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Lieutenant Commander Ian Peter McConnochie RAN (Ret'd) as a writer HMAS Sydney, Korea 1951-1952, interviewed by Lieutenant Commander Tony Hughes RANR

Recorded
at: Canberra, ACT
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by: Lenny Preston, AWM Staff

Description

Ian McConnochie talks about his initial training in the RN and his transfer to the RAN; his duties as a ledger keeper aboard the *Sydney*; commission paid by the Commonwealth Savings Bank to the ship; his action stations; family naval connections and the loss of his father during the Second World War; general living conditions aboard the *Sydney* in Korean waters; replenishment at sea; Typhoon Ruth; the rescue of MacMillan and Hancox; the effect on him of casualties; organization of the pay office and pay parades; recreation at sea; a visit to HMS *Glory*; visits ashore in Japan; a comparison of pay rates between navies; military police patrols ashore, and an appreciation of the RAN's Fleet Air Arm.

Transcribed by: C.L. Soames, February 2003

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Identification: This is an interview with Ian McConnochie; it is conducted by Tony Hughes on 11 July 2002 at the Australian War Memorial. The topics covered are the experiences of Lieutenant Commander Ian McConnochie RAN (Ret'd) as a writer on board HMAS *Sydney* in Korea between August 1951 and February 1952

Ian was born in Portsmouth, United Kingdom, on 2 October 1931 and was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School. His significant postings included HMAS *Sydney*; HMAS *Anzac* in the Far East Strategic Reserve; HMAS [*Tarango*]; HMAS *Penguin* for the Mine Clearance Diving Officers' Course; HMAS *Sydney*, Clearance Diving Team 1; the Officer in Charge of Explosive and Ordnance Disposal Section on US Navy exchange; and as the Fleet Mine Clearance Diving Officer on Fleet Staff.

Ian, welcome to Canberra. Briefly, can we discuss your background and experience, as well as training, which prepared you for the Korean War experience? And how old were you when you entered that operational service?

When *Sydney* went to Korea I was nineteen - had my twentieth birthday in October '51 and we were already in Korea at that time. As far as training in preparation, I'd only been two years in the navy and had just done normal basic training and specialist training as a writer.

I notice you were born in the United Kingdom. Did you come to Australia with Royal Navy background, or did you join the Royal Australian Navy?

My mother had already emigrated to Australia with my sister, and I was given a free discharge from the Royal Navy to join the RAN. So there was no break in service and, in fact, I joined HMAS *Sydney* in Portsmouth and signed on on 25 October '50 and took passage to Australia.

So you joined the boys' training school in UK?

No, my initial training was done at HMS *Royal Arthur* and the writer training was done on HMS *Ceres*.

Where was that?

I couldn't tell you.

That is interesting. So you came to Australia on the *Sydney*?

Mm. We got to Sydney in December '51 and then I was posted to the *Sydney*. So I had joined her in Portsmouth, in October '50, and I stayed on her until about February '52, I suppose, or March '52.

On your return from Korea?

Yes.

Well, Ian, that usurps the second question. Your role as a writer on board *Sydney*, what did you do on board the ship?

I was a ledger keeper in the pay office. In those days the ledgers were literally ledgers, and you

had two people to each section - the ships' company was just divided alphabetically. You know, somebody might have the officers' and section petty officers' accounts, and another person would have A to N, for instance. There were two ledger keepers for each section, a 'fair' and a 'rough' ledger keeper. The more senior of the two writers would be the 'rough' ledger keeper and the junior one would be the 'fair' one. His ledger always had to be immaculate because it was the one that got sent to Director of Navy Accounts at the end of the quarter.

> That's a fairly big ships' company. Did you carry enough money to pay them each fortnight?

I presume so, they never seemed to run out. I don't recall ever any hiccups in that area.

> Something that's always amazed me is going away on long deployments, particularly in the days gone by where the banking system isn't the same as it is today - though the ship had its own banking arrangements, didn't it?

Yes, you had the Commonwealth Saving Bank. But there's not much chance of the money running out because it's circulating within the ship. Even when you, say, go to Kure or Sasebo, or whatever, there's an exchange of money - the US scrip, or whatever, was brought on board and people changed it. So that Australian money that they received on pay day still stayed in the ship, so the same stuff was circulated all the time, I guess – pretty well.

> Later in your navy career, before becoming a diving officer, you were a supply officer. If I can just step you over your time as a writer on *Sydney*, going back to this banking arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank, was there some sort of a commission paid by the Commonwealth Bank to the running of the bank?

