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TITLE: June Graham as a member of the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA).

INTERVIEWEE: June Graham

INTERVIEWER: Sue Maslin

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June Graham as a member of the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA), 1942-1945, interviewed and recorded by Sue Maslin on 28 May 1985 at Lake Bolac, Victoria.

…It takes seven years to mature and soon as it comes out of the top we had to stick the knives in through the soil and just sort of guess where they were and cut them, and like once the air gets to it, it turns green, you see. So that's how the asparagus. And there we are packing it. That was on the vegetable farm down in Koo-Wee-Rup. That's there, I can't remember quite what, I don't know what we were weeding or doing… It doesn't look like weeding, though, does it? Unless we just posed there. But that was the channels up there and we used to go swimming.

This is all at Koo-Wee-Rup, is it?

No, this is up at, that was at Koo-Wee-Rup. Now these channels were up at Merrigum. That's where we were fruit picking. And there we were all up together and we used to mostly cling stone peaches and pears and we used to have a foreman. And it used to get pretty hot up there and he'd disappear during the day and he used to have a special tree somewhere with, you know, the ordinary nice juicy peaches. We never ever knew where that tree was. He used to come back, we used to wear these bags, and he'd have a bag full of peaches, and he used to give us all one of those extra peaches. But we used to be just picking the other ones, you know. And we used to have quite a lot, you can imagine, a lot of stewed peaches for lunch. We used to have, it was

really like a holiday home now, only we used to have, there'd be about ten of us when we went through. Well, they'd have their own places for us to stay, they were private properties, but the one we stayed in we had about ten, we had bunks. And then they used to get some seasonal girls come up and we had in our group, we had most of us knew one another but we had a couple of strange girls. And one was really a very rough girl. And we had a university girl up there in seasonal work and she was extremely, well, she was a lovely person this other little girl. This other big girl she was, the one that was rough, she used to sort of pick on her. But she'd never ruffle the girl, she'd just, you know, be so pleasant back to her. This was the different types we had together.

Where was this?

This was at Merrigum.

Merrigum? Whereabouts is Merrigum?

That's up near Shepparton, not far from Shepparton. But, you know, there were such, oh well, so many different types. And she did always pick on this seasonal worker but the other little girl used to take no notice and just be nice back to her and she'd finish up, you know, leaving her alone. But it happened all the time. That was just one sort we had amongst us, you know. And what else, you ask me some questions.

Okay, how about we put the photographs down for a while. I'd be interested to ask you a little bit about your background firstly and a little bit about your life before you joined the Land Army?

Oh, oh well, oh well I was working for the Southern Command. That was another Army place, Army Headquarters in town, just doing in the pay office. But before that I had quite a lot of different jobs. I worked as a waitress, and up at the woollen mills at Millston. Don't know if you know where they are.

No, where's Millston?

Well, it's up near Fawkner, it's on the Brunswick line only up further. What else did I do?

Were you living at home?

Oh yes, yes, I'd never sort of really been away from home. It was quite, you know, a completely different life really coming to the country because the boys used to come up and say, "We're going to go crocodile hunting, with would you like to come?" We were very, you know, very innocent, naive and we thought, we couldn't work it out and it turned out to be duck shooting and we'd go out duck shooting. But, you know, we never had a clue if they used to go shooting or you know. It was completely different and we didn't

realise how all that vast, how far away from home we would be really, but anyway.

Where was home? Where did you grow up?

I used to live at Flemington and then I worked for my father in Richmond. He had an electroplating business and I used to help in the office. But I was there then when I joined the Land Army.

How old were you?

I was 16, I'd just turned 16 when I joined the Land Army, and so was my friend Vonda. As I say, we couldn't get into the, we wanted to really join the Air Force, you know. That was the main thing at that time.

Why did you want to join the Air Force?

Oh well, we just thought, you know, it was a little bit better. We just fancied we'd be better off in the Air Force. And then we tried the Army but we were too young, you see, so we finished going into the Land Army. But we enjoyed the… When we went to Lancefield, I think I said King Lake, didn't I? It was Lancefield. When we rode up to my friend's uncle's place, we loved being outside, you know. We both had been working inside and we liked the stooking and oh, it was just completely different. That's how we come to finally get into the Land Army. But, it was, you know, quite

a, it was a nice life but we did work hard for the first. Well the first job was very hard on us because we didn't expect it to be as long and have so many. The people there, the Neals, the O'Neals, I think it was, they didn't have any children and they didn't give us any pleasure. When we used to have our meals we used to, you know, it was Mrs Neal who used to be the, well, she seemed to be the man of the house and we didn't dare put much butter on our bread or ask for anything. He'd just sit there and watch us. It was a strain for young, you know, the way we were. Anyway, we enjoyed the work and we used to get in and we used to sing mainly. That was mainly what the Land Army did when they were working, they used to sing along and he sort of was all right. He used to, you know, enjoy it. But when we got back to the home he was very quiet and different. But, as I say…

> Can you remember your first day in the Land Army, when you first went to that farm?

Well, no, I think we went to the Werribee.

> Oh, all right. Perhaps we can go back to Werribee first?

Well, I don't remember much about Werribee. They mainly marched us to work, I remember that, and showed us over. It was more like a showing of the, you know,

what was done on a farm. I don't remember us doing very much there.

Can you remember why they decided to teach you to march?

No, I don't. We used to have a Mrs Mellor, I can remember her, and she was in charge of us and she used to group us together and march us and give us clear instructions about everything, but I don't know why we marched. It was probably an easier way to take us all to here and there and show us around the area. But I can't remember much what we did around there. I remember milking the cow. We had to go practice milking the cow.

Can you describe the practice cow?

No, I can't really, it just looked like a cow and we had to sit down. No, I can't tell you much about it. It was really a bit useless, I thought, you know. It was just a matter of sitting there and having a go but it wasn't like milking a real cow really.

What did you have to do? Did you have to fill it up with water or something?

Yes, they put something in the bag, yes, it was probably water. It had a hole at the back of it up the top, you know, and they'd fill that and we'd just sort

of sit down and sort of practice milking the cow. But it was pretty hard for the… I know I was always a bit nervous of animals, even after. We never really got to milk a real cow but it was only after I was married that I milked a cow. And then I used to feel a bit nervous because they used to leg rope them. Oh, a lot of them were quiet, you know. But I think the cow we had used to know I was a bit nervous and it used to run me, you know, run around the wood heap I'd go after chasing it, then I'd get it in and milk it and then I'd forget to undo the leg. I'd be so nervous I'd forget to undo the leg rope. But as I say most of them were pretty quiet, it was just, you know, but they do know when you're nervous of them. But no, I can't, that's all that… They poured water in, that's right, at the back up the top and then we'd just have to sit there and milk it.

