Eadie, when you returned from the Middle East on the hospital ship what followed from then?

Well after quite a lot of treatment really for my mouth I then was appointed matron of Dawes Road Military Hospital.

And that's in Adelaide, the main hospital?

That's 105, they called it. And I was there for just over, not quite a year. I think in May I went to Keswick Headquarters as

principal matron for South Australia.

Now if you could fill me what hospital was that?

Principal matron was the one that was in charge of the whole of South Australia.

But when you say Keswick that's.

Keswick's our Army Headquarters like Victoria Barracks in Melbourne. Yes that's what I meant. And I was there in the office and we had ...

And that was in charge of all the military, all the nursing of all the military.

All the nursing service in South Australia and all the coming and going and appointments from one place to another. Working with LHQ right up to until where our matron chief was. There was a principal matron in each state and then the matron in chief at LHQ.

Who was the matron in chief at that time?

Sage. Miss Sage all the way through, right to the very end.

Thank you anyway.

Well then, I went to UNRAR as I said. Now I think we've got to get back to where, after I married and what I know about Norman hadn't I.

All right then if you would.

Forget me.

Of course his POW experience you can only ...

I can only ...

Narrate what he's told you but that would be valuable.

You see when I met Norman. I've told you about that and I got married. He really was a very sick man. He was still having, well, he went off for a fortnight. He was working at Repat Hospital. That was in Melbourne at the Heidelberg Military Hospital. And then when he was at the hospital - I think I'm wrong - when he was at the hospital working that was when he first came back. He went to Heidelberg Military Hospital as the 2IC just after he was well enough and had leave after his return as a POW.

Then they told him that he, by that time of course they told him that he couldn't go back to private work. And he decided that he would give away Repat and with his property, he had twelve and a half acres of land up at Lower Plenty, he build sheds and had fowls of all things. And he, well, loathed it, hated it. But it was they thought the best for him to be in

the open all the time. He sold his eggs, I don't know anything about that story. And his wife wasn't well by any manner or means. She had, I've never heard it in plain language, but I think she had a TB kidney and the child was a caesarean and she nearly died when he was born. He was a seven months baby. And then she was, she was ill at that time as well. And Norman decided to give away the fowls and go back to Repat and he then was working at St Kilda Road in at the Repatriation Day Centre.

In the out patient part, yes.

And it was then that his wife died. And he got housekeepers and he has this child who was nine, or nine and a half when Norman came back from the war. And then I came on the scene in 1950 when we were married. And as I've said he was then a very sick man. He looked dreadful. He used to have awful dreams. He'd wake up screaming and fighting and I was trying to tell him everything was all right. And then he'd wake up and say, 'Sorry I had a dream'. And he was obviously dreaming of some Japanese torture and he still had a lot of bowel trouble. I gave him injections that they ordered and he wasn't to do any work for a fortnight. Something to do with this BC infection he had of his bowel. But gradually Norman just righted himself. He, when he lived to 91 and I had a letter after he died from Neville Wilson. Doctor Neville Wilson who was Norman, his wife, his first wife was Neville Wilson's first cousin. And I had a letter from Neville after Norman died. It's a wonderful letter. He just said that he knew his wife had written to me but he wanted to write himself because he knew Norman so well. He said he was always a shy, quiet person. He had a dominant brother and he said and then he married a sick person who was my cousin he said. And on top of all of that he then had those years on the railway. He said, I just want to, he said if he hadn't married you Edith, Norman I know would have become a complete recluse but he said I want to say thank you not just for myself but all Norman's friends for what you did for him because he was a completely changed man after a few years of marriage. And he was, he just, we never talked ... that's why I think I don't know very much about, see even, some people might have said to him what did you dream last night. I never used to ever ask him any questions at all. And I think that was the healing part of Norman's after life, after war life because he wasn't able to dwell on it, he couldn't. Some people can live with it and able to make a story of it but he just never wanted to talk about it.

