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Name: Vic Ould
Regiment: The Royal Navy

Date transcript: 16/01/2014
Transcribe by: David Davies

Time code	What is said
01:00:00	Start of Film 1
01:00:01	<p>I was born in London at City Road Hospital 1926 my mother told me that the snow was up to the windowsills I'd imagine this was on the ground floor. Within a few days I was a poorly baby, I went down with double pneumonia, which was one of the child killers of those years and therefore I was on open order. Open order meant that every twenty four hours they checked you just to see if you were still alive and any of your relations come in at any time to see myself and my mother of course in the bed by the side of me to see if we're all right. I was baptised in the hospital chapel and fortunately I managed to overcome that problem.</p>
01:00:59	<i>Why did you want to join the Navy and what were the circumstances around that?</i>
01:01:01	<p>I think really in those days it's difficult for people to envisage this now. A war was on and people like myself you wanted to fight back. It's like a burglar trying to break into your door normally you'll try and stop him and I was doing a certain amount with the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) and I really wanted to go a little bit further so I thought about it, and I thought I'll try and get a little bit more involved so I went to the local drill hall where they usually take volunteers for any of the three services and this is one in Edgware, Deansbrook Road and volunteered for the Navy I came along to pass all the tests I think there a few weeks later and be they excepted me and said a letter would follow, but they couldn't take me at the time because I was only seventeen. They said they would take me at seventeen and a half providing the job I was going to do in the Navy took about six months so I would be eighteen by the time I could go aboard a ship.</p>
01:02:30	<p>So when I started work on the Monday after that I said to the foreman well I've joined the Navy and he was going 'no no you can't... we want you here we're doing more work here you don't have to join the Navy' I said 'I've made up my mind I'm joining the Navy forget it' and another bit of luck because that firm was working a hundred percent with asbestos and at the time there was no problem, but of course I find out later on nearly everybody in that firm that I knew died of asbestosis so must have been another one of my lucky... lucky times.</p>

Time code	What is said
01:03:19	From there dead on my age of seventeen and a half a letter arrived report to the drill hall where you joined and you'll be taken on from there to HMS Royal Arthur so dually I turned up there, a little crowd of us and then I a truck I think it was took us to the London station and from the London station a group of us went up to Skegness and there we are at HMS Royal Arthur. There we did all joining routines, get your uniform and be told lots of things about the Navy. Lots of horror stories I'm afraid to do with what's known nowadays as... I think it was venereal disease in them days which was rife.
01:04:24	I went on from there after passing all the usual tests to HMS Scotia where I went through the exams for a telegraphist in 1944 I went down from there to HMS Royal Arthur again and at that time D-Day was coming up and they had quite enough telegraphists to fit all what they wanted so they said 'would you like to change over to something else' I said 'well if you need something else' he said 'yes you can become an Able Seaman and from there... there are lots of things you can aim for' so I thought I like that sound of that so although I was a telegraphist because I passed the exams went from there down to HMS Ganges. HMS Ganges was tough you can't say that hard enough... it was tough after being in somewhere like HMS Scotia which is quite easy.
01:05:34	<i>Why was it tough?</i>
01:05:35	Well because you had to be an Able Seaman and an Able Seaman as it turned out was a tough job. The one thing because D-Day was coming up you did training to fight on the land as well as fight on the sea so we were going in for bayonet practice, throwing of hand grenades amongst your ordinary seamanship jobs and D-Day happened while I was still there and we could hear the fighting going on the other side of Harwich from the landings. And we were giving blood as much as we can for the injured and we were told several times that 'if the fighting gets any worse and it's horrific now you'll be over there joining them whether you are fully trained or not'
01:06:37	So fortunately fighting although injuries didn't get tougher than they were so passed out as an ordinary seaman and after that I was asked if I wanted to do what was called a Suberate. The Suberate you could be an ASDIC Operator, a Gunner, or you could be a Torpedoman. Well as I was already trained as a Telegraphist being a Radar Operator seemed about the next step. So anyway that was another short course on The Isle of Man.
	Start of Film 2
01:07:23	<i>Are these all Stone Frigates that you've been training at?</i>

Time code	What is said
01:07:26	<p>They are all stone frigates all the land bases are stone frigates so... so far I've never even seen a ship only little whalers and we did learn to sail and do all the knots and everything at HMS Ganges. So in between that when I finished my telegraphist course and they said to me 'well we're not sure if we've got enough telegraphists' they said 'there is lots of options' so I said 'can I have the options' they said 'yep well one nice job that is coming up nowadays is a signalman on landing craft' they said 'well you've done all the training you only have to learn to be a signalman with the flags and so forth' but it came into my head the landing craft with me standing up the front there flag waving and the Germans shooting at the flag waver so I said 'no I'm no hero I come here to do a job not be a hero' so anyway so I finished up as a Radar Operator.</p>
01:08:45	<p>There was two types of radar operators. There was a Radar P??? and Radar Gunnery Control well as I carried out gunnery in HMS Ganges on big guns they had six inch heavy guns there that you trained on I operated for the Radar Control Gunnery so I did that course and from there I went down to Chatham, which was my base anyway I was a Chatham Rating and waited there for a ship. When you're waiting for a ship all you do is walk about the barracks jobs like painting coal white or sweeping up all different places and you go down every evening in your own time to what I believe is called the big barn and they'll have lists for people to go on draft for a ship.</p>
01:09:54	<p>Well the first one I came across after going down there for several weeks had my name on there was quite a lot on this draft so we had to go for some reason to have a medical... everyone had to pass for a medical that was on that draft what it was for they never tell you... they never tell you in the Navy it's known as the silent service... they never told anything. Anyway I went for this medical examination as it came to my turn to see the medical officer he said 'out' I said 'why' 'out' so I stand out to one side wait for some time and then came across I said 'what's wrong I feel alright' he said 'you've got German measles' well my goodness 'German measles and you're fighting the Germans I haven't been anywhere near Germany' he said 'don't be funny' I was out. I spent a few weeks in sickbay I've got no memory at all of what happened there, I don't think anything could of happened, but if you're going on a draft and you're going on a ship obviously two hundred men upwards on a ship you could pass it on so...</p>

