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Name: Baden Singleton

Regiment: Royal Navy Patrol Service, Churchill's Pirates.

Date of Transcript: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Transcribed By: David Davies

Time Code	What is Said
00:00:00	Start of Film 1
00:00:01	My name is Baden Singleton. I was born September 27 <sup>th</sup> 1924 and I was brought up in [????? 00:00:17] in Dorset. I went to Lulworth School until I was fourteen... two and a half mile trek to school and when I was fourteen because my father died when I was seven I had to get out and get some work... because we were brought up on the parish. And I got this job in domestic service. Three male servants, and three each kitchen and house maids, quite a happy household really. I was there until I joined the navy. I was glad to get out of there because I was on my own... I was doing the butlering side of it just me you know. Anyway I joined the RN at seventeen and a half to go and stand guard on the camps. I did my training at Gosport in a New Barracks Gosport. At six weeks disciplinary and rough outline of naval... the I went to [inaudible 00:01:56] camp. six months I was there standing guard. And then from there too general service training at Collingwood.
00:02:08	<b><i>Were you a volunteer for the navy? Was this something you really wanted to do?</i></b>
00:02:13	Yes right from a youngster I found a seaman's hat on the beach and it fascinated me. I had tried as a boy to get into the navy and I couldn't I got two retracted ribs not even the Merchant Navy would take me but, when the war came they didn't notice that... they accept anyone I suppose. Anyway from Gosport too Collingwood and I really can't remember how many... we did the full training there quite strict... we had a old retired PO in charge of our class and he didn't want to come back in and he let us know... at every opportunity. He was quite a character he said 'if it wasn't for you lot I could be at home sitting in my arm chair spitting on the ceiling' that was his favorite you see. And during the training in Collingwood the roads weren't that wide... and you're marching in a squad and there is a squad coming from the other direction... he would ask you 'what do you do?' and we would sort of move over but, not him straight through he said march over them... you know we had that sort of training... it was all new to us. End of training it was just a batch draft from Collingwood to Lowestoft a batch of us.
00:04:18	<b><i>So you had no choice about it?</i></b>
00:04:20	No no we were just seaman, we don't have choices.
00:04:25	<b><i>So what happened when you got to Lowestoft?</i></b>
00:04:27	Yes... we were happy it was a wet day a miserable night we got there dark and of course they have no barracks and you were billeted in the town. It was much too late for us to be billeted so the main area was a concert hall that was part of this place in Lowestoft they took over. It was a big concert hall with a stage and what have you anyway we just spent the night on this floor how you could. You know you just laid down and went to sleep. We were tired enough and in the morning we went round with a lorry and you would drop off here and drop off there and I finished up at the south end of Lowestoft Hatfield. Quite a long way from the base but, then we had free bus transport so...

Time Code	What is Said
<b>00:05:36</b>	<b><i>So you were in digs basically? You were billeted out?</i></b>
00:05:40	Yeah and I was billeted with a fishing skipper and he was very strict but, a nice old chap you know and the failing I had with that is he insisted on making Yorkshire pudding in a basin and we had to eat it... you could not leave it unless you had a pocket, which very often happened you know you must not leave this Yorkshire pudding but, he was a great chap meeting down the pub and buy him a drink. He was your mate all through the war and service I was seaman. And a seaman in a minesweeper you... deepening in how many watches... the first ship I was on we only had six seaman so that meant we did four hours on and four hours off all the time we were at sea which could be quite a long time and quite tiring and of course your watches change at the dog watch. Which is six until eight... yes six until eight I had to think then. Anyway you know if you were close to the dogs just come off and wanted to sleep you lost it because you stood too dawn and dusk... you always everyone was up. You see and we had an hour and twenty minutes on each post this was on the bridge lookout... hour and twenty minutes at the wheel and an hour and twenty minutes on the aft gun lookout. The aft gun lookout made the cocoa for the next watch. When we were in harbour you would paint and get stores in you know all manual jobs I suppose...