But I can tell you one or two little funny things he'd say such as Bert Coatesey he knew very well and they were in a camp together and they'd been moved up from one place to another as they were always doing. And Bert Coates and Norman had got their patients all settled down and somebody put down two palliasses in the hut for them. It was dark and they got themselves down on their straw bed and one of them said to the other, 'This is the worst bug house we've ever been in'. And in the morning when it was light they found their palliasses had been put on to an ant heap and they were being crawled over by huge ants. And when Bert got his knighthood Norman wrote to him and said, 'Well Bert I'm only the one who can say to you

I've shared a bed of ants with you to sleep the night'.

A unique, never be repeated experience.

No never repeated. And they were, he never talked very much. I think you know that Ian Florence was just like a son to Ian cause he's done medicine since the war and he was a medical orderly and he worshipped Norman, Ian did. And they used to talk about medicine when they were able to. Norman used to say Ian never had a cross expression on his face even. He always looked on the bright side. He still does. And if you interview him for this you'll find he's just a marvellous person. And ...

Well Mrs Eadie perhaps you might tell us a little about the Australian doctors who were POW's because I know you knew a number quite well.

Well a few. Weary was a patient of ours when I was in Alexandria. He'd been in Tobruk and he landed in our hospital which was this lovely Greek hospital in Alexandria. They had sheets even there. All the boys when they arrived used to say fancy having clean sheets. Anyhow I as matron would be doing my round and one day I saw him down stairs, upstairs, in my lady's chamber and in the middle and I saw him wandering from one room to another and I said, 'What are you doing you're never in the same place for five minutes?' and he said, 'I can't sit down I've got boils on my tail'.

Anyhow of course then he was a prisoner of war and Norman went to his wedding. Cause I wasn't married then to Norman but he married after he came back. Weary did. And then next time we saw Weary was a few years ago. He was actually in the lift in that big hotel in Collins Street. He'd been to a - he told us afterwards - as president of the Japanese Australian Association. I think there's a Japanese Australian Association.

Well he was the Australian Association President.

For the Japanese or something. Something to do with the Japanese.

Oh right I'm sorry.

Cause he showed us the little program of the dinner and he was head of it you see of course. Anyhow we were in the lift and we were right at the back. I was there with one of our other sisters who'd been at Heidelberg for years and she was with me in the war. And Norman was pushed in we were crowded and this other friend, Sister Cowan said to me. 'That's Weary in the front there'. So I whispered in Norman's ear, 'Weary's in the front there'. So when the door opened Weary got out first and went for his life and Norman after him. And so he came back when Norman. I don't know what Norman had said to him but he came back obviously knowing that Norman's wife was one of the two people standing there. And he walked up to Floss Carr and he gave her a kiss and then gave me a kiss. So when I saw him on Armistice Day, this last Armistice Day, he came over as

guest of honour at our Armistice Reunion we had - a big dinner which we always have - really in memory of the Banka Straits. And I went up to have a talk to him and he said, 'You're wearing very well', and I said, 'Well I'm 82'. And he said, 'I'm 83'. And then I said, 'Anyhow I haven't seen you I don't think since that day that we were in the lift and Norman chased you and you came up and you kissed Floss Carr instead of me first' because I think you thought Floss was Norman's wife and not me. He just laughed. That's all I can really tell you about Weary.

But old Syd you know I knew Syd well.

That was Syd Kranz, wasn't it?

Yes and he was a house surgeon in my very first year of training in 1928. We were a bit frightened of him as a house surgeon because he was one of the ones that was always like a packet of crackers. But I didn't have any dealings with him I don't think then. But then he of course was a prisoner of war with Norman. And he and Norman got on very well together. He arrived in the camp on one occasion when Norman was up to his eyes in work at the RAP. Norman then said to him, 'Are you a doctor?'. And he said, 'Yes'. One lived in Victoria and one lived in Adelaide in civilian life. And, well Norman just fell on his neck almost with gratitude because he was so busy. And they really became quite good friends. The story that Syd used to tell to me and with Norman listening with great glee in his eyes because Norman was in the camp - now this has another bearing of a camp - but Norman came home to me one day when he was working in the Repat at St Kilda Road and he said 'I had a patient today and he said to me, I was a prisoner of war on the Burma Railway and there was a doctor Eadie up there'. And Norman said, 'I think I'm that one and he said oh no you're not the one. He was Colonel Eadie', and Norman said 'I am that one'. And I tripped into Norman then and said, 'Why didn't he think it was you?'. And he said, 'I don't know'. But then when I still asked Norman a question I found out in Norman's hesitant way of ever saying that he was in any trouble that he never wanted anyone to know. He said, 'Oh well he knew that I'd been left in the camp where everybody was dying'. And I said, 'Were you dying too?' and he said, 'No I was left there as the doctor to look after them'. Now that isn't true I'm sure of that. I think Norman was one of very, very ill ones that had been left behind.