Time code	What is said
01:11:10	<p>in a few weeks' time my name was on another draft and this was for HMS Carron and we're not told we're just told we're going on a draft and the number on the draft. So when the time came there was about a hundred and fifty to two hundred of us from Chatham. We were put on Navy trucks open back, but covered truck taken down to the London station I'm not sure which one it was now... but all of us put on one train I don't think there was any other people on that train. Every one of the doors were locked, locked in and a young lad by the side of me said 'you know what that's for' I said 'yeah to stop us from getting out' 'no it's not it's to stop the girls getting to us when we get to a station' I started to chat, we got friendly.</p>
01:12:12	<p>None of us ever knew each other we come from all over the place, but anyway that was a long trip up to Glasgow. We stopped quite a few times I think for air raids and for no reason. I believe we stopped at Carlisle and the windows were opened on the carriages lovely cups of tea and sandwiches passed across from the WVS or whoever now anyway after a little rest on started the train again. As we drew out of the station I remember there was a big factory by the side of the station right on the track an old mill or something like that and out of the windows there was balloons, the girls waving the balloons well not some of the balloons I can remember I think they were a little bit of another type, which I won't mention, but anyway that was nice we loved the fact we were being cheered on our way.</p>
01:13:22	<p>We eventually in Glasgow and we changed straight away what must have been a local train that train took us to Greenock... Greenock was our destination and we were then put in to what must have been a YMCA a big building and we were then told that we were due to be a ships company of a brand new ship that had been built in the ship yard that was right next door to the YMCA really. Now it wasn't ready we could go and look over the ship anytime we liked a mass of wires and people welding and I can't really remember what we did we must of walked around Greenock anyway in a few weeks the ship was ready all the old wires and bits and pieces had been removed and we were given our places on the forehead mess deck, we were pointed out where we had our locker, where we put any clothes we were in uniform now of course our civilian clothes had gone so we just had our Royal Naval clothes.</p>

Time code	What is said
01:14:50	<p>The first of the things we had to do was go through the trials. The trials were taken up the Clyde to do the speed... whatever was determined and a few gunnery trials anyway when we finished at the trials and the ship was commissioned then into the Royal Navy that was the time we was going to be off none of us was told we were going to go on a certain day so if we happened to be having shore leave we couldn't tell anybody, but then one dark night shortly after we finished our trials we slipped from the dockside of the yard and edged our way up through the Clyde no lights of course, we closed all the water tight doors all the scuttles all the dead lights... and we were given our positions that we were on watch then, we were real sailors then. So I was starboard watch so therefore I would be up on the... half an hour on the starboard lookout we never had any actual training for this we were just told to do whatever we were told.</p>
01:16:17	<p>So anyway we eased out of the Clyde you had to go past the boom which lets out the Clyde and I remember I came off watch or I hadn't gone on watch I can't remember this stage, but I had reason to go to the head which are toilets... I was just sitting down and there is an enormous explosion and the doors rattled... I pulled my trousers up quickly... rushed out of the door... into what they call the canteen flat that's the passage way and bumped into one of the other sailors who was a little bit more experienced than me... 'have we been torpedoed on our first night out' 'no it's only the Torpedoman trying the depth charges out' a bit shame faced 'I didn't know that' he said 'you were in the right place there anyway' so we had a good laugh about that anyway from there as I say it was a dark night.</p>
	<p>Start of Film 3</p>
01:17:21	<p><i>Why was it all so clandestine when you left?</i></p>
01:17:24	<p>This is one of the problems the enemy knew that there was ships being built nearly all the time and they would come out of the Clyde or come out of the Tyne or perhaps come out of Ireland and if you can visualise Ireland and Scotland in narrows.... It's really wide you know it's a long distance but it narrows as a continent and therefore ships have to come in and out of that area well this was always the places you'd have two or three U-boats just lurking hoping for a good kill and whether they ever found out that a ship with spies or anything that was coming out at that time I've no idea, but that was the most dangerous part because none of us had worked together. We'd all come out of training we'd had good training in our own jobs, but of course not as a team because we were not with the same people we were training with.</p>

Time code	What is said
01:18:38	<p>So from there onwards as you go up through the Hebrides it was really a few sailors that had experience and the officers of course that were experienced and you had to have all their knowledge to do what you were doing because you would get no escort you're a ship completely on your own with seventy five percent of the crew never been to sea at all never even seen a ship before very often so if we'd been attacked at that time we would have been a sitting duck.</p>
01:19:12	<p>When we arrived at Scapa flow, which is relatively safe we go through the boom again to get into the flow and from then onwards we do are training. Well the training at Scapa Flow really is to get you working as a team. The whole ship has to know exactly what they're doing the gun crew of four or five has to know how to work together and if you're in the transmitting station, which is one of the ???? as we were as gunnery control you'd have about ten people in that room, which is only the size of an ordinary sitting room and each one of those has a job to do because on a destroyer, which we were HMS Carron was a destroyer a brand new one as well so nobody knew anything about it so we had to learn how to use the fire control table as it was when you've got eight people on it and all those eight people although they are trained on something similar in their training they still have to know how to fight if the ships attacked or if we're attacking another ship. So that is what was expected of us in the Flow...</p>
01:20:35	<p>By that time we were so short of destroyers in particular and other escort ships so not only are we staying in a nice safe area to do our training we were sent out in harness as it was called with another ship that might be more experienced and then there is one that is experienced and one that is training and that is us so we learnt it the hard way. All our real fighting was around that time. At the end of 1944 which was October, November, December we was around that area so they would send us out with another ship and this is in one case we was the only ships that were in the Flow destroyers and of course we was duty destroyer and HMS Bullen, which we didn't know about at that was a ship that got sunk.</p>
01:21:47	<p>So we was sent out with no basic training on this. We had a call to go to a ship off Cape Wrath that had been sunk or been torpedoed they didn't actually... our message was not that it had been sunk. That a ship had been torpedoed two destroyers had to go out to try and help to catch the U-Boat that had sunk it and pick up survivors if there was any there. So there was two of us and it seemed from one of the records I've looked up the other ship that went out with us was another ship that was also working out... so there was two destroyers without absolutely no experience at all had to go out to this ship.</p>