How many girls were at Werribee when you were there?

Oh, well, I couldn't be specific about it that either but I think there'd be about 15, round about the mark, but I couldn't say for sure. It's such a long time ago.

What sort of work would you do while you were there?

Well, it was mostly weeding and, you know, I can't greatly remember, I'm not much help about that.

Did you think that the training was adequate at the time?

Oh well, it wasn't really. It was more about, let me think, no it wasn't really, I don't think, to what we had in the Land Army. It was just real work that we did. They went into more technical term, biology term and with the plants and that, you know. But it wasn't really anything. We just had plain hard work when we worked. Like weeding rows of carrots and parsnips, oh, and it was in pretty bad weather, you know. If it was wet we'd still be doing it.

Can you remember your first impressions when you arrived at Koo-Wee-Rup and started working?

Oh yes. Oh, I didn't mind it at all really. It was just, you know, it was a bit monotonous but, no, we used to enjoy it. We used to sing it but when we realised how long we were working, we weren't too happy about that. We realised it was far too late when we were called in, it was always sort of getting on dark. But we didn't mind, we put up with it. But then when we had a couple of girls come they really complained. We were a bit naive, you know, for a start and quite willing to do everything for the war effort. But they really did, you know, complain. Well, I think when we

first, you know, Kitty McEwen was the… When we first complained they sort of doubted us and when the other girls came and they realised, you know, that the people were making us work too long. But I don't know, we were sent away then too. We were more or less sent away on approval to see how we worked on the next place. We knew that ourselves, you know. But we got on very well up here. This was the next place.

What happened to your employer? Did he have contact with the Land Army?

Oh well, I think he may have been reprimanded from them, by all accounts because, you know, we were removed there and I'd say they would have reprimanded him. But you know, we didn't know anything, we didn't hear about that after. We were just sent on and we were more or less under, well, they wasn't too sure whether we were telling the truth or not. But they found out. A lot of it happened in the Land Army, evidently, you know, I heard after. But it was quite a lot taken away from jobs. And then there was other jobs that we enjoyed like the fruit picking and the flax mills. They were more like a, more like a factory job really. It was you started and you finished on time and had your breaks, you know.

So after Koo-Wee-Rup, where did you go?

I've got the list there, I'd better have a look. No, I'll just check on that.

Lake Bolac?

From Koo-Wee-Rup. Then I went to Mr Elliott's vegetable garden.

And then up to Merrigum?

Merrigum, yes, that's where we were fruit picking. That was back to Werribee. That was more or less just a stage. We were sent there between jobs really.

Why did you go back to Werribee?

Well, see, the fruit picking only lasted, that would only last over the period of time and we were sent back there until they got us another job to go to. Then I went out to a poultry farm. Where was the…

Werribee, then to flax?

Yes, that was at Lismore. And we used to have, that was very pleasant down there. We liked being down there. We had a very good matron and she was an excellent cook and she used to look after us all. And we did the same thing there as we did up here really. We used to, our hostel was right opposite where we used to go to work, and used to have, we'd get on a cart,

the same here. We always had a yodeling girl or something on the cart with us. And they had the tents, exactly as it was here in Lake Bolac. I don't think there's anything much different there from here that I can tell you about, Sue.

Did you always travel with your friend Vonda?

Oh yes, we were inseparable. We did state when we joined the Land Army that we hoped to stay together and we did really. I think the only job I went to without her was at the poultry farm at the end. But she was there at Lismore with me and we went fruit picking together.

Can you remember the day you joined up together?

Yes, I can remember us going in there and they asked us, they were a bit worried about our ages but they said we'd probably get in. They had a matron there, I think. She was a matron later, I can't remember her name although Vonda will remember. And they just accepted us. It was just a matter of passing our age because we were, I think the age of 16 was on the verge then. We should have really been older but they let us in anyway.

What sort of feelings did you have that day, so you think, about joining the Land Army?

Oh, we were very happy, yes, we were thrilled to get in. We really were looking forward to it. We didn't, you know, it didn't worry us we weren't old enough for the others, we were quite happy to go into the Land Army and we'd enjoyed the farming so much up at her uncle's.

Tell me a little bit about your experience on the land before you joined the Land Army?

Oh, I didn't have any. I had no idea what it was like. It was just, it was only when we went to her uncle's we thought "oh, this would be lovely working outside". And we enjoyed the stooking and, you know, making the stacks. We used to use the two pitch forks and pitch them up. And somebody would be on the carrier and just put them into place. There was a real method of doing a hay stack properly. But I had no idea. We were both very citified. Couldn't be more citified, really.

What do you mean?

Oh well, we loved people, we loved being in crowds, we loved going dancing, liked life. We played basket ball. Finished up getting a basket ball team over at Lismore, got some photos there. You know, we weren't really Land Army girls, let's put it that way. We enjoyed it, we made the most of it, but we really both were city, still citified really.

Can you remember the reactions of your family and friends when you decided to join the Land Army?

Oh, I think everybody was sort of, I don't think they were greatly surprised. The war was at a bad stage then and anything you did for the war was, you know, everybody just accepted it, it was just part of to do something to help, really. We were rationed. I suppose you'd know that, we had our ration cards. No, we just felt very patriotic. It was more patriotic than anything else. And especially us young girls. We were really patriotic, you know, something to do for the war. So it didn't really matter what you went into.

And what about your sisters. Where they older or younger?

Oh yes, my sister Val, she was older than me and her husband was in the Army and he was sent away so when they knew we were enjoying it she decided to join, she came into it. And she loved it too. But she was more countrified than I was, really. I've got a photo I can show you. That was our uniforms. She was always a Leading Hand, my sister, and you know, enjoyed the… Vonda and I were a little bit more mischievous. We weren't… like there was good girls, there was some that were a little bit too nice to the matrons, and there was some that weren't good enough. And we were about in the middle, Vonda and I. But we were younger and we

were a little bit, well, it was a bit of a strain on us really. When we used to have our meals with this Mr O'Neal, we used to try and be serious, but Vonda would say to me, "If you dare look at me when we're having our tea at the tea table," you know, she said, "I'll start laughing. Try not to look at me." And, of course, he would sit there like this leaning over here. He just looked down like this and frown every time we wanted a little bit more butter. Oh, we used to have broad beans and dumplings just about every night. And, of course, we'd have this between us, and I'd look at her, and of course, you know, we'd be sent away from the table like little kids. This would happen. But, we got that way, we had to control ourselves. But it was a very, you know, it wasn't natural for us because her parents were very free and easy. Well, strict, but pretty happy at home. There was this tension all the time and when I was telling you about the room we had. They put us out on the front veranda and there was a bee hive above our bed, we had bees coming in all the time. And we thought she hadn't finished making the beds, you know, and we got such a shock when we saw this hessian just left on top and we had barely any blankets. We put up with it, we didn't mind and just a… it was a fruit case for our cupboard to put our clothes in. Well, we could put up with that, but it was their manner, you know, and then when we'd say, well, I told you we made a few friends down the town, and they rang up and we went down. She said, "Make yourself at home" and they had a piano there and

telephone. And I went to play the piano, well, went to have a go at the piano. I wasn't any pianist, and you know it was a real restricted. We didn't dare do it and when they rang us up and invited us to the town to have a shower, they rushed to the phone and wouldn't let us talk. It was, you know, not like at home at all really. But that was only a minor thing, you know, but I think that happened in a lot of places with the Land Army girls. It wasn't…

How did those conditions compare, you know, with your home? You said it wasn't much like your home? What sort of background, what were you used to at home?