<b>00:08:09</b>	<b><i>And at sea?</i></b>
00:08:09	Scrubbing the decks at sea that's all you did. A sweeper takes in a lot of water she is not like a big liner and you couldn't do much on the deck if she's a bit choppy not much you could do actually so you're just watch keeping or sleeping you didn't do anything between. On the second ship the Wolborough we had nine seaman so we had three hours on and four... four hours on and eight hours off accept for the dogs... and then you lost a bit. My first trip out was on Romeo and at the time we set off I was pumping water from the main tank to the heads up top. And I'm pumping away you see and the ship poked her head outside down a trough, up a trough down and over the sides and that was it no more... I lost what I had then and went back to pumping the water quite happy. The only time I was ever sick again was off Bengasi we were at anchor and the heat was terrible, no air at all and there was a heavy swell and you know I was sick again... just the once I got rid of it I was alright. But, that's the only times. The ships I was on were escort... we were ASDIC sweeps and radar.
<b>00:10:26</b>	<b><i>So you were detecting mines?</i></b>
00:10:29	Not mines no submarines...
<b>00:10:31</b>	<b><i>Detecting submarines...</i></b>
00:10:32	If there was any mines we would find them... no it was subs we looked for.
<b>00:10:40</b>	<b><i>And if you actually got a contact then what did you do?</i></b>
00:10:46	Nobody was handed to the bigger escorts... but, if in some circumstance we had to drop our own thigimies...
<b>00:11:00</b>	<b><i>Depth charges...</i></b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:11:02	Depth charges yeah but, you know... we only do twelve knots if we could race about whereas our flotilla leader was a frigate and they could move a bit faster corvettes they did. Even... there was another one a South African whaler was part of our escort off hand I could never remember the names of the ships or how many. We had a fair flotilla,
	<b>Start of Film 2</b>
00:11:44	We had nine seaman two four six stokers... two yes I think telegraphists and signalmen there was two each of them I think. ASDICs there was three, radar there would have been three and then engine room as I say we had the Stokers two engine men and one chief PO... then you had a skipper a first lieutenant, lieutenant commander a sub... and we had one two three I one lieutenant and one sub lieutenant. The sub lieutenant was chart room, a lieutenant general... lieutenant commander was first number one... and the skipper he was head of the family... the first lieutenant was a Canadian.
<b>00:13:32</b>	<b><i>Royal Navy... Royal Canadian Navy?</i></b>
00:13:35	Fisherman I think...
<b>00:13:37</b>	<b><i>So he was also Merchant Navy?</i></b>
00:13:39	Yeah... very few we didn't like RN we were different we were Harry Tate's Navy Churchill's Pirates... do you know how we became Churchill's Pirates? Churchill came along the docks one day and of course we were never in any naval rigs normally... we might wear the trousers but, anything up top and he asked 'who the hell is that lot?' and when he was told he said 'they look like a lot of bloody pirates' that was his words so that's how we picked up the name Churchill's Pirates... and Harry Tate... Harry Tate was a comedian who could not cope with modern gadgets and that's where Harry Tate came from... the RN called us Lilliput Navy. They didn't like us. An instance the flotilla leader would go and do cinema shows you see and of course we'd go on naval trousers khaki shirts flapping open hats on back of the head and walked up the gangplank and the officer of the watch used to go white... 'Where in the hell did you come from?' and we told them go on then... we had this in Gib...
<b>00:15:26</b>	<b><i>So you had a great deal of freedom then?</i></b>
00:15:28	More than RN... much more... we weren't so bad you know if need be we were smart if you know what I mean but, normally we were doing a job and learnt from the fisherman that originally started that job. You know free and easy really. Skipper was much the same. Bringing back the ship we had an RN Sub and for no reason he would put you in COs report for anything and we'd go to the skipper 'who sent you?' 'so and so' 'oh get out' you never got in trouble.
<b>00:16:21</b>	<b><i>Give me a feel for the ship and what armament did it have?</i></b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:16:27	Armament we had I'm doing the Wolborough I can do the Romeo the Romeo had a twelve pounder forehead... Oerlikon port and starboard and .5 on the stern... I mean .5 is just throwing rocks at them really they were a waste of time anyway... that was the Romeo she had a depth charge port and starboard and roll off on the stern and the Wolborough up front she had a four inch gun... great big massive gun she had. Oerlikons port and starboard and behind the stack the stern... and once again throwers port and starboard and roll off depth charges... and you know this one was fitted with anti-submarine detection and we didn't have the other one... aircraft thing that came later on the Wolborough and it was great fun really. We could see all sorts of things we couldn't see before coastline and things like that you know.