Time code	What is said
01:22:38	<p>I found later in life it was HMS Bullen, which was an escort vessel and they had been looking for a U-Boat. The very U-Boat they had been looking for hit one of our ships first so HMS Bullen had been sunk and the other ships that were with her were still looking for the U-Boat. Well the first thing we did was our skipper was very knowledgeable, very experienced and he went to the position where the U-Boat had sunk HMS Bullen. Nobody was told anything, he knew it was HMS Bullen none of us were told. So the first thing you do you go around depth charging the whole of the area in case the U-Boat is still there. Well we picked up an echo which told our ASDIC operator that there was something down there, which could be the U-Boat so we depth charged that area and apparently the echo didn't move it stayed there so we assumed that... that was a U-Boat and it never came up, never got any oil, never got anything.</p>
01:24:14	<p>So at that time in the war the snorkel had only just started, which helped them later on in the war. Now if this U-boat didn't come up within twenty four hours then it was a dead duck. So we waited around there all night with a boarding party ready to go onto the U-Boat because it would have had to come up for fresh air if it had of been... and then it seemed we had to go on another job. I don't know whether we received the message, but we had to go on an escort job. So we stood down the whole team. we stood... this was the next morning we stood down the boarding party and I was looking over the side of the ship, I had no work to do... I was off watch I could see in the near distance a magnetic mine float past, but nobody shot at it which they might of done usually in case there was a U-Boat down there they would know we was still there. We was on silent routine all night, you never started your engines because you didn't want that U-Boat if it was still alive down there to know we was still up there waiting. So in the end we went back to Scapa Flow and carried on with our learning to fight a war.</p>
	Start of Film 4
01:25:37	<i>Tell me about Christmas in Skapa?</i>

Time code	What is said
01:25:40	<p>Well this I told you about was the 6th of December some more jobs we might of done there I'm not sure, but the next important thing that I can remember is that we are not required for work around the Christmas period so we were back in Scapa Flow and it was quiet and we were safe, but none of us has had a Christmas away from home before this and there we all were in a dead place Scapa Flow... Scapa Flow is a terrible place dead as anything and what surprised me there is two hundred on a ship roughly two hundred ships complement and luckily we had a few amongst us that were experienced and there we were the cooks in the mess making Christmas cakes with whatever stuff we could get hold of. We also managed to get... I'm not sure where from a Christmas tree from somewhere and that is run up on top of the mast on top of every ship at Christmas time if they are in harbour they have a Christmas tree run up on top of the ship.</p>
01:27:00	<p>And we should have been served I think by the officers being Christmas, but I can't remember whether we were or not and you're not allowed to have drink onboard it's a dry ship, but some of the old ???? saved some of their rum ration, which you're not allowed to do because there is a very high charge if you're caught, but the officers normally on a small ship like a destroyer close their eyes to lots of things that they wouldn't be allowed to on a big ship that we call a passer ship. So many of the lads that were allowed rum, I wasn't because you're not allowed rum until you're twenty and I was only eighteen, but out came the rum ration horrible I hate it and people made up things out of paper some ???? paper red green and blue came from different places out of hidey holes and that was made into decorations and we were moored at a buoy there at the time and we would sing Christmas songs.</p>
01:28:23	<p>Some people had instruments so we had a small band onboard and I suppose some of our lads that come from homes that never had it bad I think they were very tearful for them. I came from a home that we didn't have much money so Christmas wasn't much different. So anyway we all enjoyed our first Christmas away from home at a lace like Scapa Flow so that was quiet good.</p>
01:29:00	<p>Commander Wilkinson was our captain and everybody would have given their life for him really after we'd been with him for a time... although it was very strict... he was a lad the same as us later on in the story when we go to the Far East I'll tell you a little bit more about it. We had water polo teams and he was on the team with the lads against the officers and that was the type of person he would be and I think he was boxing champion of the fleet or part of the fleet and yeah he was such a nice person you know and there is another case that I will tell you when I go ashore.</p>

Time code	What is said
01:29:54	But the next thing we went on really after Christmas was when we really started learning that there was a war on. We would still go out as a ship working up together, but the first one we went out with I believe two aircraft carriers and this was to be a strike against Norway. We didn't know until we were out at sea that we were doing this, but there was these two aircraft carriers some more destroyers I think and some other ships now are job was not only to protect one of the carriers, but it was also to act as a life boat really when the aircraft took off and I think a couple of these were old type aircraft, I can't remember the name of them, but they were bi-planes.
01:31:04	Now this was a really rough day and they took off... and I watched them I was on watch all the time and I watched them from the deck and the carrier was bouncing up and down and they took off and I think they carried out or tried to carry out their task, but the two I saw come back didn't make it because the ship was dancing up and down the aircraft carrier dancing up and down and I believe one of them hit the deck and was pushed overboard, that's with the people in it... they can't take them out pushed them overboard to make room for another one landing and the other one disappeared I think he was given orders to try and fly back to his base or a base because it was too rough to land on the aircraft carrier... we were crash boat I think it was called we went to try and find the aircraft that had ditched... sadly no aircraft so anyway I think they had to call off the strike because it was just too dangerous to do anymore flying or anything like that... so that was really a bad beginning to my war... then we went back to Scapa Flow.
	Start of Film 5
01:32:31	<i>When you talk about it being rough how were your see legs?</i>
01:32:34	Terrible I was sea sick most times when I went to sea, but when you are on look out or when you are in the TS which is ??? the TS is down below and that is the transmitting station that takes the... that's like a relay from the director tower which is right up the top of the ship through you in the TS to the main armament which is four 4inch guns so I was a communication number. The director would speak to me the two officers and the director would be speaking to me and I would be speaking to the guns, but apart from the director would have instruments that would send signals down to our big computer the original mechanical computer would send that information mechanically to the guns, but once I got into a position where there was excitement I forgot all about sea sickness... I was okay so that was a good thing, but normally if I wasn't on watch I'll be standing on the upper deck watching the sea heaving up and down... probably being sick.