Yeah. I don't know what it was, what amount it was, but yes, there was some sort of a commission paid. I can't recall now whether ... I think, as a matter of principle, it used to get paid into the RAN Central Canteen Fund - I think, I couldn't swear to that. Maybe some pussers might have been more miserable than others.

> I think that was one area where more than one supply officer finished his career in the navy, in that area. It was just as a matter of interest I ask that question.
>
> Do you recall what your action station was, your defence station?

I had a variety of them, I know I was employed in HQ1 for a while.

> Can you explain what HQ1 was?

Damage Control Headquarters 1 located on 4 Deck where any reports of water-tight compartments being opened would all come in to that one source, that one headquarters, and be controlled there. As far as my function in there [was concerned], it was just a sort of dogsbody, you would sit around and wait to be told to go somewhere and tell somebody something, or whatever.

Another occasion I was employed in one of the magazines up forward, probably about - I think it would have been about 7 Deck, it was a long way down, I know that - and in about Delta or Echo Section, I suppose - the first time I went down there – [there was] only a pretty small

access - and we were loading rockets and bombs, I think. But we were told by the person in charge not to worry about anything too much, about being down this far, because if anything happened the hatches above us would be closed and so you can forget about trying to get out.

Comforting thought.

Comforting thought, yeah.

One of the reasons I think I became a signalman was so I was always on the upper deck.

And see what's happening.

As a member of the Australian Defence Force you were simply expected to pack up your kit and proceed on duty in Korean waters. What did you know or think about the conflict so soon after the Second World War? I guess there were probably some bad memories, particularly growing up in the UK, lingering from the Second World War.

Yes. My father was killed during the Second World War in May '41. He was a submariner and his submarine failed to return from patrol in the Mediterranean, so that was certainly a bad memory. I was, what, nine years old, I think, at the time - no about eight and a half. So that was a bad memory for sure.

Growing up in Portsmouth during the war and the blitz, I suppose, I was pretty inured to air raids and getting out of bed in the middle of the night and going sleeping under the stairs, or in the air raid shelter, or whatever, and then going out the next day and collecting shrapnel. So I didn't really have any apprehensive thoughts about the Korean War; I was aware of what it was about through press and radio reports. I don't recall any particular instruction or lecturing from the ship itself.

No assembly of the ships' company to discuss what it was all about?

No.

Just another job?

Need to know.

Did you have any other family members in the navy? - I'm just going back to your dad.

His father was in the navy and my mother's father was in the navy, but I've only got a sister - she wasn't. There are no other cousins, or anything like that, in the navy, no.

So you followed on in the footsteps of the family?

Yeah.

What age were you when you joined?

I was seventeen.

Your mum was pretty happy about that?

Yes, she was quite happy, I think, to think that I was settled and didn't have to worry about me.

The same reaction from most mothers, the lad's secure in a good environment.

Yes, although I think she had some apprehension about the war more than me because of having lost my father only ten years previously.

Was there any difficulty in communicating home from Korea - mail correspondence, radio telephone calls, anything like that?

No radio telephone calls, but mail was reasonably okay. We would get it during a refuelling at sea, or some [log rec] thing.

So the ship's company was happy they were getting their mail?

I think so, yes.

Movies?

Yes.

Did you have beer issues on board the ship?

No, I don't recall a beer issue at all. I think we may have had one - it was a spliced main brace on one occasion, but it wasn't related to the war - probably Christmas.

It made the runs ashore all the better in Japan.

Yes.

Your initial reactions to being in the operational environment, including the climatic adjustments? - I know it was very cold when you were up there.

Mm.

Was anyone of particular assistance during this period? Was anybody looking after you personally, as a young writer?

No, no. I suppose, overall, the divisional officer was the one you got guidance from, and the chief writer in the pay office. No one particular person.

What were the living conditions like on board, on your mess deck in particular?

Very, very crowded. I was in M-26 Mess. Of course, in those days we slept in hammocks. It was a pretty full mess because it was a miscellaneous mess, so we had SA - stores assistants - victualling and naval stores, and scribes. So people would be sleeping on the lockers, in hammocks, generally a pretty confused area. To get out of it occasionally we used to sleep on stretchers down in the pay office where we had a little bit more room.

Pretty rough old ships, weren't they, to live on?

They were, yeah. The ventilation system was not the greatest thing in the world. You'd usually get hot air coming through when you are in the tropics.

It was particularly cold up there during your time. Was between decks kept at a right temperature or did you have to get around with your woollies all the time?