Oh well, oh well, I was probably, we weren't wealthy, but we were comfortable, you know. And I had a very strict father and we always had to be on time at the right time and everything but we had our comfort. Weren't, you know, they were just average. But we always had, I had a very healthy home. You know, my mother was wonderful, my parents were wonderful.

What did you Dad do?

Well, he had this business electroplating, silver plating, but he was a tradesman, a carpenter by rights. And my mother, oh well, she was just a housekeeper but she was inclined to… There was five of us, my brother and he was in the middle and my mother sort of spoiled

us all individual. My father was very strict and we did what he said, you know. Like most people in those times, the father was the real head. And she used to spoil us individually in her own little way, you know. Before we were at Richmond, it was, well, the war and things were pretty tough then and she'd get her wage and we'd have a big splash, we'd have everything that day but near the end of the week we'd be more down to bread and dripping, you know. It was sort of, you know. She used to enjoy seeing us have it but then she was a little bit soft to us in the one way, she wouldn't sort of ration it out. But I think we enjoyed it better because we'd have that one big lash out. But that's how things were then. It was really, we were pretty hard up, you know, unless you were wealthy, really wealthy. We were just mediocre. And it was a matter of getting jobs at that time. But, it was…

And how did your friend Vonda's background differ?

Oh Vonda, oh well, her father was a, he used to make saddles for horses and all that leather work. He had his own, he used to have his own little business. But they had a very happy family. A lot of, there was two boys and four girls, I think it was four girls. Bess, Vonda, Vicky and Nancy. And although they worked hard through the week, we always had, I used to stay at her place for the weekends or she used to come to my place. We met through basketball in the first place and then my sister, eldest, finished up marrying her eldest

brother. So, you know, we were pretty close family. But my father was stricter than Mr Fordham, and I'd go to Vonda's and he used to compare all the dances. He was an MC. Very big tall man, he was. A bit like the one in, do you watch "Carson's Law"? Oh, you don't, well, a bit like the main actor in that. And we'd sit up and take notice when he spoke, but we'd also go out with him. We used to go out with parents to the dances, you know. And we made our debut together and Vonda and I were really constant all the time. It's only in the latter years we sort of haven't seen much of one another. Because I've been getting little Brucie, actually, he's taken up a lot of my time, you know. But, you know, I'm glad. I get a lot through him, it's worth it, sort of, you know.

> How did you get along with the other girls? How did you find living in a group with other girls? You say you were at the hostel up here on the flats?

Oh yes, well that was, well, Vonda and I had each other and we were pretty, we stuck. Well, we had our mates. We had Norma Elliot and we had Marie Janna and there was about six of us that were quite friendly. We all had our individual ways. Norma was always a romancer. That was the one that used to sing, you know. She'd always fall… Oh, we had Americans come here and we used to always worry about Norma because she used to get herself involved with one of the, well, they were young

boys then. And Marie was very serious. Marie was a very genuine person. I'm trying to think who else was in our group. Pearl, you know Pearl. Pearl had the most refined face when she came, when I met her up here at the flax mill. But she wasn't refined. Like the things you had to put up with, you know. She came into my room. I don't know how she came into my room and I didn't know her very well, and she was making noises and, you know, these are the different types you had. And I was quite surprised and yet she had a lot of ability. She could sew, she was quite clever in her own way, but she had a bad family life, I believe after. And then we had girls that used to steal up in our group. Oh well, not often but there was always the one that you found, you know, things missing.

And how did you deal with that?

Oh well, they'd get… you see we had a matron, I'm just trying to think of her name, I know it too, I'll tell you in a minute, Miss Dean and she was very strict, oh well, she was very strict. Like we had to be in at a certain time, I think it was 11 o'clock, if we went out. And anything that happened, you know, they were reprimanded by her. And she used to… A lot of the girls used to sneak out and get in late, you know. And some used to help them get in late. This used to happen. Others didn't. It was really funny. And oh, I think you know, there was only perhaps one or two

that you didn't really bother with, with the girls, but most of us got on pretty well really.

How did you get on, how did the girls who stole in and out late at night, how were they able to do that? Would others cover up for them?

Yes, they used to, they used to cover up. I wasn't in that group, but I know that did happen. And there was a couple that used to be a little bit wild and they'd come in very late. But, they used to get away with it most of the time. Although there was times when they were found out.

Where would they go?

Oh, they'd probably go down drinking at the hotel here. Or if they met somebody in the area they'd go out with them somewhere. We only had dances mainly on Saturdays, Saturday night was the night. And if there wasn't anything on Saturday night it would be a great loss. But I don't, I can't, I think we used to just go out for walks other nights. There wasn't much on. Or make our own concerts which we did quite a lot. We used to have a piano up there. We always had someone who could play the piano, you know, we'd have a sing song. The few local boys that were here used to come up and join in and quite a lot of the local people around.

Can you describe the sort of contact you had with the US Servicemen?

Oh well, I'm trying to think. They were invited to homes here, a few of the wealthy cockies used to invite them and stay here. And they would come to the dances, you see, that's how we got to meet them. And oh, they were, oh well, very nice but typical American. Little bit different from… very well mannered and very nice.

Can you describe what you mean, I mean, what your impressions of them were when you say they were American?

No, I can't really. Well, a little bit brash sort of.

Did they have a lot of money to throw around?

Yes, they were, they had more money, they seemed to have more money than our local boys and were dressed very smartly. Their uniforms were very nice. But, oh, you know, I didn't have a lot to do with them. Some of the girls did. I wasn't, although I did meet a couple in Melbourne when I was in Melbourne. Vonda and I took a couple of sailors home, American sailors. They were very well mannered and very nice. We took them to Mr Fordham, that was her father.

What did, how did he react to the Americans?

Oh, he was very good. Oh he was lovely really. He was very sociable. He was very nice and welcomed them home.