He had been very ill yes.

And somehow or rather Syd had heard about it and he was up the line in the next camp. And the story now is, from Syd's point of view, he heard and he went to the Commandant in the Japanese Orderly Room or whatever it was. And he said 'I am going to see the doctor who is sick in the next camp'. And they said, 'No you can't'. And he said, 'I'll run on my own, I'm going'. So he was so authoritative - I can see he would be - that they said, 'All right you go but you go with a guard'. So he started. I don't know how many miles he had to walk but he had to walk and I suppose Syd would never have left any of his possessions behind so he carried his bag with him. But with

great glee he told the story to me with Norman listening appreciating it of course. And he said, 'You know I made the little bugger carry my suitcase for me'.

And I can remember another time when Norman had had a series of temperatures shooting up because he had a lot of emphysema and you could never hear his lungs the doctors told me. And we just thought this temperature that shot up, would give him some antibiotics and it would settle down over the years this went on. And then suddenly he said I've got a pain in my side. No before, that's right, so we sent him into Dawes Road Hospital. And he wasn't under Syd. He was sent in as a physician, you know for a physician. And Syd went into to see him and he said I can't interfere Norman but if you get sick again get Edith to ring me. So they sent him home as nothing abnormal detected. Just like we've been over and over again. And the next time he ran a temperature I rang Syd up and Syd came straight over to see him and he said we'll put him into hospital. So he took Norman off himself and put him into hospital. And the next morning he rang me up at about quarter to seven and he said I'm at the hospital and I'm going to take Norman into the theatre. He said, there must be something wrong. So he said you come in and go into his room. So I went straight into to Wakefield Street hospital here and I was sitting in the room and I got a message to say Doctor Kranz wants you in the theatre. I thought my goodness I wonder what's gone wrong. So I went up the stairs and there was Syd standing at the door of the theatre with his white hat on looking like a chef almost with little peaked cap with serious face he said, 'Very bad'. I thought he's going to say very bad news. Very bad retrosecal appendix. I said what's going to happen. And he said, we'll just have to watch him. And I said shall I get a special for him. And he said Norman doesn't want a special. He wouldn't need any special attention. And I said, Syd that's very serious they usually die from a paralysed ileus don't they. And he said Norman won't die. So I left him and then about two days later. I don't know whether it was two or three days later I went in to see Norman and they'd apparently. I don't know whether they'd been giving him an enema or medicine or what it was but they were worrying about a paralysed ileus. And just before I arrived Norman had apparently had his bowels open. Syd came into the doorway whilst I was xxx. Well are you any better now or not. And Norman said I've done my duty and he said thank God for that I thought you'd have a paralysed ileus. And then he said, now I've got some good news to tell you and Norman said what. He said, well you wouldn't have seen it but xxx television, but it was when that Fenwick, boxer, Australian boxer boxed the Japanese. And Syd stood at the door and he said do you know he said, you shouldn't have seen it Norman. Fenwick he tossed the little bugger over the rails. He thought that was the funniest thing he ever saw.

That's the end of the tape. I'll put another tape on. This is reel two of the interview with Mrs Eadie.