No, it wasn't kept at a comfortable temperature to my memory. Certainly there were sections when you went though machinery spaces, to get from A to B on 4 Deck, the main deck, but you still needed a jumper on. Pay office was down on 5 Deck, and the waterline was about two-thirds the way up the bulkhead there, and so it was a lot colder there - and heaters weren't particularly effective anyway. None of us - I can't speak for the flight-deck crew, they would have had some sort of issued warm clothing - but the rest of the crew had normal issue gear. You had to make your own arrangements.

I know this is a difficult question: Did you feel at all sorry for the people who were on the upper deck all the time? and did you treat them with some sort of respect? For instance, hopping in the lunch or dinner queue, did you stand aside for those poor old blokes on the upper deck?

I don't think so.

We spoke of mail and that sort of thing. During the logistics of such a large ship in that environment, was there a need to re-ammunition quite regularly?

Yeah.

And refuel, and food, stores on board. Was that often done at sea, or did you have to go back to harbour?

Oh, no, we did quite a bit of under-way replenishment. On those occasions there would be a clear lower deck to manhandle the food, or ammunition, or whatever it was, in the same way as if one of the sea boats had to go away, then it was a clear lower deck and man the falls for that sort of thing. It was a lot more antiquated then than what it is now.

Yeah, man the falls. Do you recall, were they Royal Fleet auxiliary vessels that replenished them, or just navy?

Mainly RFOs. We, in turn, fuelled the *Tobruk* and *Anzac*, I think - we fuelled a couple of times.

Essentially the area you operated in was pretty well a Commonwealth unit, wasn't it?

Yes, it was. When we came on station we relieved HMS *Glory*, a similar sized light fleet carrier. So yeah, it was ... And our main R&R base was Kure, which was BCOF headquarters, although we did, from time to time, go to Sasebo and [Ucosca], the USN places. Mainly we went to Kure and remained in the Commonwealth organisation.

I never went to Kure. There are some interesting stories to be told about it.

Do you remember Typhoon Ruth?

Yes, very well.

Being in HQ1 I suppose you had to close up during that period.

I did at one point close up there, but mostly we were just sort of hanging on, it really was the roughest seas I've ever been in. We lost about four aircraft over the side and a couple of others wound up upside down in gun sponsons. There were safely lines rigged on the upper deck - 3 Deck - but that was made out of bounds most of the time. It was about a forty-eight hour thing, I suppose, that we were in it. You wouldn't want to go up there anyway, you very easily could have been washed over the side from the sea breaking through onto 3 Deck. I went up a couple of times just to get some fresh air, up on the gun sponson, and it was quite impressive.

They didn't place the upper deck out of bounds? Well, they may have, but you did.

Yeah, that's right. You weren't supposed to be on the sponsons either, but you feel like you've got to go and see what's happening, get a full impression, other than just being rattled around inside. I know we didn't have any ...

(break in interview)

You were talking about the effects of Typhoon Ruth, talking about going, probably illegally, on the sponsons to see just what was all about. But going back, I think during that time the ship actually suffered some damage, and there were a lot of fires - electrical fires - I understand. Did that cause a lot of concern?

I really don't recall that there were any fires - I'm sure there would have been something like that, but I just don't have any memory of it.

I think with the ingress of a lot of salt water into the intakes it was causing all sorts of havoc with motors and things ...

Yeah.

... in the air units and that sort of thing.

Yeah. In my exalted position as an OD [Ordinary Seaman] Writer I wasn't really kept up to speed on what was happening. There was a real dearth of information, I think, for the ship's company generally in those days. You were told what you needed to know, and if you didn't choose to read the notice board then you probably didn't find that out either. Occasionally there was an announcement by the XO [Executive Officer] - I think the captain even, on one occasion, made one. But it's nothing like the dissemination of information that occurs in the navy today.

You were there to get on and do the job, you didn't necessarily have to know what you were doing.

No, that's right.

Sorry, you knew your job, the significant professional side of life, but you didn't necessarily have to be informed of the overall picture.

Yes.

If I could just digress, the time that I was in Vietnam, we were well informed, the ship's company was well informed, what we were doing, what we had done during the day. It was made a lot more interesting for us to know that.

Do you recall, as an OD Writer, any significant operations which stuck out in your mind?

That the ship was engaged in?

Yes.