<b>00:18:04</b>	<b><i>What was this equipment?</i></b>
00:18:05	Radar... radar we didn't have that originally that came in afterwards it was very handy around the Greek Islands because when the war finished we were rolling about up there doing all sorts of odd jobs and that was very useful
<b>00:18:30</b>	<b><i>Could you tell me then with your training over your first deployment, your first operational deployment where that was and what were you doing?</i></b>
00:18:41	Operational after we got to the Med Alexandria was our base it was just a matter of waiting for a ship then and the first ship was the Romeo and on the Romeo we were escorting from Alexandria out to the Atlantic... where the Atlantic convoys took over. And it was on her that we did the Sicily invasion but, the Romeo had seen better days she was on the way up to the Sicily invasion broke down... and then we were sitting in the Med and skipper wants silence because the engine over fitting... something to do with the boiler. We had to blow the boiler down and no steam and you know but, the noise coming up from the fitters you see how we got away with it I don't know I really don't know but, we did and caught up with the convoy and found you know we joined some more close to harbour and not a happy place for us... we had to blow the boilers again you see... all the boilers and we were laying opposite the boom no steam couldn't move and Mr Hitler decided he'd have a go and they were dropping them all over. We just missed either side we had it... missed.
<b>00:20:46</b>	<b><i>What was this, aircraft?</i></b>
00:20:49	Yes yes oh yes he didn't like us being there and everyone else that was there he really had a go that night and then on the tannoy we heard this thing come out 'enemy torpedo boats were trying to have a go at the boom with torpedo's we're right opposite... we weren't happy.
<b>00:21:20</b>	<b><i>This is the boom defence around the harbour?</i></b>
00:21:22	Yeah the net yeah... we weren't too happy if he had put one through the net we're right in line but, never mind. From there we had to go across to Malta and get a mini fit... and of course they were getting it as well weren't they... I have nothing for respect for the Maltese people... how they put up with that day after day after day it really was terrible. It was so bad they told us to stand down because the shrapnel coming down from the guns was like rain on the deck great big pieces you know... like size of two hands laying on your deck could hear it coming down...
<b>00:22:19</b>	<b><i>Is this in Valletta or</i></b>
00:22:21	Yes in the harbour there...

Time Code	What is Said
<b>00:22:22</b>	<b><i>In Valletta?</i></b>
00:22:22	Yeah we tied alongside you know the convoy that saved Malta... I never remember the name but, anyway the tanker Ohio got in there with her oil but, then she was sitting on the bottom and we tied alongside her as a birth not knowing anything about her at the time but, you know since I've read about it I have a lot of feeling for that ship. You know something anyone that's not served I don't think they can understand the feeling you do have for a ship. You really do... it's your home and I suppose the thing I miss most when I came out was the comradeship. You do miss it, you really do. Anyway I changed ships when Romeo got back to Alexandria she had to go for a proper refit and we came off her then and that was the last I saw of her but, now the Romeo was quite unique actually her bow turned starboard because the tele motor that controlled the steering broke down as she was entering harbour... and just inside the harbour was this base ship that had this commodore aboard you see and we rammed it... I wasn't there then Romeo rammed it and she had a bent bow which meant she was a bitch to steer... oh she was she really was you know... they allowed ten degrees either side the compass point but, she would go on if you didn't watch her...
<b>00:24:35</b>	<b><i>And you were escorting convoys what separation was there between ships?</i></b>
00:24:41	Oh quite a distance we were sweeping, we'd sweep it depends where we'd go out usually a quarter we were on a quarter of the convoy... the bigger ships were on forehead and we would sweep what forty five degrees inside you know and you had at a start they gave you the compass reading and they just told you to go on ASDIC turn over you didn't need to give over... you knew it...