Now to get back to Syd when he was on his way to see Norman when he was sick. He found Norman really very ill. In fact Norman tells me he didn't remember seeing Syd but he remembers being put in the back of a truck. But he was then sent down to

the base hospital at xxx. It was the base hospital and he had cerebral malaria. Well I think that really made Syd and Norman's friendship even more cemented because I think Norman felt he almost owed his life to Syd. And when Syd died Cathy rang us up and well we went over and he died at seven in the morning and we went over immediately. And Norman wrote out what he knew to put in the paper. That's something from the army point of view or medical side as well. And, well, it was just something that those two boys. I don't think Syd ever talked any more about being a prisoner of war than Norman was. But put the two of them together. They didn't have to talk about but they could have their laughs at what was a funny thing and they just appreciated each others company as a result.

Oh that was wonderful.

I suppose that's just something that happens when you have a ... I suppose something when you're very ill you always remember people who that have done something to you.

Did he have any dealings with Mr Kranz on a professional basis in the hospital itself?

No but I know all sorts of stories about who they used to fling xxx

Tell a few stories I've been told before.

Hurling sponges at the nurse. And I know another very funny story. I know a very funny story. I'd forgotten about this one. But Elsie Hughes, Sister Hughes, who was at Adelaide Hospital theatre for years after the war. She was training when Syd was a student and she knew him from those days. She then was in England before the war and worked with the Queen Alexandra Nursing Service, not with the Australians, during the war. Came back here. And of course Syd then went in as a senior surgeon. And of course he'd have the sisters in tears in five minutes. And theatre, it was different in my day. It was several floors up and down. Anyhow she walked, this girl came down she had been the sister doing instruments that day. Crying, she said, 'What's the matter?'. She said, 'I can't work with Mr Kranz any more. He says he doesn't want me anyhow'. So she said, 'You go over to the home I'll go over and speak to him'. She said, 'I went up to Syd and I said what the hell are you up to Syd?'. And he said, 'I don't want a sister I'll work on my own'. She said, 'You will not work on your own. You'll sit down and wait till I get a sister who is off duty on duty'. So that's what he had to do. Those were the sorts of situations that Syd got himself into. Oh dear, oh dear. He was quite different to his brother Roy. Roy was house surgeon. He was younger and he went to Melbourne afterwards. I never saw him after being house surgeon. He was quite a different type. He was dark but he was, Syd was a typical what he was, little face and little nose.

He was a short person wasn't he?

Short person but Roy was quite a different type and a happy go

lucky. And I always remember sending, this is away from the prisoner of war days but I was in charge of the TB ward at the Adelaide Hospital and we had one of the nurses who was dying of TB. And well I know that I thought she ought to have her parents sent for. And I went on duty at seven o'clock this Sunday morning and I thought well I can't do this before I get the house surgeon's ... she'd been dying for days ... I'd better ring up and say whether I'm going to ring her people now. Roy answered the phone and I said, 'What are you answering the phone for?' and he said, 'I'm medical emergency for the weekend'. So I told him and he told me what to do, that I could ring them. And he came down afterwards at about nine o'clock. And I said, 'I'm sorry I woke you up so early on a Sunday morning' and he said, 'I was up'. And I said, 'Up at seven o'clock in the morning!', and he said, 'Oh natural causes that's all'.

And that was Roy the brother.

That was Roy, quite a different person altogether.

Can you think of any other stories about Mr Kranz?

Oh I don't know.

You're doing so well.

No I don't think that I know any more about him.

Well shall we come onto Major Moon and you might think of something?

Major Moon. He is a different kettle of fish altogether. I only met him with Norman after the war when we went to Sydney a couple of times. His wife had died. She had cancer. And I can't quite remember but it was a slow, terrible death. I remember him saying and he sat with her, morning, noon and night. And he was a very gentle man from what I could see. I also know another side about him. Because after xxx Cogg who was, he died, my very, very best and oldest friend's husband and he was also Norman's padre in the 2nd CCS. And after we were married Ernest Cogg told me about Major Moon. They were great friends. They used to go for walks and his whole conversation centred around his wife and home. And then when Norman and I went, we had a couple of evenings with him after his wife had died. And we went to his home one night for a meal. And he took me into his room for me to put my bag or whatever it was down. And on the dressing table was a photograph of his wife with a bowl of red roses in front of it. And she'd been gone two or three years I think then. And I made some remark that that was his wife and he said yes. And my housekeeper always keeps those red roses beside her face. And I really feel that he would have been one of the nicest people you could meet.