Time code	What is said
01:34:11	The only time you go to action stations is when you're expecting action later on when we talk about the mine laying we're at action stations all the time, but if you are doing a job just escorting then you are at cruising stations until some trouble pops up. Depth charging a U-Boat is not a case of going to action stations it's only if the U-Boat fights back then you go to action stations.
01:34:49	So anyway we went from there back to Scapa Flow I think we did one or two journeys like this of the Coast of Norway and this is the beginning of 1945 and eventually we supposedly finished our training learning working together as a team. Mind you all this time I'm talking about to you now we were still learning because we were still teaming up with people that we never worked with before so if we run into any real trouble at that time we wouldn't of stood a lot of chance. It wasn't until later on when we learnt these things.
01:35:34	So the next one I think is an important one this is about February I believe we were just told we were going out that night and we were not given any real information about where we were going and what we were going to do, but it was a very big do. There was a very large force; we left about ten o'clock at night.
01:36:06	<i>Is this out of Scapa?</i>
01:36:09	This is out of Scapa this is what turned out to be the mine laying operation although there was no moon it was all-star light so it was very good visibility and it was a very calm night strangely enough hardly any rough sea or anything. We set out and you seldom know who is with you... it's the silent service and we'd been out about an hour I believe about ten o'clock and the skipper then said over the tannoy what we're going to do... he'd opened his orders and he told us that we are a big force one of the large force was going down the southern part of Norway to Egersund and they were going to attack a convoy.
01:37:14	We were one of two ships another one was HMS Zealous was a same destroyer as we were and are main task was that we had to escort this minelayer HMS Apollo. First of all both forces working together had to pass through a big minefield there is a big minefield that was laid I think by us and we had to go through one path through it, which was the only path through it, but we knew where the opening was so it should have been safe enough, but you do get loose mines so our ASDIC operator had to pick out the mines and I was on watch at one time and I could hear him saying that there is something on the port side and the captain would move the ship over a bit. So anyway we got through the minefield all of us with no real problem and then we split up.

Time code	What is said
01:38:30	We were to wait until twelve o'clock and at that time at twelve o'clock the other big force we were by the way up near Stavanger at that point and the other big force was two cruisers I think, no aircraft carriers at that point and they were going to attack a convoy... a German convoy that was going to leave Egersund and was going to hug the coast all the way up to Stavanger, but the other force was to stop them getting there.
01:39:09	So dead on twelve o'clock the other force that was going to attack the convoy and they were hoping when that started lots of fireworks down along the coast it's quite a few hundred miles, but that would take the heat off what we were doing... we were a clandestine operation. We were to escort the Apollo to the point where she was going to start laying mines dead on twelve o'clock and we were to be between her and the Norwegian coast and if she was sighted by the Germans or picked up by radar by the Germans and they were to start firing we were to make as much noise as we could and tear up and down between the sea between the Apollo and the Norwegian Coast and use all the guns and flares and everything we could to take the heat of her so they'd attack us.
01:40:25	So the Apollo would of either flashed us or indicated to us or not I'm not sure because everybody had to keep radio silence and we were on silent routine... nobody was allowed to smoke or anything. You were not even allowed to bang because the noise... we were not far away from the coast our two, but the ships both us and the other escort destroyer the Zealous had to keep up as much steam as we could because if the fireworks started we would have to at full speed rush up and down this bit of coast firing whatever we could to prevent them seeing the Apollo.
01:41:19	Well I could hear from the guns in the TS and from the director before we started doing anything and I could hear the people on the guns saying 'I can see the headlights there... there only over there a little bit a car coming down from the right to the left' I could hear all this and 'I hope they can't see us where they are' and then he said 'right they've started down the other end' and they started firing down at the other end they attacked this convoy and they would have been...
01:41:55	<i>You couldn't see that though?</i>
01:41:57	We couldn't... I couldn't see anything anyway because I was down in the TS so I was getting all the messages not from the two officers in the director tower, but from my mates on A gun, B gun, X gun and Y gun they were funneling all the information to me 'saying I think that blokes smoking over there... hope they can't see us' apparently they didn't we didn't have to do much. So we were slowly moving up and down and the Apollo started laying her mines dead on time... dead on twelve o'clock

Time code	What is said
	Start of Film 6
01:42:39	The minelayer... it's a big minelayer they carried a lot of mines a big cruiser they are and once they start laying the mine that's where we would have had to come in they can't stop they've got to do the whole of their mine laying because the mine field is being laid so they can't turn back, they can only go on and carry on laying their mines. So anyway we're just going slowly up and down and because our ship was keeping steam up ready for a quick dash up and down the valve blew so you've got a normal what is a well-known destroyer hoot woop woop, which we do every time we come in and out of harbour just to signal.
01:43:29	And apparently everybody went mad the cruisers went mad, we were in silent routine you know and the fact that we were never sussed out not until the very end and I think it might even be if anybody had heard that woop, which is a well-known British destroyer signal to say I'm coming in to the harbour or somewhere if they thought you know it can't be a British destroyer nobodies daft enough to do a thing like that you know.
01:44:02	So anyway they laid the mines and then we knew I don't know by signal or what just said 'all done we carried out our mission see you back in port' and I was at that time listening to some of the... and they were saying 'look at her move' and she was doing forty knots, she was one of the fastest ships there were and they could see the bow wave... it's night but it was star light and you could see... you could see the shore, you could see the place where the guns were, they would have had a crack at us if they'd known and away went the Apollo at speed and we turned around, we went as fast as we could, but we were not allowed to go at a good speed because we got a signal that the Germans had sussed out that they were being attacked from Egersund with the battle we had going on down there and some friends of mine afterwards on the Apollo I kept in touch with them. They said they understood and they were in the wireless room... telegraphist office they had understood that we had been challenged the force had been challenged because they had picked us up on radar.
01:45:44	The force had been challenged and he thinks that the Apollo that was in charge of course had given the right challenge answer, but then they challenged again later on and didn't the Apollo started disappearing so they sent torpedo bombers after us and they never found us so we got back okay. So the mine laying was successful our force further down at Egersund had stopped the convoy going up to... the German convoy had sunk one or two of the ships and one or two of are ships had injured people, but this whole mission was successful.
01:46:38	<i>It sounds to me like you were expendable when you were out there with the Apollo?</i>

