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Name: Buster Brown
Regiment: The Royal Navy

Date Transcript: 03/02/2012
Transcribe By: David Davies

Timecode	What is Said
01:00:00	Start of Film 1
01:00:01	I'm Henry William Brown that's my actual name and I was nick named Buster... Buster Brown from London Town and that stuck with me all the time I was in 'The Andrew' (check Jack Speak for Naval slang) all the time I was in the navy it was Buster and you got so used to that name even my... I got my first great grandchild and my grandson and you'd never believe it because he's named the first name after me because they called me Harry a lot of them called me Harry in civilian life so he's named his baby that's that little boy there... over there. He's named the baby Harrison Buster so he calls him Harry Buster Brown so he's got the full link
01:00:51	<i>Tell me what it was like when war was declared for you personally?</i>
01:00:56	When the war was declared I evacuated, I was working in a place called Astral on electrical components making and as soon as war was declared I was fourteen and a half going on fifteen my mother says you go away with John that was my mother's kid brother he was a year younger than me so she said you go to your nan she lived in Lindsell this was the other side of Dunmow and I went there to live and she was a lovely old girl... my great grandmother it was and her daughter my aunt... Aunt Lil she got me a job with a building company in Dunmow Pickfords was the name of them, they were the people and he had two sons Tony and John they sort of took me under their wings because they were a bit older than me and it wasn't going to be long before they were going to be called up into the forces which they did they were. I worked with them for a while and I loved the job it was great but the war was on, the war had started you see and cause John he got fed up just going round rabbiting all the time cause he used to just go in the fields and catch rabbits anyway so many rabbits you'll never believe it

01:02:32	<p>The long and short of it was we stayed down there for a few months and I was enjoying work but he said I'm fed up I want to go home I said because they hadn't started the bombing then you see the bombing... it was what they called the phony war to begin with because nobody... because Hitler hadn't started his Blitzkrieg but then once he started we came back you see. anyway I got a job with the Enfield Cable Works as an apprentice electrical engineer I didn't know it at the time but I was approaching the age of seventeen when I was working at the cable works and I was getting on very well they was sending me to college and it looked promising you know but then trouble started because they started the bombing and the Blitzkrieg started then cause then we wished we were away in the country believe you me anyway I came back... as I say I came back I was working I liked the job and I was getting towards the age of seventeen I had the feeling in my own mind that I'm going to be called up but what I was afraid of I'm going to tell you what I was afraid of I was afraid of being put down the mines I didn't want to go into the mines but I didn't want to be a Bevin boy so unbeknown to my father cause I was still seventeen you see then I went and I volunteered for the Royal Navy.</p>
01:04:18	<p>And cause they said by rights you got to wait until your eighteen you see because otherwise your father could more or less claim you back your still under his jurisdiction at the time even though if the country wants you they'll take you but the actual minimum age for conscription was eighteen so of course I finally went in just before my birthday actually that's why they put down there seventeen. Anyway I volunteered my father knew nothing about it and my father was a brick layer and very intelligent man but at the same time he was a brick layer and he said... you know he kept on saying you didn't have to go because your apprenticed to electrical engineering he said you'd be alright I said no no I'm not taking that chance cause they wanted electricians down the mine I'm junior I'd be taken and be put in there with electrical experience I've had and I don't I'm not going to take that chance so he said you stay as you are because he didn't know anything about it but one day I just took it in my head and went and I volunteered for the Royal Navy</p>
01:05:43	<p>and the next thing I knew unbeknownst to my father I got a medical, I went for the medical over in Edgware and cause I passed A1 I was a pretty fit guy and at the time little did I realise that while I was working at the Enfield Cable Works I was sucking in a lot of asbestos dust because I used to blow it... as a boy you used to do all the dirty work you had to blow out the motors in the asbestos area you know but I didn't know about that at the time... nobody knew but anyway that was another part of the story.</p>