Yes he's certainly highly thought of by the men.

Yes I'm sure he was, gentle nice person. He and Norman got on very well and of course he stayed with Norman whereas Weary

went to the surgical team just before they left the Middle East. Because Weary really was Norman's 2IC in the 2nd CCS. And then Ginger Burson went up to Norman in Palestine and said, 'I want Weary please. I'm going to form a surgical team and I want him to take charge', and that's when Weary left the CCS.

And as you say he became ...

And Major Moon became 2IC there.

Yes that's in the diary I think.

Yes I think.

And Mrs Eadie what happened to the sisters who were POW's?

Well now. When I was at Keswick Headquarters we only got little bits of knowledge of who was who and who was still alive and we knew they, I think we even knew - I'm not quite sure - I think we knew about this Banka massacre. I can remember on one occasion. It was when the first cards ever came through from any of the prisoners of war. And I know that Norman's wife got one that read just Dear Eileen, and it was printed, I think he wrote: I am well, love Norman. And that's all they were supposed to put. But when this day I walked into my office and there was this little, I thought old lady being young myself then. And she was shaking with excitement at the door in the passage in headquarters. And I didn't know who she was and she said 'I'm Mrs Hannah. And I've just had a card from my daughter'. You haven't heard this story have you.

No, no.

And there was a card. Well Mavis Hannah was one of our sisters that was up there and she trained under me but I had gone to the war before her. And I didn't know she was even in the army when I was away. But then when I was in Keswick the records were that she was one of the ones who'd gone to Singapore. Now but knowing that girl nothing would stop her. And she, somehow or other, and I've heard this by the other girls that thought well she was ridiculous to do it, but she decided that she would write a letter when they were given this card. We thought at the time she must have written with a pin. Because she got so much on this one little card but I can almost recite it off. It started off: Dear Mother, Dad and the brothers and sisters. And then it said, please do not worry about us, we are all right but due to long distance breast stroke we need the following - which gave us the clue they'd been sunk.

Oh right.

And that was very interesting. She said there are 32 of us here. Five South Australian's and she named those five girls and their addresses. And she said will you please get in touch with their families. Now that was absolutely marvellous because until then we didn't know who was alive or anything. And I went down to Brigadier Blundock who was the head of the army here and we had that card photostated and enlarged and we had it put in the Adelaide Advertiser so that other people

could read it. And got in touch with the other parents. Well now, those girls, well we knew there were 32 of them there. We didn't know how many were going to be at the end. And towards when the war was getting to the stage it was just about finished. Miss Sage our matron in chief, who was a wonderful person said to General Blamey, 'I want to go up to where the jumping off place was to see if I can find where the girls are'. And when she got to Java I suppose it was, somewhere in Java. They heard there was a convent with some nuns and they thought the women were there. So Miss Sage found Lady Mountbatten who had a Red Cross plane. I'm wrong I think Lady Mountbatten took her from where she first got to. I don't know where she was up in New Guinea I suppose somewhere where our headquarters was. And Lady Mountbatten said, 'You can come with me cause I've got a Red Cross plane and nobody can stop me from going', because they weren't taking army planes in at that stage. So Lady Mountbatten and Miss Sage went up, found this convent, they slept on a palliasse, Lady Mountbatten too, with these girls and told them that they would go back, go back that day and make arrangements to get a plane to bring them back. And Miss Sage told me herself that she'll never forget it. They went back the next day with a bigger plane to get them and these girls had saved their uniforms because it was all they had left. They looked like death warmed up and they were all carrying their little basins and spoons that they'd had. And Miss Sage said to me, 'I told them they don't need those things any more', and they said we could never part with them, we couldn't be sure. But that was a phobia those girls had. Incidentally Norman bought his spoon home. It was silver I gather and all the silver's worn off and I've given that to the War Memorial. It was the spoon he had to eat his food all the time. But Miss Sage ... those girls came home.