Yes, I do. The time that one of the Fireflys - MacMillan, I think, was the sub-lieutenant - Sub-lieutenant MacMillan and Observer Hancox - they were shot down some distance north of the Han River. They got out of the aircraft alright and were taking cover in a ditch, but the North Korean troops were advancing on them and the ship scrambled the US helicopter that we had attached, that used to fly as plane guard during flying operations - it was a Sikorsky. I've got a photo of it at home, I'll always remember the number, it was UP28 - they were totally unarmed. It was flown by an American warrant officer and his aircrewman - I don't know what rank he was. They were dispatched to see what they could do to rescue these two guys, and they were given an Owen gun. That was the total armament - they would have had side arms themselves. They went across country to rescue them, and while they were on the way the ship's aircraft were strafing the troops and generally keeping them at bay.

But this guy got in there, very low on fuel, picked them up, and shot out a few of the enemy and sort of took off back, realised he didn't have enough fuel to get back to the ship - it was getting dusk, I think - so he just headed south knowing that he would find a friendly area eventually - which he did. I'm not sure where he landed, but they landed in South Korea, and then the next morning came back, brought the two aircrew back to the ship. That was a big moment for the ship, for sure.

I suppose the warrant officer and his crew were suitably recognised and received some award?

Yeah. He - chief or warrant officer he was - he got a US Navy Cross, I think, and he also got the DSM - he was rewarded from both services.

Well, that's appropriate.

That was appropriate, yes. He was also feted in the wardroom of the *Sydney*.

Well, as a warrant officer - if he was a warrant officer - was he living in the wardroom?

No, no, he wasn't - he may have been a chief.

Well, that was a nice gesture.

There were a few fatals - casualties - aircrewmen lost. Do you recall what effect that had on the ship's company?

I don't know about the ship's company. Only speaking for myself, I think it was a sobering moment, particularly ... Again, I used to go up on the sponsons whenever I could to get some fresh air, and I was up there on this occasion when a helicopter came in with the body of one of the pilots. Yeah, it is a fairly sobering moment, sort of brings home to you, particularly in a ship where, by virtue of its role, is well offshore conducting its business. Something like that brings home to you (the fact that) this really is for real.

There was a lot of activity going on ashore and those aircraft were very much involved in that. Until you see one of the results of the conflict ...

The results of it, that's right, because you are very remote. Not so for the other ships, the destroyers, who were in close and bombarding, it's a lot more real for them.

Yeah, there was a lot of activity, for the guys up the Han River particularly.

Yeah - *Murchison*.

Murchison, yeah. We'll be doing some interviews with some of those people so it will be interesting to hear about that side.

Circumstances of the operational environment that put most strain on the ship's company, whether enemy activity, patrolling, long hours; how did the ship's company cope with it all? Were they fatigued, did they carry on stoically?

Well, from my perspective everyone just carried on with their job as usual. Certainly the flight-deck crew were the guys that were the hardest done by because not only were they working long hours, but they were doing it in very miserable conditions up on the flight deck. But I was never aware of anybody being uptight about their working hours, in particular.

What about your own divisional sort of organisation? Do you remember who the supply O (supply officer) was?

The Commissioned Writer Officer was Geoff Britain - I can't remember the Commander S's name.

How many were in the supply side?

In the pay office there were ... I'd say seven of us in the ledger side, there was one writer the other side of the bulkhead in the accounts office, and that's also where the Commissioned Writer sat - and that was Geoff Britain - the Commander S, I just can't ... I can see him, but I can't place him.

I probably couldn't remember half of my bosses either.

The job of an Ordinary Seaman Writer in the Ledger Office, that occupied your whole

seven days a week at sea?

Yes.

Or did they give you something a bit more interesting to do?

No, that was it. You've always got people coming in to change allotments, and all that sort of thing. These ledgers were pretty big things, and they had to be rewritten every three months. The current one went to the Director of Navy Accounts after it was all balanced off and checked, and double checked, and all the supporting documentation, and so on, and so forth. You had to, in preparation, write up your next quarter's ledger, so I never seemed to be at a loose end.

These days there would be a program.

Your pay gets sent into your bank account by email or something these days, from what I understand. I don't think they have accounts on board.

Well, you know, you might recall we had to, every two weeks, go and get our pay in a regimented way, and we had to fall in in groups, and respond to our name being called out and front up to the table, and put our caps out.

***

Yeah. The (inaudible) below would take their cap off, and the supply officer would put the pay envelope on the top of the guy's hat, and then he would put his hand on it and go away, and put his hat back on.

It's a quaint thing. They'd have the opportunity of having somebody there to pick you up to get a haircut, or something?