Did you take the sailors back to meet your parents?

No, I was staying there at Vonda's for the weekend and there was no, you know, they weren't there long enough for that. But other than that I didn't have a lot to do with other Americans. But the ones up here I remember because Norma got involved in one.

How did the other girls feel about Norma being involved with an American?

Oh well, they didn't mind. They all just accepted it. But Norma was always, you know, a bit inclined to go a bit head over heels. She'd sort of get wrapped in somebody too much, but that was her weak spot really, Norma. But as I say she gave us the most fun out of most of the girls really. There was another one here too. We hadn't done a lot of knitting and somebody would start knitting and start teaching us a new pattern. So we'd all sit there Sunday morning or after we'd done our room out and knit. It was quite a thing then.

Do you remember the evening when you'd sort of sit around the fire and talk about things? Like what

sort of things would you discuss, you know, amongst yourselves?

It would probably be what happened during the day. We used to discuss the matrons quite a bit and we used to have, we were very disappointed in the food we'd have. They'd get us buns and they'd be pretty stale, not all the time but in general, and we'd have raisins and honey on most of them. And you know, it was so, it wasn't enough change at all. We'd have bread all the time. We'd all put on weight because we'd have these big thick bread sandwiches with honey and raisins, and then they'd have these buns. Sometimes they wouldn't have butter in. It was a pretty bad diet when I think of it. Oh, you know, we used to just accept it. But I can't remember really the discussions. It was mainly what happened during the day.

Would you ever sort of in those days, sort of sit around and talk about, you know, your relationships and the boys and so on? Would you discuss, say, birth control?

No, no, it wasn't, never ever discussed, ever. We were all really too naive. I don't really think it did any harm. I'm not a great believer myself in teaching too much sex. I was at the high school for a long time, for ten years after up there taking Phys Ed and Needlework and I found that some of the teachers were very young, male teachers. And I felt they didn't,

well, they were too familiar with the pupils, and I couldn't imagine any of them teaching them, you know, anything to do with sex because they were too young anyway. And what we didn't know in our time, it didn't hurt us. I think you find out soon enough, later on. You don't need to know. I think, well you need to know a certain amount, but I think you can know too much. That's just my opinion. Because we never used to, you were either good our you were promiscuous. But in general, I can only remember one girl. When we were at Lismore there was the Air Force base at Cressy and Vonda and I, we were pretty naive at that time, but we used to keep ourselves very nice. Anyway, this lass always used to be talking about she was going at the weekend to visit somebody at the Air Force. So she went away a couple of weekends and then later she had got herself into trouble. But that's the only one that I can remember for the time I was in the Land Army. Oh, there was others used to go out with boys and that. We were always wondered with whether they were decent or not. But in general girls were pretty good then. And just before, you'd be interested in this, just before I joined, it was before I joined the Land Army, you might remember they're making a film now of the Leonsky murderer? Well, I was living at Flemington at that time, just up from Royal Park and we used to have the blackouts, you know, and they'd be blacked out and there was Flemington Bridge. I don't know whether you know Melbourne, do you? And I used to live in the next house up and there was a lot of hoardings inbetween

which are probably not there now and I used to have to catch the tram from the city to there and it was round about this time when he did murder the three women and, you know, we were very frightened in that stage of the game. But that only happened once in a blue moon then to what happens now. I think the only one was the pyjama girl murder, which I can remember. But there was only two cases really, that I, you know, in that time. So that's how things have changed. You could go out, we could go out and meet two boys and go out with them in a car, you know, Vonda and I on a Sunday. We were always fussy who we went with, but it was very safe. We never had any, only when the war came it was different, when we had the blackouts, but nothing as dangerous as it is now. You can walk down any park and go out for a nice stroll. I went down to Melbourne, oh it wasn't that long ago. Well, I'd say it would be 20 years ago, and to my sister's in Brunswick and I went for a walk up to the park, it was a nice night. She said, "Oh, you know, you don't want to do that around here on your own." That's just how things have changed so much, and I wasn't aware of it because up here we're fairly safe, you know. We don't have anything happen really, it is a good safe area.

So at the time did you feel you had quite a lot in common with the other girls or was it a very mixed crowd?

Oh, very mixed crowd. We didn't drink, Vonda and I, we were too young anyway, but even so we weren't the sort to drink or we'd have, later we had a social drink but some used to drink. And then there was the other girls who were very good, there was a couple…

Where would you get a drink from?

Oh, they'd go down to the hotel here and they used to get it, you know. We'd hear of them being down the hotel. They mainly went to hotels to get it. There's a little pub over at Whitcliffe, I don't know whether you've been through Whitcliffe, have you? That was, I think, you know, they used to have their quiet drinks later. Probably weren't meant to be drinking at that hour, but they used to get it. And then there was the girls that snuck out with married men, like, you know. There was one up here, a married man, and she used to be with him just about all the time. It was just a variety of girls that made up the Land Army, I suppose. But you get to know them and you accept them. You mightn't approve but you've sort of got to live with one another. It's like living in a country town.

What sort of things would you do for leisure? You started talking about concerts?

Oh well, we used to, oh, we'd get dressed up and some would do a bit of a dance. Some would play, we'd sing around the piano. You know, we'd get wigs, try and

get, oh well, we'd try and make them out of the flax, try and make wigs out of the flax. But mainly I think it was mainly sport and concerts. I can't think of anything else we did much.

How much contact did you have with the local community?

Oh well, quite a bit. We got to know all the people through going to the store. Some went to church. I wasn't one of those. Mainly meeting them in the town. And then we were invited occasionally out to tea to people's places. And Mrs Morton, it's very sad she died recently, you know, the lady that the other Sue said, I don't know whether she rang up, but she had contact with her. She was a wonderful charity worker and, you know, she was a wonderful person. She just died recently. Well, you'd get invited to those people's places and that's where some of them invited the Americans to and we'd meet at the dance. Met mostly everybody at the dances too, I think. Except the real old people. Another lady used to do our, alter our uniforms. She had a husband in the Army and she used to do it to work. And, you know, if you wanted, oh, we'd do what we could ourselves but if you wanted anything a little bit hard she'd do it. But they seemed to have a lot. We were all there together, you know. Most of the, well not the real old ones, but they all used to go to the dances, just about, you know. And they did have some lovely dances too. They

had good bands and good music, it's just trying to remember what I can tell you.

No, you're telling us heaps.