01:06:28	<p>But I went and I got... I just waited then because I had my medical I was A1 and all I could do now is wait for them to pick me up my father still didn't know, I didn't tell him and I was an only son and anyway all of a sudden I'm working at the cable works in the road down the entrance I was doing some outside wiring and he come... I seen my father coming along on his bike and I thought he looks vexed he's waving these papers in his hand and he said to me he never swore I never heard my father swear in my life never heard him swear and I think he said bugger that was... you silly bugger and he said look at this he said your called up he said you shouldn't go you shouldn't of bloody gone you could have been kept out he said I'd of made sure you'd of kept out anyway I said no I'd sooner go in I'm not going to take a chance... I didn't want to take a chance anyway he was understanding and we waited until I had to go and then he came to the station Waterloo Station cause I'm going to Skegness and a... I think it was Waterloo anyway and he said a I'll never forget it because he had a pronounced Adams apple and cause I was his only son obviously he was very emotional and I could see he was crying cause that didn't make me feel to good but luckily a guy who lived across the road from me got called up the same day we went to school together with this guy and we both went to Skegness anyway</p>
	Start of Film 2
01:08:22	<i>When you went to Skeggy what year was that?</i>
01:08:25	1943
01:08:26	<i>Ok so and how much preparation before D-Day or was that literally....?</i>
01:08:31	I had just over a year on... I landed D-Day my birthday was on the 12 th of May and I landed on the 6 th of June I landed on D-Day... actual D-Day at around about seven o'clock in the morning.
01:08:51	<i>How much did you know about D-Day and what were your feelings about this thing that was building?</i>

01:08:56	<p>Well you see the type of things we were doing because I volunteered Combined Operations, now Combined Operations got me out of becoming a signaller I didn't fancy being a signaller anyway though I was good at Morse... good at signals but I wanted to go into Combined Ops on landing craft actually, I didn't know what I was going into but of course you get command.... Equivalent to Commando training you had to know.... You become a soldier as well as a sailor in Combined Operations you proved that because on D-Day I went across the... I went across the Channel on an LCM that carried just one lorry a small landing craft carries one lorry and the chap whose the a... who sails it is a Marine and of course there's me and one or two other guys there you know who landing parties they were soldiers but I was the only Matlow there.</p>
01:10:14	<p>When we were going over on D-Day the sight that you saw would never be able to be seen again and those that didn't see it don't know what they missed the skies were absolutely black with planes... absolutely black with planes I've never seen so many planes in the air in one hit all going over gliders the lot fantastic sight and you're in a little boat looking up and you see all that going on and you say what are we going in to.</p>
01:10:49	<p>But this officer who was more or less in charge of me because he was our engineer officer anyway when we landed I told you the a... I was on the beach... as the flap went down we run off well the soldiers went straight with the army section I went with the army section but I got pushed onto this sergeant and he straight away even though bullets were flying about he says to me you're going to be handed twelve German prisoners he said now make them work because that was my next job and as the landing craft was coming in and the flaps was coming down and there was rolls of mesh what they lay across the sands for the future for any tanks or anything save them sinking too far into the sand they had to be laid well I... it was my first experience with Germans real Germans cause don't forget we were in England all the time and anyway I got a dozen and there were eleven of them who all said they were Polish and a... because they were after me cigarettes and there was one German youth who was sixteen seventeen I'll never forget because I'm the only guy with the rifle and I'm just pushing them out and making them work.</p>

01:12:29	<p>Anyway this a... they just said cigarette so I says no no and they could see them sticking out me blouse see and they kept on about cigarette so I said ok when they worked then I gave them the cigarettes a cigarette each and this German he was only a youngster he said a cigarette so I said no your too young cause I was being a bit naughty with him really because he was a bit vicious and he said a Englander svinhunt and I thought well that didn't sound very nice I didn't know any foreign language then, I said... I said you get to work he said cigarette I said no you... you didn't say please just like that... na please... no no I said your too young you can't have one anyway with that he spat at me so I hit him on the toe with me rifle butt so he had a sore toe and I had to wipe the spit of here... off of me I said don't you do that once more I said I'll put a bullet in ya, but I didn't. I wouldn't of done that not a prisoner anyway. Anyway this sergeant saw me, he saw me hit the bloke on the toe with me rifle butt and he said I'm putting you on a charge for that I said put me on what you like I said just like that. That was it but there again that were the conditions you were working under at the time.</p>
01:14:08	<p><i>What do you remember of the actual final approach?</i></p>
01:14:11	<p>You're not scared don't get me... I wasn't scared I always used to believe there was somebody on my shoulder looking after me and that was the way of feeling I had I mean I saw people fall when they're getting hit but don't forget at the time a lot of the French girls married Germans they became snipers the German girls up in some of the houses and they were carry on firing until they spread them out they got them all out eventually and we could move... more movement along the beach cause don't forget were ducking and diving at the beginning because of the bullets that are coming across at you but I know for a fact I walked along the beach this particular day where they've cleared the houses of the snipers because they went in and dragged them out that's where all the prisoners were coming that we were taking and cause they had to find them work and a... until they scoop them up and take them back to Blighty.</p>
01:15:26	<p>Well all you're doing, you know you got a job to do you know for a fact that you're coming off you got to go and report because you've got the beach sergeants that are directing you anyway whoever was a sort of none combatant were being directed so that's how I finished up. Anyway when It became... quite all down and soldiers were coming in and there all moving up it's a continuous movement as there coming in all the time see, and then I walked along the beach and I know, and I saw a pile of some clothing you know German clothing... steer clear cause I was always told never kick a cocoa tin because they know Brits love football and if they see a tin sticking out of the sand they'd kick it so what they used to do we was told don't kick them cause you put TNT in it and they'll blow your legs off, which that did happen at various times they had experienced this and...</p>