<b>00:25:19</b>	<b><i>Were you in visual contact with the other vessels?</i></b>
00:25:23	Yes oh yes we weren't close not that close pointless really at night time or even day time actually all you had was slits in front of you to see you know it was armoured plate put there with just slits. You couldn't see anything just a compass at nighttime that's all you could see... what would that be about four and half five inches square roughly and you're looking up at it at eye level and that's all you could see quite an eye strain... and you can imagine you are doing four on and four off minus the dogs when you change... and you were tired you really did get tired you could sleep anywhere and I've actually fell asleep at the wheel. We had a seat behind the big steering wheel and a little small wheel to steer with and I'd fallen asleep there at night time, got blasted from up above he asked 'where the hell are you going?' 'You've always got to have it out sir... you mustn't let them know' they knew they knew... obvious. It was always loud on ... RN wouldn't RN would never allow... even our rum ration that was neat, we had neat rum whereas the navy was three or four to one...
<b>00:27:17</b>	<b><i>Did the convoys close up at night?</i></b>
00:27:21	No no we kept station as it was. We'd sweep away from the convoy you know and that's on a quarter and one on the stern doing the same thing... one to each quarter and depending on the size you might have one in the middle but, you know not in the middle of the convoy in the middle of the outside. Your escorts were always on the outside of the convoys...
	<b>Start of Film 3</b>



Time Code	What is Said
00:27:47	The war had claimed a lot especially after the invasion of Sicily before that it was a bit hairy. We used to sweep through between Sicily and Malta at night time you know and get through the other side same coming back.
<b>00:28:11</b>	<b><i>When you got a contact what happened aboard?</i></b>
00:28:16	Normally it was flashed to the flotilla leader who then either you know sent one of the quicker boats or he would disappear but, he didn't usually leave station he was the one in charge you just had to watch on... you know the seaman ASDICs, radar skipper on the bridge, signalmen you know and just the watch but, it didn't take long because you didn't undress... soon as that went you were out... you got so tired four on four off because I maybe had a couple hours to go after the dogs before I'm on watch I've just laid my gasmask down on the gun platform and I've just slept there. You could sleep anywhere you were so tired. I've slept standing up on the bridge. Leaning on the bridge with my glasses up to me eyes and legs gone. I didn't know I was going to sleep you know it wasn't intentional but, I have I've fell asleep I mean you couldn't carry a lot of fresh food... bread we had for two maybe three days maximum, we would run out of fresh veg and stuff so we'd finish up with tins... tinned food. Eggs seemed to last longer than most but, flour the cook made bread, he would make bread. Now have you ever eaten cheesecake that's what our bread looked like... because the flour was full of weevils... and you'd just ignore it actually and Yorkshire pudding on your plate you learnt don't turn it over... never turn it over because the weevils have all gone to the bottom... and we eat you do we eat... we didn't have [inaudible 00:31:04] all we had was the dome underneath the ASDICs sweep that was our sweep, we were looking for subs... you know so that they didn't get.
00:31:21	As for war went on it was left to the Italians and the Italians aren't very brave I don't know whether I'm allowed to say this... they're not fighters you could tell that through the war they did change sides to who they thought was winning. You see and I think this is why we got away with it when I arrived out there they'd sort of more or less given up so that we didn't have a great deal of trouble... one of our points were the [inaudible 00:32:07] jerry had an airbase there so once again we used to go through there at night... they would know we're there but, it's no use them trying you know with aircraft at night...
<b>00:32:28</b>	<b><i>Soon as you left Alexandria and joined the convoy you would then be sweeping throughout?</i></b>
00:32:33	Oh yes...
<b>00:32:34</b>	<b><i>And if you got a contact then the usual drill would be for you to pass that information to the corvettes or other vessels that were more capable?</i></b>
00:32:45	With the speed...