Now what was I going to tell you about. I know, about Lady Mountbatten. Now then, Norman's story about Lady Mountbatten was. Lady Mountbatten visited Heidelberg Hospital when Norman was 2IC after he'd come back and she looked at him and she said, 'I've met you before up in Singapore'. And he was fascinated that her memory for faces was so astounding. And I've been told that she was like that, which is rather wonderful.

> Can you remember the circumstances when he did meet her in Singapore?

Yes they were all lined up. All, I presume probably all the officers were because they were in Singapore. Also this is another point that whilst they were there some as Norman put it, the wealthy Chinamen, because they had no money at all, and some of the wealthy Chinamen who owned shops I suppose or whatever. I might not be right they might have even been bankers or whatever but they came along to the Australians and said, 'We trust you, you can have what money you want. If you want to buy presents to take home to your wives'. And I know Norman kept the receipt and the letter for years from the man whom he had to return the money that he'd borrowed. And I presume that was done by quite a lot of the officers. But it was a nice gesture on behalf of the Chinese Malays who were able to help at the end.

Yes it was a different relationship than the Japanese.

Yes, that's right.

You did have a story about Sister Hannah from Adelaide, Mrs Eadie?

Yes that was the one I told you just now about the letter which she sent or this card. It wasn't the Victorian Hanna who spells her name differently who is a marvellous person but she wasn't a prisoner of war. This Hannah was and she's the one that stops at nothing. Well I'll tell you a story. She told me that - she stayed here with me - and she talks prisoner of war all day long. She was in Allan Hobbs' unit. And she's parked herself on me now because I don't think she can get her words expressed enough with Allan. Cause he can't carry on a conversation. And when I rang the other day to say you were here Allan said I'm sorry that you're the one who's had to have her each time. She mustn't know that but anyhow. She told me the story of how the Japanese Commandant, and she calls him something, Suzuki or something. But they hated him and he came along and told her that he would like her to come up to their mess that evening. So what she did was. She went back to these 32 odd days, because this is the early days. And they decided that there would be eight of them that would go. And they chose the ones that didn't have their own teeth and they took their dentures out. And those who had parts in the side of their they parted it in the middle so they had like a crest of hair at the top. They looked ghastly and these eight girls, no shoes on, landed at the door of the officers mess. And he looked staggered and they just stood and said no understand, no understand. Anyway they asked them to come in and they asked if they would like a whisky. And they said, 'No we only drink milk'. There was one other girl, and I don't know who it was but she's not a South Australian, but she had volunteered with Mavis Hannah that they couldn't keep this charade up all evening and they'd been to the Dutch lady doctor who was in the camp who told them that if they were raped and became pregnant that she would look after them. That they'd have to take it or be executed or whatever. So they were prepared these two. And well it got to the stage that Mavis Hannah thought that she'd have to let the others go. And she looked across to this other girl and she nodded. So the others disappeared the six. And Suzuki, we'll call him that now, said to her, 'Come', so she went. And she said you have no idea how terrified I was and going from the lighted room it just looked black everywhere. And she said we'd only taken a few steps along the path when he stopped and he had his little peak cap on and his sword at the side of him and his rubber gum boots as I call him. And they stopped and he put his hands on her shoulders and he said, 'I love oo'. And she said I don't know what happened but involuntary I didn't know what I was doing. I shoved him under the chin and he fell back and there was a ditch behind him. And his sword and his hat and everything went flying. And she went for the lick of his life back to get the other girl and they ran for their lives and they were never, ever asked again, which I think was a wonderful story because they could have been ...

And another funny story. All the Dutch were in that camp. And the Dutch women used to get money for doing favours I don't know how far the favours went. But they used to go into the local town and do their sewing for them. They didn't like these Dutch women but they thought they were very clever. And one of them came back one day and all the Japanese wore were, I don't know what you call them, those little things, like a little T thing that tied up with ties on the side you see, around their groins. And this woman came back. They'd been making them for the Japanese you see. And apparently this woman was quite a good sewer and she said, 'I've made my issue today that will never be forgotten'. And our girls said 'What did you do?'. And she said, 'I worked forget me knots all over mine'. Oh dear oh dear.