Well, Vonda, my friend, if you happen to get in touch with her, she has been in touch with quite a lot of the girls. She would probably be able to help you a lot. Then we had, you know, we had all sizes and shapes. We had a very lovely girl, she was a big tall red-headed girl, auburn hair, and Dorrie Franks her name was and she was a quiet sort of a girl but we all loved her. I think Vonda's been in touch with her since. There was this little group of us, well, you pick your own friend and we had this little group. Well they were the ones I said, well Norma and Mary, and Dorrie Franks was another one. When I see the photos I remember their names. And most of us went to Merrigum together, we were at the fruit picking together. I think dancing was mainly our entertainment. There's Dorrie. You can't see her unfortunately.

Where would the bands come from that played at your dances?

Oh, they always had local bands, they weren't, you know, they were form bands and mostly local people. One of the fellows, Cliff Murray, he did live down here, he played the saxophone. Most of them were musicians in this area. The Macintyres, don't know if

you've heard of the Macintyres. They've all got properties around here. Three brothers and they all played in the bands. And even if they didn't play there was always, there seemed to be, well, there were more bands around because there was more dances. We had them every Saturday night. They'd be at Maroona or Streatham. And well, they wouldn't get early here but in Melbourne you'd be there by eight, well, Vonda and I were always there at eight o'clock, you know, because it was the thing to start at eight then. But they were everywhere. We had bands everywhere. We used to go to the Collingwood Town Hall, that was a great place for dancing. The Coburg Town Hall, and St Kilda, down St Kilda they used to have, they'd have three bands, you know, they'd have Hawaiian guitar or steel guitar band and that was a great place for dancing, you know, everybody would get there. But even in the country we always found that there'd be a dance on of a Saturday.

> Would there be, you know, the US Servicemen there and then there'd be the local boys, would there ever be Australian Servicemen?

No, very seldom. If they came home on leave. There was a real shortage of men. No, well you'd meet them on trains, travelling, if we went from, we go to Ararat here if we want to get to Melbourne and we'd catch the train at Ararat and then you'd meet Servicemen, some going home or, you know. It was mainly when you were travelling that you'd meet Servicemen. Or the

Americans would be on leave and be invited here. In Melbourne we met Servicemen when we were home on leave, but, you know, it was just a passing. Either a ship would pull in and they'd be here or, we were out, I lived at Flemington. Royal Park was another Army centre, that's where they were. But we never really had time, like, to get to know any of them because they were only sort of for short times really. But I can't ever remember, we only had a couple of incidents being with Americans, Vonda and I, you know. That's if we went to town.

(Resumes)

We used to, oh, we used to entertain, and we had to put on a concert there and we met them. They were helping with the concert. They'd pull the curtains and things like that.

Sorry, whereabouts was this again?

Well, you know Seymour? There was an Army camp up there at Murchison and there were Prisoners of War there at the time. But this was after when I was out of the Land Army and I was in a concert party my sister and I and we were sent to Murchison just to do a show, you know, and that's where we met a few German Prisoners of War. We weren't supposed to be talking to them but they were up on the stage and they made conversations with us. And then there was an Army

Barracks, an entertainment place in town for the Army. Everybody went there, they got meals and we were on the concert there, we put on a bit of a show there, but, you know, that was after.

What was your feelings about the German Prisoners of War?

Oh well, we were aware that they were prisoners but they were just talking to us so nicely. We were friendly with them and we felt very sorry for them and they were so well mannered. I can remember we were about to go on the stage and this prisoner started to make conversation and told us, you know, he was there as a prisoner and clicked his heels, you know, just like you see. Took his hat off. And they were so, oh, so, you know, made you feel so important. Where as the Australians, you know, just happy-go-lucky. But they were really very polite and very well mannered. So, you know, we were friendly to them. But, you know, there was that limit. They were there as prisoners. But it was really an experience. That was one of the best experiences I had really, really, meeting them and I did feel very sorry for them because you could see they were just as nice as, you know, anybody.

So what were you doing at the camp?

Oh well, you know at concert parties, well, you know, if you entertain, we used to learn dancing, and all my

sisters. That's how Sid, my brother's on the show now, he went to New Guinea when he was 17 and he used to have to come with us four girls. My mother worked to get us taught dancing in town and he used to have to come along with us, you see. So he learnt a certain amount and he used to hate having to come. But when he went to New Guinea, he was, they had a 50 percent American and 50 percent Australian concert, and he used to have a ukulele when he was young and it gradually got to a guitar but he was always a little bit clever at amusing people. I can remember him at school with the teacher, he was always a bit naughty but he could get away with it, you know. And he went over so well in the concert that he decided he'd like to do it all the time. So that's how he come to do acting. He is a comedian, really. But, you know, he's getting on now, he's sort of past it now. But that's how he joined because he used to have to come with us and we, well, they used to have these concert parties for these Servicemen and they might get a black man who was good at the whip and flicky and, you know, how they flick your hat off or your cigarette and some dancers. And actually it was our singing teacher that used to organise them. And we'd all get together and load up in a bus and off to the Army camps and entertain for the night, you see.

How long was this after you left the Land Army?

Well, the war must have been still on because, well look, it went from '39 to '45, didn't it? Well, it would be, it was while the Servicemen were in, it would be say about twelve months after. I'm having a stabbing guess about that. I know we danced in town and there were all the Servicemen were there. And we went to Murchison and several other places that I've forgotten now. But we used to have great time on the buses going.

So were you with some sort of official body or whatever with the concert parties? With the AWARS or anything?

No, no, it was just, well, they used to have them. No, they were just called concert parties and if you had a connection with any singing teacher or anybody that was interested in that, they'd just gather you all together to have them you see.

So it wasn't any official organisation?

Oh no, it was mainly through your teachers that they'd organise it, for the war effort, really. It was just another war effort that went on.

Well, why did you decide to leave the Land Army?

Oh well, I was tired of it. I wanted to get out. I think it was, well, it was completely different from

our life and things were picking up. Everything was improving and I was really wanting to get out. I'd had enough of it, living away from home. Well, it was a strain on us because we were younger, I think, and, you know, being away from home all the time. I had, well, my sisters left, when my sisters left, and I felt I wanted to get out. They let me out, well, mainly on they said compassionate leave but I think they realised that we'd had it, you know, enough of it.

Was it difficult to get out, to convince them that you wanted to get out?

Oh no, no, at that stage, no, it wasn't at that time. When I asked they just said, "Oh yes, it will be okay." But, you know, you couldn't just go in and say, "Well, I'm leaving." I think they knew we'd worked hard and they were glad to let us go. It wasn't, they didn't seem to mind us getting out. I think Vonda left about the same time. Vonda got lumbago, my girlfriend, and she had quite a lot of trouble with her back. She got out too. But it wasn't exactly the same time, you know. They just sort of eased us out gradually. We did try to get, they tried after the war to get a bit of what's the word? Well try and get the Land Army named as like an Army.

As a Service?