Yes, Master at Arms would be there.

And you'd have to give the last three numbers of your official number. On one ship, I can remember - on board HMAS *Yarra*, I can remember now - on the starboard side of 1 Deck - on the upper deck - doing this. There was a chance of your pay packet being blown overboard.

We used to do it on the flight deck, as long as conditions were okay, in the *Sydney*. If they weren't then it was using the hangar deck. But if they were alright, then we'd take everything and set it up on the after lift, and then the lift would go up, and there would be the assembled masses waiting for the 'golden eagle'.

What sort of recreational facilities were there on board the ship - movies? Where would you see the movie if you were going to have a movie?

Movies were in the forward cafeteria usually. Other than in the Korean situation they would often be shown in the lift well if the weather was right. But movies were about the extent of it.

Similarly, the lift well - with the lift down, of course - would be used as a volleyball court, but not in the Korean situation.

Fairly busy old lift wells in that circumstance.

I served on board the *Sydney* for the Vung Tau Ferry trips.

I did that too.

On the way up there was lots of army stuff on board. I think we were still using the lift wells there for movies and things.

The captain of the *Sydney* in your time was Captain Harries.

Captain David Hugh Harries.

What was he like to you, as an OD Writer? I mean, they were God, weren't they?

Absolutely - extremely aloof and remote. I think I only ever saw him at divisions, whenever they were held, and occasionally if I was required to take any pay or allotment change forms up to the bridge for him. That would have been about the only time that I ever actually saw him. He was so very aloof, and he could be very rude and dismissive, not a happy chappie at all.

I think the commander at the time was V A T Smith.

'Vat' Smith, yeah, he was. Just to see him coming towards you with his telescope under his arm would make you think, God, what have I done wrong? But he was an excellent man, he really was, very fair. He was captain of the *Albatross* when I served down there subsequently, he was very good to his sailors.

He was the Flag Officer commanding the fleet, I think, when I was on board the *Melbourne* as a young fellow. I can remember, he wasn't impressed with some of the aircrewmen sitting on a sponson just forward of the bridge, who were, in his view, reading the Thoughts of Chairman Mao.

Working with other navies - particularly Commonwealth navies - during the conflict, did you get to meet any of your oppos [oppo – opposite number] ashore?

When we first met *Glory* - and I think it was in Hong Kong actually - yeah, it was - we exchanged visits to *Glory* and they to us during the hand-over period. And I remember, one of them took me on board to witness the up-spirits routine, which was very interesting. They were very particular about the routine in getting the spirits out of the store, and then pouring it out, and measuring it out. I think the thing that impressed me was nothing ever got washed, it was all green and grubby - ladles and little jugs. The short time I was in the RN - which was only eighteen months - I wasn't old enough to draw my rum ration. You were either teetotal - your ledger account was marked 'T', 'UA' for 'under-age', or 'G' for 'grog', so I never was in the possession of ...

Did you have a sip on *Glory*?

Oh, yeah. But that was about the only time that we really had any sort of face-to-face, and then it was only a relief situation during our other R&R phases into Kure or Sasebo, or wherever. We

were the only carrier anyway. I don't recall any other mixing, other than if you are detailed on a shore patrol, you would certainly see others around the traps then.

What was your favourite port of call?

I think Sasebo was probably the more interesting sort of a place, although they did tend to have a sameness about them, I guess - in what you saw on a run ashore anyway.

Had they recovered from the war? Was there any war damage in those ports?

There was a little bit of damage, or obvious damage, in Kure, but no, I wasn't really aware of any.

Did you go on any intellectual runs ashore, or just straight to the bar with the boys?

Mainly, I suppose, to the bar with the boys. On one occasion Geoff Britain, the Commissioned Writer, organised a run up in the sort of hinterland of Kure and we just went hiking for the day - which was very good, seeing some of the countryside. It made a refreshing break from the routine of everything.

You had Christmas in Kure, didn't you?

Yes. We got a parcel - each person got a parcel from ... I forget who.

The Red Cross, or something like that?

I don't know if it was ... it probably was through the auspices of the Red Cross, but I have an idea they were packed by a comfort fund. But they had everything in it - a packet of cigarettes, and matches, and toothpaste, all odds and ends.

Was there any exchangeable currency in Japan in those days, for favours like soap and things like that?

What, ashore?

Yeah.

I don't recall any - no, they seemed to be doing alright.

I think during the time it was the HMAS *Commonwealth* was the navy base ...

Yeah.