<b>00:32:46</b>	<b><i>So really your depth charges were really a last resort?</i></b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:32:52	More or less they were there if we could drop deep enough to get out of the way yes... I mean maximum... we're talking maximum twelve knots isn't very fast when those things were going to go off... we did... we did get going back with a small convoy we did get a ping you see and so we're on our own I forget what we're escorting it was just us and he dropped this pattern and still there... and one he first drop was shallow too shallow and we bent the plate didn't we... we had the pumps working all the time, the thing was it wasn't a sub anyway. The sub lieutenant hadn't altered the charge and this was a wreck... I mean anyone's choices really it was just a fact he hadn't made the charts up... if it was metal, a wreck normally they chart it you see so we had the charts of them... get the charts together. But, that particular time it wasn't... so automatically thought it was a sub sitting there it wasn't moving... so we had a go but, all in the bottom.
<b>00:34:42</b>	<b><i>Your personnel experiences were generally in the immediate aftermath of the Pedestal Convoy?</i></b>
00:34:49	Yeah...as I say it did quieten down a lot. We got there when it was quieter because Malta... because Malta was relieved there was no need to stop convoys you see what I mean you could go they was about and they thought let's have a go at that they would of done but, there was no point to it... there was no need, but we still had to escort.
<b>00:35:31</b>	<b><i>And you were on the Wolborough in June 44 when the invasion of Europe took place? What did you hear about that did that in anyway change?</i></b>
00:35:44	Very little very little... it was a long way away you know we didn't get much news. We did get the news that the war had finished it came over the radio operator and of course ships company knew it before the skipper most action I saw was on Romeo... that was the action I saw.
	<b>Start of Film 4</b>
00:36:16	By the time they'd gone into Sicily which was that was the action we did on the Romeo by the time that was well under way then really speaking it was a matter of form escorting and so the Wolborough we didn't actually see much at all.
<b>00:36:43</b>	<b><i>Did it become a almost a bit too routine you were ASDIC operators were...?</i></b>
00:36:50	No you still watched if you were on watch you watched you didn't relax you did when the war finished you know we were bringing convoy down from Gib down to Alex and half way down and you'd see ships with lights on you know it was something that... quiet and then the next convoy up we met the Italian Navy going towards Alex complete Italian Navy was going into Alex... and we on a return trip as you were always short of water and food fuel and we couldn't get anything... they were serving the Italian Navy was awful time to get what we wanted we weren't happy again...
<b>00:37:55</b>	<b><i>Did you stay together pretty much as a crew throughout your time on Romeo and then Wolborough and how many of the crew from Romeo actually ended up on Wolborough?</i></b>
00:38:07	None...
<b>00:38:08</b>	<b><i>So you were split all over the place?</i></b>



Time Code	What is Said
00:38:10	<p>We went into Prometheus barracks and we fiddled about there I got fed up I don't like barracks all that much and there is one session they were asking for volunteers they didn't say what for and nobody I mean you don't do you... you don't volunteer but, then they said if we don't get any volunteers we're going to just pick and that would mean married men will go... so that spurred us youngsters we volunteered. I think about five ten eleven twelve I have a funny feeling there was about twelve of us... and the first thing we went up into Alex into a gents tailors and they said 'take what you want' and well you can imagine to our mines what have we done... and then we went from there next day I think just basic kit. Khaki shirts with these civvie suits in our pack and got to Haifa nobody knew what we were... we were hungry, we were tired, we were given a tent nothing else just a tent and eventually they did come along with a bully beef sandwich and a mug of tea... which is really good then of course we were tired... we got down to it and nobody woke in the morning so we missed breakfast but, they did once again came along with a bacon sandwich and a mug of tea and eventually we got down to the harbour and we went on an ML this was about evening time... and luckily I managed to get hold of a bottle of brandy, which sort of went around and we were deck cargo we were not down below we were on deck... an this ML took us to Famagusta Cyprus... truck over the mountains and actually we stopped at the top and there was a place on top where you could get brandy again.</p>