A Service, but, you know, they didn't have any luck at all really.

Can you remember discussion about the Land Army becoming a fourth Service?

No, but I can remember us trying very hard. There were quite a lot wanting to do it and I think Kitty McEwen and a few of them did try.

Did you actually get together with the aim of trying to get it…?

No, we didn't get together but…

It was in your minds?

There was quite a lot of, yes, after, trying to. I think it was more so after we'd disbanded, you know, when they wanted to get it sort of recognised as a Service and I think Kitty McEwen really did try but it didn't come off evidently, but I don't know why.

Did you feel that it should have become a Service?

Well, I think a lot of the girls, yes, I do really because a lot of them put up with a lot. And, you know, they were away from home and we had difficulties. A lot of the girls had difficulties, problems. A lot of them had problems with the husbands.

What sort of problems?

Well, you know, familiarity, trying to be familiar with them. I heard of different stories, I can't explicitly say but I heard girls telling me that the husbands had approached them and they were molesting them or trying to. There was quite a lot of that went on.

You mean the employers?

The employers, yes. And a lot of them had bad employers, you know. I know Verna McQueen, is it, I think she was one of them. But there was quite a lot, the girls get together and say the trouble they'd had. Nice girls, too, with the employers. So, you know, there was a lot. That's getting away from the Land Army, but that did all happen.

It's all still very relevant.

It did all happen, it did all happen.

If there was trouble with the employer, I don't know if any of your friends had had experienced trouble with employers, but what would the girls do? Could they go to the Land Army?

Well, a lot did and they weren't believed. And finally they started to wake up. I think there was so many

complaints. I know when Vonda and I went, when we first made our complaint about the people we were at, it was mainly the way he was working us for the long hours. They didn't believe us at all. We were sort of reprimanded and we were sent, we were only on leave and we went in. It was quite some time after when these other two girls came and they really did complain and we were just one lot. But I believe there was, you know, quite a lot of girls working far too hard, far too long hours. We did it, actually, it probably didn't do us any harm but at the time we thought we were hard done by, sort of. We hadn't been used to it and being young, most of them were pretty young, I think. Well, Vonda and I were but in general they weren't very old, the girls. And a lot of them did hard work on the hay stacks. That was quite hard work manual labour.

Can you describe the work on the hay stacks?

Yes, well you used to, well, you'd get these sheaves when were rather heavy and you'd build, you'd work from the centre. You'd lay the sheaves down in a, you'd do the centre first and work round the centre and the next lot and build them up on the outside. I can't actually but my husband would probably tell you that better than I could. But you know you had to have a method to do it properly. It had to be done.

And who would organise how you built the hay stacks up?

Oh well, you'd get on with two men for a start and they'd would show you. There'd be two men working and you'd be helping, and usually there'd be a man and a girl, once you got the idea. And the girls were fairly good and they worked hard and they had the men throwing the sheaves up which were off the ground, but some of the girls worked very hard at building the hay stacks. That was probably the hardest job of the lot. That doesn't sound hard but, you know, they were quite heavy.

What did you find as the hardest jobs in your experience in the Land Army?

Oh, hardest? Well, I loved fruit picking, that was hard work but it was likeable. I think when you were on the scutcher, you know, used to have to, well, it wasn't hard but it was very hard standing all the time. We'd be spreading out the flax and you'd just be standing there moving it along the machine. It was just tiring standing there all the time in the one spot. But the building, I think, of the hay stacks would be physically the hardest. The weeding and the other, I used to drive a horse there for a while doing a bit of ploughing. Blossom, his name was. You know, all that was all right.

Was that a draft horse?

Yes, yes, he was on old draft horse, Blossom. I think I had a photo of him there somewhere.

How did you get on harnessing up the draft horse?

Oh well that wasn't, it wasn't hard, it's just routine mainly. I had to be shown, of course, and I'd just have to walk him along the rows with this little plough and it wasn't hard. Well, it wasn't so much as the work was terribly hard but it was the long hours, really.

Did you feel at the time that people out side of the Land Army, like when you went back to Melbourne for weekends and so on, realised the sort of work that you were doing in the Land Army?

No, I don't think they did really. It was just such a busy hard time. You were just a part of the community like, it was just you were just a Land Army girl. I don't think they ever thought about it, because everybody was so busy. I don't know, they seemed to be too busy working to get some money for themselves, you know. It was really hard times. I can remember my mother going and working in offices just to get a bit of extra money. You know, she'd be up at six o'clock, gone, and just to bring in that little bit of extra money. No, I don't think anybody realised the Land

Army was just a bunch of girls. I don't think they realised really how hard they worked. And, you know, we'd be out, it was more regular hours here but we'd be out there in the cold. Some of the men weren't working when we were out there working. We used to laugh because there was a local boy and we'd be going out on the real cold frosty morning and we'd be working and he wouldn't be working, it would be too cold. So, you know, we did really have it quite hard and as I say a lot of the girls didn't get the uniforms for quite some time and they didn't have a lot of stuff. And I can remember this lass, she always had all these chilblains all over her feet. It was pretty cold when we were out, you know. Oh, you know, unless you got your Army issue you didn't have much to wear.

How do you think the Land Army affected your health?

Well, it didn't really because I'm pretty healthy person, I think. A few others, sort of had trouble with backs and that. But no I don't think it did me any harm, I don't really. I just, I missed Melbourne a bit, that's all. But being a city girl, of course.

I was interested to ask, what sort of reactions you got from all the men employers, sorry, employees that you were working alongside? How did they feel about girls coming along and working alongside them?

I think they liked it. I don't think they minded it at all. I never struck anybody, I can't say I struck anybody that didn't like the girls being there. Even the old Mr Neal, he loved us all singing and working at the same time. And then at the flax mill the men seemed to enjoy the girls there. They used to help them, they were very good really and I think they appreciated, I think the men realised how hard the girls worked, more so than anybody else. The ones that were with them. We used to have a Mr Linton in charge up here and he was very, well, he was… nobody liked him. He was very rude to us and he worked us very hard. He used to have to get such quota out by such-and-such a time. And I think the men were very good to the girls because they knew he was doing this. You know, he was pushing us all the time. But we probably got more work out for him, when I think about it, but at the time none of us liked him very much because he'd come out and he'd speak so rudely to us.

In what ways?

Oh, he'd, well, if anybody happened to be doing the wrong thing, oh, he was a really rude man. I just can't think of an instance. He'd come out, he'd say, "Get off there", oh, you know, there was no pleasant way with him.

Did any of the girls stand up to him at different times?

Yes, my sister was very good. She was never rude to him but she had a way of putting him back in his place. Nicely, but he used to take notice. There was a few that could do it, but she was a bit older, you see, and she always good stick up for herself. But he was rude to nearly everybody.