Time code	What is said
01:46:42	You are...
01:46:45	<i>I would of though a destroyer was valuable bits of kit... tell me a bit about the role of a destroyer and it's comparable?</i>
01:46:51	What I shall bring in is because later on towards the end of the war which won't be in that one is when we were a big force escorting some of the cruisers out to the Far East we only took them as far as Gibraltar you see and then another force takes over, but we were escorting a battleship the Renown and we were the close escort on the destroyer each side fairly close when others were further out and it was a beautiful day like this and I wasn't on watch I was just leaning over the side, but we were quite close because we were close escort you see and I'm just leaning over the side and over the tannoy comes the voice from the captain 'we're now reaching a dangerous area and there might be U-Boats around if a U-Boat has fired a torpedo and we see the track of that torpedo heading towards big sister' which they called the Renown 'then we stop it, you know what we mean... we stop it' and there's me looking over the side looking and there is a torpedo bulge on the Renown and thinking to myself yes we're going to lose two hundred men just to stop a torpedo bending a torpedo bulge you know...
	Start of Film 7
01:48:32	<i>Just tell me a bit about the role of a destroyer?</i>
01:48:36	Well the role of most destroyers is they're fast and they are maneuverable and they're like a smaller version of a cruisers they have all the gunnery, but smaller guns so they've got four big guns 4.5 big guns and other small guns got all those. The one thing they've got extra apart from the smaller size scaled down. The big ships have not got anti-submarine equipment they've got torpedoes and things unless the submarines on the surface they've got no depth charges. So a destroyer had depth charges so we are there too...
01:49:26	But on the other hand the difference the reason why you've got a destroyer is just as I said if the capital ship or whatever it is we are guarding is torpedoed the last resort is you get in the way of the torpedo they'd rather lose a ship that's only got two hundred men onboard than a possibility of losing more than two hundred men on a battleship remote as it might be that it's got a torpedo bulge and this is why we we're short of destroyers because so many of them get lost because the first thing you do when a torpedo is sighted is go to attack the submarine that fired it, but you should be near enough to get in the way of the torpedo if it happens to be heading your way.

Time code	What is said
01:50:26	<i>You know you talked a bit about how you weren't a team you were a young crew is there a moment when you were onboard where you thought we're working brilliantly now?</i>
01:50:38	Well not really you just sort of fit in part of life is you manage to fit into every situation luckily enough I never worried you think because you are a good swimmer you must be alright if the ship sinks, but then when you think about it and you speak to other people you've got sea boots on at the time, you have a belt which should save you, which you wear all the time at sea, but you can't wear that belt blown up because it gets in the way of the arms and everything so what happens is if you have to jump into the ocean as they call it... the sea that belt mustn't be blown up because you might break your arms so you're expected to blow that up when you hit the sea and I can't see... luckily I never had too, but I know survivors that have told me 'I had to blow it up as soon as I hit the water, but I had no breath at all left so I couldn't blow it up'. But the sea boots drag you down because this is what you're wearing it's just one of those things.
	Start of Film 8
01:52:10	<i>What's the next big event that you recall then?</i>
01:52:12	It was really mundane most of the things as escort to the monsters we did your enemy in most cases was the sea we got battered left right and centre trying to keep up with the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth because as we took them out of the Clyde we zig zagged all the way with them and we kept up with them until they reached top speed, which was for the distance all the way across then we left them or we either waited around for the next one coming in. for instance we might of taken the Queen Mary out and we might have had to wait just a few hours for the Queen Elizabeth to come in.
01:53:07	And all the time one of you might pick up one of the three of you... the Queen Mary would have its own ASDIC besides its own radar and we of course had the ASDIC and radar and our cohort perhaps the Cavalier would be the same. Well when we'd steam out we would probably be apart at the extremes of your ASDIC circle and your radar circle so you didn't interfere with each other's receipt of the wave and if we picked up an echo, which might have been a submarine, might have been a wreck well immediately we'd run up a black flag on our flag deck so the Queen Mary would know and also the Cavalier would know that we've picked up an echo.

Time code	What is said
01:54:03	Immediately we'd hive off to attack that echo and this is where you are in trouble if it is because a U-Boat might of already fired its torpedo and this is where you turn off swiftly at full speed if you can, if you've got a beam sea which means you can't turn off left or right you hit the beam sea a destroyer you've got hardly any draft you'll turn over straight away so you have to be very careful... we never did whether it was luck or judgment I don't know anyway then if you haven't been hit by a torpedo then you'd find your wave to wherever that echo was and you would attack the echo you'd loose of about two depth charges from one side two from the other and roll off from the two racks from the rear a pattern of about ten charges.
01:55:07	Well if the U-Boat is a very experienced one and he was watching you on the periscope he wouldn't be there when you arrived he'd of either gone down low or he would of disappeared in another direction, but at least you've kept him down no chance of hitting your charge... and then we'd have to try and catch it up it takes about half a day because they're keeping the same speed. If the two destroyers had to leave the Queen Mary or the Queen Elizabeth... the Queen Mary would carry on, it wouldn't stop and one of the worst things that could of happened if they'd actually torpedoed the Queen Mary then they would of lost a lot of lives because if the Queen Mary was coming back in it would have a full complement of American GI's and that would be between ten thousand and fifteen thousand it would be carrying now they would not be able to tighten up their water tight doors because they're going from the different decks all the time in the twenty four hours.
01:56:32	If we go into action stations then we close our water tight doors, which means if you're torpedoed on one side it will only damage the compartment within so most likely the ship wont sink, but if it's on the Queen Mary then they've got no chance of any of their water tight doors because they're travelling between the different decks. They're perhaps sleeping on one deck travelling up the next deck to eat food another deck for exercise... the top deck is always exercise so they couldn't close their water tight doors so any of those would have been one of the biggest disasters you'd find.
01:57:20	<i>What was it like seeing the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth sailing with you... did you have any pride was they ships that you knew of and were proud of anyway?</i>