00:41:01	<p>And we couldn't understand why the driver wouldn't let us give him a drink but, we did on the way to the other side you were looking straight down you know... really way up and so we realised why he didn't want to take a drink sharp corners and it wasn't a road way it was a track. We finished up the other side and near camp and we didn't mind anyway the Indians killed this goat and we were given some of the meat. We had to keep out of the way because our shadows mustn't fall on the goat or they couldn't eat it because it was tainted... they gave us this meat, we had one of these caldron things and some coal and a shovel and that was it apart from our own billy cans and cutlery and we sorted out this meat into the pot, with the vegetables we had given us and then we had nothing to stir it with only the shovel... all this hair floating on the top, we were hungry I'll tell you that it got scraped off and then when it went in your billy can you scraped a bit more of but, didn't we enjoy that stew oo we did... really did you know it was beautiful you know... anyway we went ashore one night there and [inaudible 00:42:56] there men came ashore and we were in the bar and somebody must of said something wrong because I have no idea what had happened, a fight broke out.</p>
00:43:14	<p>Have you seen on television fights where a chair is flung and it goes through the drum and things like that chairs flying, bottles flying it was one of them that's the absolute truth what a fight... I got away with it I was in the middle but, I got away with it a lot of them finished up... anyway the pickers were called and they separated us one on one so we're on another the other truck back to camp and they didn't even give us time for breakfast next morning in a truck and half of them hadn't washed... disheveled you know with blood all over their face and we got on this destroyer. Once again as people were going past looked at us...</p>
<b>00:44:11</b>	<b><i>So where did you end up?</i></b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:44:12	I don't know... [inaudible 00:44:18] we were then transferred to a schooner it took us to one of the islands [inaudible 00:44:28] quite close to the coast and we were there to man these schooners five crew and a leading seaman you see but, we never did... we never did whoever sent us there changed their minds or maybe the war developed I don't know but, we never did we stayed on this island even that wasn't good because there wasn't no cookhouse or food hall nowhere really you fend for yourself and scrounge what you could. The Wolborough was the best ship, she was a wonderful ship to serve on.
<b>00:45:16</b>	<b><i>And was that partly as a consequence of the other members of the crew the people you were serving?</i></b>
00:45:22	Yes the ship itself and the company you know the first lieutenant was a great chap and the skipper was wonderful and thing you remember most was the comradeship you know your mate was your mate.
<b>00:45:40</b>	<b><i>And the Royal Navy patrol Service did you feel that you were a very special little band of pirates?</i></b>
00:45:46	Oh yes yes...
<b>00:45:47</b>	<b><i>And still do?</i></b>
00:45:48	Yeah yes... yes we were the only branch of the navy who could wear that badge no other branch in the navy could wear that... you know we're quite proud of it actually when I was in Lowestoft when we were being demobbed I signed on to stay in but, then just after that I got married and I signed off. We had the choice you could do it and I seen so many dear john letters there was no way I was going to be married and in the service... you can't blame the women, you can't blame the men. I mean a marriage is to be together isn't it... so if you're away from home say three or four years things happen. You hadn't... or didn't it effect people... I seen it... you'll see it on the smaller ships so much more than on a big one. And the personalities on that changed completely you know nice good humored, easy going people and their nature changed completely... it was quite sad.
	<b>Start of Film 5</b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:47:13	My way of unwinding after a sticky convoy was I discovered the naval... the navy ran a brothel and I went there originally for the obvious reason but, very soon got attached to one girl and I would go in there and we'd have a cup of tea... she even did my mending and we'd have a chat and it was wonderful to have a female company without... you didn't need the sex. She was there to get money to get married and I didn't mind I respected all those girls. One particular time I came in there of an evening and I'd had a few beers and I'm sitting and in comes Jack you see and he'd had a few beers and he took off his cap and slug it like one of those disk things you see and it caught my forehead here. Well up stands Baden going to take over but, no he didn't I was grabbed and I was in a room she wouldn't let me fight... and I had to stay there with a cup of tea and sober up and you know it became quite a good friendship really did, I was grateful. The one thing we'd forgot about we did the first trip outside the harbour when I was sick but, the first action I was on a Oerlikon and old fashioned Oerlikon that had a gunner... did the elevation and I had to do the left right business and I was also the loader now when a magazine ran out see I'm on one side of the shield and the action side if there is any bullets coming never mind the gunner is behind the shield... I was shaken so much with fear... actual fear it was I could not load that magazine. I could get it up there but, I couldn't get it in. He had to come around and do it.
<b>00:50:11</b>	<b><i>Were you actually under fire whilst this was happening?</i></b>
00:50:13	Oh yeah that's what it was about you know first time in action. I'd never been in action then...