The other terrible thing is that eight of those girls died and they made the girls bury them themselves and they were so weak that they used to know that so and so wouldn't live any longer. And Raymont, one of our army sisters from here, in Adelaide, she died about two days before the end and she knew she was dying and I think by that time the Japanese knew they were losing the war. And they would take Raymont in her rice to eat and she would say, 'No you have it, you have it'. And wonderful things to tell you like that. And they would dig the holes in the morning when they still had a bit of energy and bury them afterwards.

Oh terrible.

Oh they were terrible stories that they could tell. But there were apparently wonderful women there as well. There was one nun that. They got a, Betty Jeffries has got a record of this a cassette. Have you come across Betty Jeffries at all.

I know of her yes, she wrote a book.

Yes. Now do you know that she went with Bullwinkle to England. Do you know whom she saw?

No.

Well when she arrived. These are stories I suppose from the nurses fraternity.

Well please continue.

But she arrived in England after the war with Bullwinkle and they were the two sort of ... well not Betty Jeffries as much as Bullwinkle was the hero being shot. And they went to Australia House and the Head of the Red Cross there said to them now we can arrange an audience. This is to Bullwinkle, not Betty Jeffries. We can arrange an audience for you with the King, or Mr Churchill, anyone you like, Queen Mary, and do you know whom she chose Adette.

Oh yes.

The girl who had her fingernails pulled off. Yes who was Mrs Churchill really, yes, they divorced afterwards.

Yes she was in the European camps.

In the underground yes.

Yes she was parachuted into ...

But she chose to see her. And they took her to her house. She was living somewhere just in London. And Bullwinkle - this is her story - she was taken into the sitting room and Adette came down, we only know her as Adette. But the thing that Bullwinkle noticed immediately, she wore gloves. So I suppose all her fingernails had been pulled off and she had terribly scared hands. But you don't know about those stories unless somebody tells you.

Now I can tell you another little story when Norman was 2IC at Heidelberg Military Hospital. It was when Lady Mountbatten and all the dignitaries used to go out there just after the war. And, I don't know, I think it possibly would have been the Dutch Consul in perhaps Victoria who went out. But he was a man of authority representing the Dutch. And Norman was there that day apparently in charge and he knew Norman had been a prisoner of war and up on that railway and mixed with Dutch up there. And he said that he was going to recommend, it was the least that the Dutch could do to hand out an award to, or decoration to, a representation to one of the Australians. And he would feel that it should go to Norman and he said if you are quite willing I am going now to make that representation to Headquarters. And that was the last Norman ever heard of it. And he said to me, I just presume one of the people at Headquarters got it.

Which probably was what did take place.

He wasn't resentful of that. But it was just as a fact that things are forgotten.

You were going to say something about Tim Godley.

Tim Godley. Well Tim Godley was a student and a house surgeon and his two sisters were at the Adelaide Hospital. Jay who was the younger of the ... the older one than Tim. Tim was the baby of the family there were other sisters as well. But these three are the ones I'm talking about. Jay was the oldest ... Nora was the eldest. Nora was an artist and a very wonderful artist. She'd been to Italy and painted and she was a wonderful girl. Then she started nursing when her sister was already a sister. And Jay did her training with me. We sat for our general exam together. Then Tim came along. He was her baby brother. He wasn't naughty. Harmless compared to today. But he was one of the bright boys who was always asking somebody out you see. Jay and Nora were both Norks, J and Nork, Joyce and Nora and they adored him but they just wanted to know how frivolous he was. And I was talking to the two of them one day and they said that's not the sort of person you'll marry in the end we know. Quite certain that they knew what he would finish up with. He actually married a girl from Western Australia who had a sister who was in the army.

And is that why he went to WA?

No he went to Western Australia work after he finished as a house surgeon. We lost a lot of boys to Western Australia.

And did he stay there until he died? I haven't got the information.

No he, they lived here and they lived here just not very far from here.

Thank you very much Mrs Eadie for a most informative and interesting interview. That completes the interview with Mrs Norman Eadie who was Matron Butler in Adelaide on 24th January 1991. Interviewer Doctor J. Mitchell.

END OF INTERVIEW

9/91