Time code	What is said
01:57:28	Well all we really knew was going to pick up one of the monsters or bring one of the monsters in. if it was the Queen Mary and we were in Greenock then we would of known it was the Queen we were taken out and that's always got three funnels anyway if we picked it up... if it's got three funnels it's the Queen Mary, if it's got two funnels it's the Queen Elizabeth and so on you've got four funnels with the Aquitania and so it went on. You were never told you would just sail out and go to a rendezvous where you would wait around or you've already contacted that ship to say you were there and you'd bring it in.
01:58:19	Very often even we two escorts one would be at Greenock at the Clyde and the other would be down at Liverpool and we would meet a point of rendezvous going out of the Clyde and the other one Cavalier perhaps come out of Liverpool and then we would steam up together to the rendezvous point for the monster. This happened once or twice a week for one of us we never had the same cohort because they wouldn't always be in the same area, they'd be doing something else and between that if you're duty ship if there was an aircraft carrier which happened in one case had been torpedoed we'd just come down from Scapa to Greenock and we'd just arrived at the harbour entrance we went straight to an oiler because you always have to fill up with oil because you might have to go out
01:59:28	And just as we were at the oiler we got an emergency call to say that an aircraft carrier had been torpedoed just out in the Clyde at the beginning of the Clyde so we just let go from the oiler and straight out to the ???? an aircraft carrier and strangely enough she was on her own she come from Londonderry, she'd had no escort and luckily she didn't have a full complement of seaman and so forth and she was coming to the Clyde. I don't know why, but they torpedoed that. They torpedoed a merchant ship at the same time and the U-Boat got away so we went to attack it. It was dark and we left the others I think looking for the U-Boat afterwards when we came back into harbour.
	Start of Film 9
02:00:32	<i>How long are you at sea when you are out in the Atlantic and how often are you going back to base and getting your land legs?</i>

Time code	What is said
02:00:39	In a destroyer not very long because you haven't got that much fuel and you're always using your top speed always maneuvering. The only way of getting fuel if you are out for a long time is from one of the bigger ships wither from an aircraft carrier or if it's as big as the Belfast or a cruiser or something like that and also food. Your food runs out after a short while so the only time we were really out for a long time is when we were up at Scapa when we was working up... when we was going out on forays to help sink the Tirpitz or doing other jobs.
02:01:25	Most of the others it was a case of going out just for a day or two just picking up one of the monsters and then come back with a monster or take one out and leave it, it which case we would have to go to Londonderry perhaps and then we come out of Londonderry again you know and go out on that so we were lucky on that respect that we were not out for very long. There is only we was out for a very long time it must have been over five days I can't remember what the occasion was, but we had run out of food and we was further up in the North Atlantic and our captain was an ex fishery fleet man... he had his own fishery fleet... so what he decided to do as we run out of food he said I know where the fish are so he guided the ship up too where he knew they were, picked up a shoal on the radar, on the ASDIC, dropped a depth charge, lowered a boat, picked up all the fish that came up stunned he stood on the Foc'sle... we saw him stood on the Foc'sle and said 'that one mine' picked the biggest one and we lived on fish a few more days after that.
02:02:58	But our runs were mostly just about five days at a time, but that meant every time we came into either Scapa or if we were in Liverpool or to the Clyde we had to always have plenty of fuel onboard because if you're duty destroyer and then something comes up where a ship has been sunk you'd have to go out straight away and you might be out for a long time looking for a submarine or more than a submarine so we were lucky in that fact that we never went out for a long time otherwise it would have been oiling at sea which is a dangerous practice anyway and picking up food and everything from it.
02:03:55	<i>Can you just describe radar... this is the job you were doing yes?</i>

Time code	What is said
02:03:59	<p>Radar yes... well first of all when I was on a radar set it's only a small set and there are different types the 293 that is high up on the mast specially for picking up aircraft or surface ships really any distant I can't think of the range of it, but it sends out a signal from there, which of course if it doesn't hit anything you don't get it back, but if it hits anything even cliffs or an aircraft or a surface ship then it bounces back and on the screen which is a round screen and the curser is going around all the time that will show a blip and that blip you have to be able to determine whether it's a cloud, which it might be depending on your radar if it's doing vertical or angler and then you'd read off the distance angel and everything. This is mostly on a level, but you have another screen that gives you the height of an aircraft... so you use one with the other. When that electronic signal hits anything then it returns and then you read of the distance of it.</p>
02:05:11	<p><i>Is it easy to use?</i></p>
02:05:46	<p>It's easier to use where you find the difficulty is by experience very often you know what you are looking at either the land because of the size of it on there if it's a small blip its and aircraft a ship whatever, if you know you are using one type of radar it's only horizontal if you're using the other one it could be horizontal or an aircraft and it would give you a good distance the time it takes of course it's based on if it takes ten seconds from there to there its... and you read it off the screen. Luckily at our point in the war we never had any trouble with aircraft only times we had problems with that is if the torpedo bombers had been sent after us of Norway then we would have had to use are... then we would know... we'd have to use the two radar sets then the one that gives you the signal with the height of the aircraft and the other one that gives the distance of it. Then you are trained to know which is the distance.</p>
02:07:04	<p>and I also believe as far as I remember if it was one of our own aircraft it would have an identification signal, which you would know on your radar set before it got to you so you'd have to be pretty well experienced, but my time was not always on a radar set you were sometimes on lookout as a seaman where you are sitting up in a lookout box and starboard side was mine and you are looking out for aircraft which was not very often, surface ships or more than likely you're looking out for a little tiny periscope, which is very hard to see in the rough Atlantic or you might be unlucky enough to see the track of a torpedo coming towards you in which case you get into a panic and call out quickly to the people on the bridge.</p>

Time code	What is said
02:08:00	<p>The people on the bridge the captain or the officer on watch at the time in those days it was an open bridge nowadays it's enclosed, but it was an open bridge so the bridge is here and you've got a look out position just here so you just call out to that person on the bridge, duty officer 'chip bearing red 5 0 green 5 0 whatever your position is, angle of site if it was an aircraft and he can immediately look at it and decide what action to take, but if you're on that look out position which I was on quite a lot as a seaman it's rough because as the ship goes down all the time being a destroyer you're almost a submarine at times the whole of the sea comes up over you and you get knocked back against the search light and its very damp that is very rough... uncomfortable but this is what you get used to. You used to wear a special suit which covered you completely, a water proof suit with kapok lining, but even that the water got all the way day and you got soaking wet.</p>
	<p>Start of Film 10</p>
02:09:16	<p>I remember coming off watch on one occasion like this because normally you have to climb down the outside ladders of the ship because the doors you would go in and out in port are open when you are at sea the doors will be closed because the water comes in those so you have to climb down ladders down the outside of the ship. Not outside in the sea but climb down from the top deck to the lower deck and if you're not careful the wave when it hits you can get washed away so you hold on very tight.</p>
02:09:57	<p>Well this was the middle watch I recall which is from twelve o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning, but you're not on watch lookout all that time on the four hour watch you do different jobs, half hour on lookout, half hour perhaps on a radar set, half hour behind A-gun where you become part of the gun crew so if you did have to go into action you would do the shooting while the real gun crew is called up to take over from you. Well on this occasion it had been very wet outside I'd got soaking and tired and say middle of watch say about one o'clock I'd come down so I went down to my mess deck which is in the Foc'sle a rough part of the ship, I hadn't slung y hammock I'd slept on the cushions, this time I didn't fancy sleeping on the cushions because the ship was going so much this way... I knew I'd come off the cushions so I got down under the mess table, there's about that much water on the floor on the deck about that much I got all my clothes on a zoot suit they called it if anything and I'm laying down there off to sleep straight away next thing I know a foot had touched me and I opened my bleary eyes and there is the officer of the watch and the leading seaman of the mess</p>