Can you remember an incident perhaps with your sister when he was being rude?

Oh well, no, but I might be able to find out for you. I'll have to ask my sister. She'd sort of stand up for your rights a little bit, you know. She'd perhaps, if he insisted we'd do a bit more, she'd say, "I think the girls have really had enough". Little things like that. She had a nice, very nice way of doing it. But he was really rude. He used to frighten us, the younger girls. We were a lit frightened of him. Val was a little bit older. But I might, I'll have to ask her, I'll have to speak to my sister see if she can remember anything. I might be able to let you know. I've never tried to retain anything that happened then because I wasn't really… I had a lot of fun in it but I was never over in love with the Land Army. That sort of work, I thought I'd like it more than I did. But so, you know, that was more or less the past with me. But such a lot did like the Land Army. There was a lot

of girls that were really country girls. Sort of used to it. I wasn't really, it was all different.

> Well, after you finished in the Land Army and you were with the concerts and so on, what did you do?

Like work? Oh, I went back working for my father. He's in Richmond. The business is still there now. But my brother-in-law has taken over it. He used to do chroming and silver plating and I used to be in the office and just help him. So I just went home and continued on my job there. But I used to just do the pays. Well, I did the office work really. But I was quite happy to go back.

> What point did you meet up with your husband and move back here at Lake Bolac, where did you meet?

Oh, I see, oh well, I met him when I was here and, of course, I was very young. And I kept in touch with him. We wrote and I came back. Oh, I came back two years after, when the flax mill was still going and I came back and worked for a while. So we continued on from there, you know. So that's how. But that's how it happened. But, you know, you're really young when you meet someone at 16 and continue on, aren't you? But that's how and getting married was the thing those days. You more or less, there was no thought of careers really. Well, you had to have the money to go to universities or any higher schools, so, you know, if

you couldn't do that you more or less just saved up to get married. That's we probably weren't, well, the children are alerted more now, aren't they? They're taught more. We just it was just the thing to get married then, so that's what happened, Sue.

And your husband, he was working?

He was working, yes, he was the foreman up at the flax mill. He was in the scutcher, you know, and he used to… He had a way of looking at them to frighten them, make sure they did more work, you know. But he did the, they tie up the bundles of graded flax, and he used to run it all, organise it all. So he really was farm boy all his life, you know. He's done it all his life so it wasn't any… But I was trying to think. He worked for mostly on properties before he went to the flax mill, just, you know, doing everything, shearing and all different manual labour.

So at the flax mill were you one of the girls out on the outside or were you in the mill?

Oh, yes, oh well, you had to get trained to do the grading, you see, and I started out side and then they wanted graders for the scutchers so I finished up going in and learning the grading. But Mr Linton wanted me to go into the office which I would have loved to have done but he used to frighten me. He had that, you know, he had this very rude manner so I took on the

grading and I used to like that. But it was very, very, dusty. It probably was harmful to me as far as a little bit I think, you know, in the chest. We had a lot of dust all the time. We never had any protection. When I think of it, it was dust flying around all the time and especially down at the grading end when it come through the scutcher and we used to take off. We used to take off. You'd do different jobs. The graders would take off sometimes and grade. I finished up grading all the time, but it was harmful that way. You'd get this dust, well, you knew it was about and you probably took a lot down in your chest. So I've been lucky up till now. I've been very outdoor-ish, you know, I've kept up me sport. I've played tennis up till last year, still leave them occasionally. But I think that physically had done me a lot of good. My sister had a lot of trouble with her nose when she was up there. She had, I think she started to cough up blood but she was checked out all right, but the dust wouldn't have… She had to sort of stay out of the scutcher.

> And was that a problem for her to ask to be moved, stay out?

Oh no, she had to go to the doctors, no, she got out all right. But it was the ones that were in there a long time, well, long enough. Ten months was long enough to be in there. If anybody had been there continually, all the time, it would be very harmful.

But then I went down to Lismore and did the grading down there which I liked that part of the work better than the other. I liked being outside but it was very monotonous, you know, the spreading. But we used to make our own fun, have laughs and jokes and everybody would tell jokes and you'd hear them over and over again.

Can you remember any of the songs from that time?

Oh yes, I could.

If you were pressed at some stage would you be able to be able to actually sing or remember the words.

Oh yes, I could. You'd have to give me a few little time. I can think, oh there was a lot of songs we used to sing. I'd just have to have a little bit of time to think of it. But I could write them down and post them down to you. Because there was so many. We used to sing all the time and we always had Norma was singing and we'd all join in and there was a certain set of songs, you know, at that time. I could write them all down for you. I will think about them and post them down to you, I won't forget. I'm just trying to think what else we used to do. Oh, you know, at smoko we'd play football with the boys. I don't know how the football got there but we'd kick something. Yes, we did used to have a football and they'd do acrobatics

and a lot of fooling around, you know. It was always usually the same few, there was some that didn't do anything, the quieter ones. We had a girl named Skeeter. Can't remember her right name. And two sisters over at Lismore that were… I'll have to think about it but I can sent send you some information. If there's anything in particular you want to go, let me know and I'll speak to my sister because she had a lot to do with Mr Linton and the foreman. We used to have two foremen, we'd have an overseer. He was a young chap, I can't remember his name but I'll think of it. And then we'd have the foreman. And Val was sort of, and Val Gale was very good. She used to do a little bit of assisting the foremen more or less, advising us girls. She was a very hard worker, Val, you know, the one you've met. She was very good girl. Worked hard. But she was a real, well, she was a country girl. She came from Picola way, is it Picola? Up Shepparton way, anyway. But they used to have like Leading Hands, that's what we used to call them, Leading Hands. My sister and her were a Leading Hand, you know. They used to see that the work was done. We'd just follow along.

> So you felt there really was a bit of a basic difference between the citified girls and the country girls?

Oh yes, well, we did the work. We did it and enjoyed it but some loved it and some did it. I don't mean

they did any different. They weren't better in the work, I wouldn't say that. I think the city girls all did a pretty good job because it was a completely different life, but, you know, we didn't love it as much. Well, some girls love country work and, you know, I suppose it's just what you're made up of. But I wasn't really a country girl. Can't say I was. Even milking a cow I was nervous all the time I did it. But, you know, others were quite good at it. Just trying to think of anything else I could tell you. Vonda was a city girl, she wasn't really, it was like two city girls going way out to the bush and doing something completely, you know, well, nothing like what we expected.

Did you join in the Victory Day march, you know at the end of the war?