<b>00:50:22</b>	<b><i>Was this on the Romeo... this was on the Romeo?</i></b>
00:50:24	Romeo and but, after that no I was alright.
<b>00:50:31</b>	<b><i>So once that moment had passed...</i></b>
00:50:33	Just that one time... you know I suppose I've always said anyone first time into action whose not frightened is either an idiot or a damn fool... you know I don't see how anybody could possibly say they saw no fear on their first dose of action like the gunner he never mentioned it... if I seen it I wouldn't of mentioned it and the same after action I would say on the gun platform and I was with Betty that was another way of calling it... because you go down to the mess deck and somebody says something wrong, everyone's on edge everyone no matter who they are you've only got to say something wrong... everyone's on edge everyone no matter who they are and you've only got to say something wrong and you've got problems.
<b>00:51:34</b>	<b><i>And Betty was your pen friend?</i></b>
00:51:37	Well yes that's all that time I was in live with her but it was a pen friend I did that six weeks training and we were there together for six weeks but, then I did meet another girl you see when I went to Havant I met Joyce and we became very friendly but, I never followed that I was going into a war I didn't want to get involved anymore.
<b>00:52:12</b>	<b><i>How important were the letters that Betty wrote to you?</i></b>
00:52:17	Oh very much that was home it was like listening to Vera Lynn you know every... you drop a pin when Vera was on and you were in trouble...
<b>00:52:30</b>	<b><i>So despite the fact when you started corresponding with Betty she was only fourteen, she actually sustained you through those difficult moments at sea?</i></b>

Time Code	What is Said
00:52:40	Very much so I've a lot to thank her for you know oh yes if you had something like that to hang on to you retained your sanity you know it's I think we all had our different ways of coping you had to have something you know and a lot of people say with min sweeping or that sort of sweeping how did you do that... well you didn't think about it you don't... when you're in action you don't think about it and you try not to think about it afterwards... it's not something you dwell on. That's why you won't find anything in my memories... if somebody wants to know about action turn on the telly... they can see it there. War is not something to glory... it's not you do what you do and at the end you forget it or try to but, what you did you did.
<b>00:54:01</b>	<b><i>And you coped in the best way you could?</i></b>
00:54:02	Yeah oh yes we all had our own ways I suppose. I mean once I settled down I could go off and sup with the best off them you know we did I was... what else you do when you have money in your pockets...
<b>00:54:24</b>	<b><i>This brothel in Alexandria which was run by the Royal Navy was there a way of acknowledging that sailors needed some way to let of steam?</i></b>
00:54:38	Yeah yeah and it was a safety valve for the Navy because they knew then the men weren't going to go up town and catch a disease.
<b>00:54:48</b>	<b><i>So it was closely regulated and medical checks and so on?</i></b>
00:54:51	Oh yes always and you even had penicillin to use afterwards you were always given a tube of penicillin you know to squeeze down there...
<b>00:55:04</b>	<b><i>Looking back to your time in action did you find yourself manning the Oerlikon very often then at action stations?</i></b>
00:55:12	That was my job yeah that was my job. And the same on the Wolborough there was one man Oerlikon and I had that for a while and then he put me on the 4 inch, not happy I didn't like that at all you were hanging about if you weren't actually getting the shells from there to the loader that sort of thing not... if you could do something you didn't think but, luckily we didn't have much problem on that one. I think the only one that we not in anger I suppose we met this ship around the islands and she wouldn't respond to recognition you see and we put a star shell over her panic on that ship oh was there panic... we did find out what she was and that... she was a Turkish job why they didn't answer I don't know but, they did eventually when the star shells were coming over.
<b>00:56:35</b>	<b><i>So did you ever hit anything with your Oerlikon?</i></b>
00:56:37	I don't think so I don't think so... it's difficult now a plane is travelling pretty fast you've got to get so far ahead that you've got to judge the speed if they're going across your vision if they are coming towards you then the elevation is changing slowly and it's a difficult job to do it and of course that was really our armament the four inch was not much use for aircraft.
<b>00:57:20</b>	<b>End of Films</b>