Time code	What is said
02:11:40	And he was saying to me and I'm told this in the morning by the leading hand in the mess he said 'come on seaman you can't sleep under there it is too wet' I said... looked at the leading hand and said 'what did he say?' and the leading seaman said 'I don't know I don't read that language' and so we better let him sleep there and they left me there nothing was said about it so.
02:12:08	<i>In water?</i>
02:12:11	You're lying in about that much water on the decks of the ship inside... you know inside your mess deck the water just... its one temperature outside and a little bit warmer inside so all the humidity all the water runs down the inside of the decks anytime you're on the Caviler you have a look on the inside because the metal work on the ships side is only about an eighth of an inch no thicker than that and so you've got water all the time on the mess decks when you're at sea and when you're in harbour you're not to bad. So it gets a bit uncomfortable.
02:12:54	There was another time when we worked with the Queen Mary and we had to pick her up to bring her in. we went out and it was in about one of the roughest storms there was about three really rough storms in the period we was working in the Atlantic and we had to about this time... it would be about March 1945 we had to go and pick up the Queen Mary now the storm had been raging all the way from America and it must have been a big storm that ad come across our way and the Queen Mary had brought it with her sort of thing and we picked her up. I think we were a day or more waiting to pick her up because even she had been held up by the storm well we and I don't know what was the sister ship at that time, but we got really bent up, we lost a motorboat, we lost one of the whalers and we got really knocked about and when we got towards the Clyde... knowing that it was in the area where there would be U-Boats we had to really on our speed...

Time code	What is said
02:14:19	<p>And so as we got within hailing distance of the Clyde the Queen Mary decided she could not slow down to keep up with us because it was tough rough for us we might have been turned over and so she just flashed a message see you in the Clyde ta ta and she kept up her speed and got into the Clyde now she had the whole of the front of her bridge stove in, it was a big ship well up in the air, they had a lot of casualties because they are carrying about twelve thousand troops and this was now late at night I think about eleven o'clock twelve o'clock at night, but anyway she got into the Clyde without any serious damage from the sea... we limped in later on now in the Clyde you're not allowed to anchor and we couldn't go further into Greenock because after that you go through the boom and the boom is closed at night unless it is absolutely necessary to open the boom, which prevents or helps to prevent any U-Boats getting in at that point.</p>
02:15:44	<p>So at the other side where we had to tie up to a buoy we have two buoy jumpers to tie up to a buoy when the ship tops and you have to lower your whaler with the buoy jumper and the rower in it to take you to the buoy with a chain to clip it to the buoy well if I've given you a picture of how rough the storm was it was almost impossible really... we let down onto the water managed to get down safely that got washed away with the crew in it further down the Clyde that was a way three or four hours. We managed to lower another whaler. All of us were up on the foc'sle all the seaman that could help was up on the foc'sle because you can't use your anchor, you're just using your anchor chain, which goes with a wire attached to the end of the anchor chain and the whaler has to take this wire to the buoy to clamp it onto the buoy and the buoys pulled by the anchor chain nearer to the ship so they then clip it on.</p>
02:17:09	<p>So anyway we lowered the second whaler the buoy jumper managed to get onto the buoy and in doing so broke his wrist and in the end after I think about four hours we managed to clip up to the buoy and the captain said 'tots all round' I hated the smell of rum anyway and never would have my tot because it's horrible, but I had it that night because we were frozen... frozen stiff we managed to get away with it nothing is said about this type of thing because although people of the ports new these big ships come in it was not a thing that was talked about because the Germans also knew that they were bringing all these large numbers between ten and fifteen thousand troops it could carry and any of the U-Boat captains that I understand and this is normal knowledge were offered a large sum of money thousands of Deutsche Mark (Reichsmark) and the highest honours to have knocked down any of these monsters, but we never lost one fortunately I'm happy to say, but the Queen Mary was really battered very badly battered how we didn't get turned over I have no idea...</p>

Time code	What is said
	Start of Film 11
02:18:56	<i>When you are talking about big seas what sort of size are you talking?</i>
02:19:00	Well if you're talking... is it the seas themselves you're talking about. Well it is genuinely know that some of the waves were sixty foot high now if you're thinking of sixty foot going up that way you go up to the wave... and you come down to the trough you've got a hundred and twenty foot and there is no way you can cut through those waves, the big ships and the small ships you actually go up on that wave and then you feel it and then you come down with a crunch like that and then you go up the next one and all the time you're corkscrewing you know you're not still and you get used to this after about the first few months because you've got bruises all over the place... you go through the normal flats they're called on the destroyer normal corridor on the floor on a destroyer, which is about that wide.
02:20:10	When you first go aboard one like that fairly calm when we set out for Scapa from Greenock, but as you walk along the deck comes up to meet you as it comes up and you hit your feet as you go down on the deck, but before you know it that deck has gone away as the ship goes down and this hits you from the top and then while that is happening because you're doing this... this bulkhead hits you next thing you know that bulk head hits you so in time you learn to walk like a sailor and if the ship goes down you go down with it and come up with it you find sailors when you get ashore they walk with a roll that is just that they're still walking on the ship.
02:21:08	<i>So after the end of the war VE-Day you're not finished?</i>
02:21:14	VE-Day itself we were that's the 9 th of May we were bringing in the SS Ile de France and when we got notice that peace had been declared next day we were going into Greenock so we actually brought in the last of the one ship convoys before the war ended and we arrived in Greenock it was either Wednesday or Sunday half the ships company was allowed leave, which wasn't me I'm afraid I wasn't one of the ships company, but they went ashore to Greenock and had a good time.
02:22:04	So then we still carried on with some of these convoys after there because there was quite a few U-Boats apparently missing a lot of them one or two of them went to Brazil or whatever so there was still a chance if there was a rogue U-Boat around they could of knocked down some of the monsters we were still bringing back in, but we had no problems at all, but to cut a long story short anyway we were then destined to go across to the end of the Japanese war so two by two flotilla went in for refits.