No, we didn't have a march. Well, they might have had a march, but we weren't, I don't think we were invited but I can remember that day and it was a most frightening night. Well, we were in town, we went into town the day the war ended, and I can remember being in town. I had my sister Bonny, younger sister, who was in the Land Army for a short, like a seasonal time and we were near Flinders Street, Swanson Street and everybody was there and there was such a big crowd and we were swept more or less long the streets. And do you know opposite Flinders Street, the Yarra, well, you walk down the steps down there. There was such a crowd

down there that we nearly got crushed. We had, some were getting on cars to get out of it. It was so crowded. Everybody went into town to rejoice. And, you know, it was well it was dangerous really. There was just too many there. And they were all, you know, so happy the war was over. But I don't remember them having a march. Well, they could have but I can't remember it.

Have you ever joined the ANZAC Day marches?

No, I don't think they've ever had one, they've never had one. I don't think they've ever been invited, Sue, included in the ANZAC march.

Nothing locally?

Oh here, no, no, there's never ever been any connection there. I, you know, I don't say that the Land Army girls… I don't feel that they did as much as the other but they definitely did help the war effort. They definitely.

You didn't feel they did as much as the other Services?

Oh well, we didn't go through what they went through. I mean.

What about the other Women's Services?

Oh well, I no, I don't think we'd compete with them. I mean we were in any danger at any stage of the game. We just helped the war effort. But I think that should have been recognised. But not to the extent that the others were. I mean, they were in danger, weren't they? They were in unsafe places. None of us had any of that to worry about. It was just a matter of not being treated as well as usual really.

> Did you feel that the Land Army girls should have received some sort of rehabilitation at the end of the war? Particularly ones that might have had, you know, trouble with the dust and breathing or back problems?

Oh well, I think there could have been a few. I think there would have been a few that could have needed something like that, but you know, I can't say that anybody I know needed, has needed it. But if they were any length of time in the scutcher and had trouble with their chest which could have happened. If they'd been there long enough. But I don't know any of them, any of them that would have, really.

> Well, we're making, as you know, the film about the Land Army, I was just wondering if there are any sort of things that you feel you would like to see communicated about the Land Army experience in this film. Is there anything you'd like it to

say? We're just asking the women that we're meeting, you know, what would you like to see said on this film?

Oh well, I think it was mainly helping the war. It did help the war effort. There's no doubt about that. Let me think, well, there's really not much more I can say, Sue.

Is there any sort of messages you feel that should be said?

Well, it doesn't matter what happened during those years, the things that did happen you couldn't, you couldn't, you wouldn't improve by saying any of the anyway could you really. Like the wrongs that happened, it wouldn't probably ever happen again, like the incident would never come up again, would they?

Sorry, I'm not with it.

You're not with it? Well, I mean, the messages that I would have to say wouldn't make any difference, no, it would never happen again. We wouldn't have a war like that again, would we. But I think, you know, in the film it should we shown that the mixed variety types that were in the Army. I think that would make the film, you know, because there was such a, there was quiet girls that wouldn't come out of their shell and

some, there was an orphan girl, orphan Annie, we used to call her which was sad.

Did you have a nickname?

No, I didn't have a nickname. Don't know why, could have given me plenty.

Did you have a bit more trouble, do you think, than some of the girls because you and Vonda were a bit younger?

No, but I think the first job, well, mentally it was a bit hard on us, yes, and especially them not believing us, you know. We were very, we were pretty hurt when they seemed to think we were probably being lazy. But it was the strain of living with the two people, too. They hadn't had any children and we were under a strain there.

What were your living conditions there? You were in the same house?

You were put out in the veranda and that's where we didn't have any blankets, well, we had a blanket and a sheet and hessian bags on us. That was the, it was just the, well, they didn't, they acted as though they didn't believe anything we said. They were named the tightest people on the swamp, that's the type of people we were unlucky enough to strike for a start. Some of

the other places the girls went to up near Merrigum, a lot of them on fruit picking, they had lovely people to work for. There was a lot of girls that struck bad people which, one, I can remember one girl, I didn't hear a story but I know she had a very bad time. I remember the girls talking about it. She was sent out and she was having trouble with the employer molesting her and he was consistent, you know and she didn't know what to do about it with the Land Army. And if she had of approached him whether they'd have believed her. They did wake up a lot of people had complained but it took quite a while before that. Because Vonda and I felt we were on like a probation when we came up here, but we were in our glory who we had an ordinary job and set hours and you know, a room. We finished up making nice bed spreads and had it like a little model room, you know. But, you know, there was a lot of that went on for quiet type of girls, nice girls. Vonda was more outspoken than me. Well, I always had a strict father and I was probably, but her father used to, well, she used to be. She spoke up more to the Land Army when we went down there and she'd stick up for her rights whereas I was inclined to put up with it a bit. But, you know, it was better she did really. So, you know, Vonda would probably remember incidents that I have forgotten and she could probably tell you quite a bit about it. And then we had another girl. Must tell you about Lois Farrell. Lois Farrell. We used to have drinking containers see, and we'd all have to drink out of the same containers, hot water on hot days. I can

remember when it was 104 when we were out in the paddocks sometimes. Really hot. And the water used to get quite warm in these, what do they call them, can't think, like the hessian, you know.

Coolie bags?

Coolie, yes, sort of a coolie bag. And Lois wouldn't drink after anybody else. She was very particular. We used to get that way, we'd just pick it up and drink it. You got that way with them all. And she used to have the most beautiful teeth, Lois, and she used to tell us all she used to polish her teeth. And really her teeth used to shine, they really did. And it was a strong point of Lois having these perfect teeth. She'd be shining them up. Then there was another girl that wouldn't wash her hair under the tap. She'd want her own water. She finished up marrying out here. She married Johnny Knight who lives out here but she finished up leaving him. She couldn't stand the life in the country. She was a real, well, expected everything, this lass. But Lois Farrell was, she had very thin legs and she used to make herself these jodhpurs and they were too big, you know, and we used to… She'd come out in these jodhpurs and, of course, all the girls would try and not laugh and we'd all be looking at one another and she'd be quite unaware of the fact that these little skinny legs and these big wide jodhpurs and she was just a character, you know, and her shiny teeth. And she used to keep her teeth

like pearls. And you could see she shined them up. This is just the difference in some of the girls. I can't think of any others though at the moment. But there was such a, you know, a variety there.

> It must have been quite a unique situation living there with all sorts of girls from different backgrounds?

Well, we used to like it at the time. When I say I wasn't a country girl, I enjoyed every minute of it. But it was just completely different from what I'd been used to. But we met, that Dorrie Franks, big tall girl who had rather a sad life after she married and lost a child. We all met for about four or five years after. We'd all meet but I've lost track. I only know Vonda. Vonda's kept in touch with quite a lot of them. She's a lovely girl Vonda. And she would probably be able to tell you quite a lot more.