Its occupation - or preoccupation - post-war, it was fairly common, I think, to be able to exchange luxuries like soaps.

Were the Australian sailors well paid in your day?

No, in a word. I can't remember what the rates of pay were, but no. By comparison to the Royal Navy, yes, yes, they were, but then again, you compare our rates at the time with the US rates

and no, we weren't particularly well paid. We certainly weren't well paid for the Australian economy, no way in the world.

So the time you spent at sea, saving your money, you'd spend that fairly quickly when you got ashore?

Yeah. Well, you know, I used to boost the allotment up, which had a dual purpose in that the money wasn't there for me to go and spend up.

Did you have to allot any money home for your mum in those days?

I didn't have to, no.

Not that there was much (money) to do that.

If you were married you had to in order to qualify for marriage and separation allowance; you had to declare a minimum sized allotment.

That's a reasonable thing to do, I think, make sure that the 'little lady' at home got something.

Do you recall any member of the ship's company who stood out, still now, nearly sixty years later - no, fifty years later - who influenced you at all? Is there anybody (for whom you think), I really remember this person?

Well, I can remember a couple of the guys that I worked with, but I wouldn't say that they influenced me at all. In terms of influence I suppose Geoff Britain would have been the major one. He was the Commissioned Writer in the office, and he was the sort of father figure, I guess, to the rest of us. So I think that he would have ... you know, in his function as giving advice and if he thought you were going off the rails a bit, have a talk to you. He probably would be the only one.

It's a good sort of British name, isn't it - Britain?

Yeah - Geoff Britain. He wound up a captain, he was at Navy Office in Canberra, he was working for the Second Naval Member, I think, when I last came in touch with him. I know he's dead now.

His name certainly rings a bell to me.

I know it's a long time ago - it is fifty years, isn't it? - fifty-one.

Yeah, fifty-one years.

It's hard to bring back all those memories, but is there anything of particular interest that sticks out in your mind, that you want to talk about, of those days?

Of those days! I think we've probably covered everything that was of particular interest to me at that time - the typhoon and the fellows being rescued from ashore. That's probably about it.

Oh, on one occasion, when I was sent out as part of a shore patrol from the ship - we were in Sasebo and the shore patrol headquarters were - because it was an American port it was their shore patrol headquarters. We arrived in our white belt and white gaiters, and this fellow that was in charge of the shore patrol - and he had a big white steel helmet on, and he seemed to be bristling with sidearms. He wanted to know where our sidearms were, and we said, 'We don't have them. We've got gaiters and belt! everybody knows what that means.' So he told me that there was no way that he was going to turn me loose to walk around the streets of Sasebo in that, and I could sit in the patrol car where he'd know that I'd be alright. That was quite an experience actually, to drive around in that patrol car and see how they treated their sailors ashore.

Harshly?

Oh, very harshly, and if you happened to be black you got double whacks of harshness - really unbelievable.

Different people, aren't they?

Different people, yes. I was rather pleased actually that I hadn't had to walk around the streets in my white belt and gaiters.

It's a job I never liked to do, I felt very vulnerable.

Yeah, that's right.

Just digressing, I remember a bar in [Alongepo] City. This Kiwi - Maori - had - American shore patrol, they were trying to sort out their own blokes, but he decided to intervene. They didn't want to have anything to do with us, this Maori fellow, because he was an angry ant. There are lots of stories I can tell.

The worst offenders, in Kure anyway, were the Kiwis. They would start fights just for the hell of it - what else?

Oh, well, they've got a big fight on Saturday night against Australia.

Yes, I won't win that one.

Ian, well, thanks for that. It's an interesting part of our navy history, the Korean campaign, so close after the Second World War, where, from my reading of the history, we were really on the wind-down, and this had to bring us back up again. We had difficulty, I think, meeting our commitments, to keeping ships up there and how we were going to do that. It was certainly a baptism of fire, if you like, for our Fleet Air Arm.

Fleet Air Arm, yes.

Who did themselves proud, I think.

They acquitted themselves extremely well. I think, in the time that we were up there, there were over 2,300 sorties flown, and I think there was something like 82 in one day.

That's a lot.

It's a hell of a lot. The ship was recognised as being an efficient unit and very capable, so we did acquit ourselves very well.

Yeah, our Fleet Air Arm had a short but impressive history, both carriers performed very well from an aviation point of view. *Melbourne*, unfortunately, ran over a couple of boats.

Yeah.

Which was sad.

Unbelievable.

Well, thanks, Ian.

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