Time code	What is said
02:22:55	<p>We went in for a refit late in May – June because we were going out there anyway, but fortunately when I was on leave to go out there the ship was down at Devonport being refitted the war ended. I've still got a telegram to say days leave extra... days leave extra. When we came back to the ship we still had to go out there because we were having to clear up after the war well the whole of our flotilla was out there then we were the last two so as we went out Gibraltar, Malta, Aden and places like that we thought we was in for a lovely summers cruise, but when we got to Singapore, no when we got to Trincomalee that was a naval base we were based at Trincomalee and we were also based at Singapore.</p>
02:23:57	<p>Well when we got to Singapore this was just about a week or two after the war and we were carrying out an exercise with HMS Sussex and another ship and the captain... the flotilla leader was on HMS Caesar and ourselves on Cavalier were ordered to go with the Sussex to a problem so we immediately went at full speed we were sent to Java we stopped on a couple of troop ships on the way I can't remember much about that little bit, but we took onboard... a full deck was covered with Indian troops, armed Indian troops and the Cavalier was the same, the Caesar was also and the Sussex anchored outside Surabaya because it couldn't get in, we could hardly get in because there was a sunken Japanese cruiser in there in the way.</p>
02:25:10	<p>So the Caesar went in first because she was flotilla leader full of troops and we went in second because we were second and then the Cavalier afterwards as we went in... it was daylight, we had all these troops onboard so if we had any trouble we couldn't of used our guns because of the troops luckily we didn't have any trouble from the shore, but as we came into Surabaya I was looking over the side and there was bodies dozens of them in white naval uniforms I think they were probably Dutch, I don't think they was ours, but we were slowly moving avoiding this wreckage and avoiding the bodies and you got to the stage now when really bodies in the water made no difference to you... you accepted the fact they were bodies dead you know.</p>
02:26:12	<p>So anyway we slowly moved in we anchored in the dock there and one by one the cruiser disembarked her troops first and we came in next so the three of us all our troops went ashore. The docks had already been taken over by the UK army I think had been brought in ahead and it was the Indonesian Rebels they were fighting they already had killed Brigadier Mallaby the army boss and these troops went ashore and we stayed there ready for a lot of survivors of the Dutch people they were going to be brought across from a camp right on the other side of Surabaya and they were going to be brought under escort under another truce... see Brigadier Mallaby had been killed under another truce.</p>

Time code	What is said
02:27:30	<p>Now this was supposed to be four thousand Dutch people women and children mostly in a camp the other side they were going to be brought across by another truce army trucks guarded by Indian troops they were going to be brought across to us and we were going to have them onboard and we were to take them out to the troopers, which couldn't get into the harbour well we were told while we were waiting for these people to come across we were to go out into the water because we might be used, which was absolutely necessary as it happened when this convoy of army trucks guarded by Indian troops got as far as Surabaya they were found they were stopped even though they had a white flag... they were stopped by the post office which was full of Indonesian rebels.</p>
02:28:33	<p>The Indian rebels had set up trench mortars and machine guns and as soon as the convoy got there they shot the troops that were guarding the convoy and the convoy come to a halt so we were called in to use are 4.5 guns so we had to fire on the town and we took out the post office with the Indonesian troops in it and then the convoy come through, we went back into harbour and we had all the Dutch people on board and we took them out. We didn't personally have to go ashore. I had to go ashore later on to guard some of the warehouses and so on but we didn't have to do any fighting the only fighting we had to do was fire the guns... because I was on the upper deck at the time when we were called in to fire and I was called off the upper deck to fire X and Y gun and I said 'I'm not a gunner' they said 'you are today' they put me on the gun gunnery with another one and we had to fire and we had to fire in the direction of a spotter plane that was sent up by the army... the army sent up a spotter plane so apparently we took out the post office so our good deed was done for the day.</p>
02:30:04	<p>We did have them aboard overnight a lot of these Dutch people we vacated all the forehead mess decks and we had to sleep down aft on the upper decks and different places and the Dutch people women and children until we took them out to the other ships and then we got our place back... I lost a pair of sandals they disappeared.</p>
	<p>Start of Film 12</p>
02:30:34	<p><i>How do you feel when you're sailing into a harbour and seeing a lot of dead naval people?</i></p>

Time code	What is said
02:30:40	Well you're apprehensive to start with, but at the age you are you're very seldom frightened I suppose your adrenaline comes back later on and you think to yourself well I could have been killed there, but I wasn't and that's how you took it. If you thought of all these things at the time you'd be a nervous wreck but you're eighteen years old, nineteen years old and if anything happens then fortunately you accept it's not fear. Sometimes I look back now and think I could have been killed there, but I'm not I'm here so we accept it just as a fact of life. It was exciting...
02:31:42	<i>It's quite a big way to end your naval service really to be involved in a contact like that?</i>
02:31:52	It is nice to be at this stage and know that you have done certain jobs... well we must of killed people by taking out the post office, but you didn't see them and you know by doing that you helped to save the last of perhaps two or three hundred of four thousand people and I had the same feeling when we were escorting the troopers the fact that we never knew that we'd sunk a submarine a U-Boat because we never stayed long enough all we could do was depth charge a target. If that target was a U-Boat then we might of sunk it or it might of got away, but our real job was to look after a ship coming in with fifteen thousand troops and as long as we'd saved that I'm happy, but you never know but I just hope we didn't I just hope there wasn't a U-Boat there and those people weren't killed they were only doing the sort of thing we were doing and that was the job.
02:33:15	End of Films