01:16:49	<p>but being young and stupid in a way I saw a green ball with a chain on it and a ring on the end of it and I'll never forget it cos I bent down and I picked it up and I put my finger in the hole of the ring and I swung it round just like a boy really and I slung it in the sea didn't think no more of it not until I came back home and I saw the ????</p> <p>News on the pictures and it showed you this butterfly bomb that was an anti-personnel bomb was highly dangerous and the wings come out on it you know luckily I must of picked up a dud, but you should never touch anything I was told about that afterwards but anyway that's another part of the story.</p>
	Start of Film 3
01:17:45	<p>Anyway then I had to go and join my craft you see once I'd done the initial jobs that were warranted of me under the jurisdiction of this beach sergeant that was controlling labour in other words because your spare bods really when you're like that so of course the I was told by my own officer you get back on board so we went out to the Goose.... You heard about the Gooseberry Bush haven't you... Gooseberry Line well it was a break water, block ships you hear about that did you... well that was just of Sword Beach that was and they was full up with cement and they was sunk you know often wondered why they were but u realised afterwards because it was all the landing craft had to get behind that in the storm it was just to break the... otherwise we would of all finished up ashore you know blown on the shore</p>
01:18:54	<p>But I got... I had to jump on the duck it's a amphibian and they took us out to the break water anyway I stood on their waited and I was with this officer Lieutenant Brown, same name as me actually he was and he said where do you think you're going Buster... I said forty two sir no he said you can't go on forty two he said because that's where I'm going he said I don't want you on forty two he said you go on your other one thirty nine so anyway I went onto thirty nine he went onto forty two and as I climbed over the barrier part of the craft I'll never forget it because I got my hat stuck on the, sailors hat stuck on the back of my head and I got my kit bag because me hammock was already on board it was already on thirty nine as it happens so even the old engineer officer knew I got to go on thirty nine</p>

01:20:03	<p>But anyway, which I did and of course then I'm the electrician on board thirty nine but if I'm warranted anywhere else they would send a message and they would transfer me onto another craft that's how it would be you see but luckily I stayed on thirty nine for the seven weeks I was out there and what happened then was... that's when other things happened I can tell you the time when while I was on thirty nine I got friends on there and the other one was another electrical but he was a guy named Bernard, Bernard Bland come from Sheffield we were great pals and this particular night I always remember because we used to do what they called the Trout Run. The Trout Run was the entrance... across the entrance of Le Havre the E-Boats used to come out of there and the one man submarine they had two or three one man submarines they used to come out and they used to lay mines during the night you know so we were there as a sort of a buffer were only landing craft we had no speed I mean and the E-Boats all you saw was the wash you couldn't... no good training any guns on them, but we would if we could see them the craft but they... it was pitch black they use to come out when it was pitch black you might see a bit of white foam but it could be anything you know so of course you don't give your position away.</p>
01:22:01	<p>Anyway we used to have to go there... just a sign of strength really I think so that's why all these... all these landing craft used to go across the Trout Line to make a line of defence in other words to try and defend all the shipping that was in the bay because that's a great big bay if you... you have been out there but you'll find that bay goes right the way around forty five miles that is one end of the beach Aramache down as far as Ouistreham forty five miles long and that's all sandy beach all the way along there so you can image...</p>
01:22:42	<p>This particular night he said... this Bernard said to me he said I haven't got any watches tonight he said I'm not on watch tonight he said I feel like going to bed throw in me mick cause otherwise we slept on boxes we didn't always get in our hammocks because we had so many duties to do. So he said I'm going to go in my hammock tonight he said look do me a favour he said what time you got to go I said I'm on... I got middle night this twelve o'clock at night I'm on lookout so he said before you go on he said if anything happens he said until you go on he said and I'm asleep he said wake me up so I said well if we get hit I says... I said that will wake you up he said no it won't he said I'm going to sleep he said when I go to sleep I die. So I said don't say that anyway... anyway I said alright. And the funny thing how a thing like that sticks in your mind.</p>

01:23:51	<p>So I'm sitting on the box reading waiting to go on to watch and all of a sudden he'd gone to bed laying in his hammock I saw him lying there he'd got his tin hat on one hook and his life belt on the other hook so when he got out of his hammock he would naturally grab those cause there essential so and I never forget cause all of a sudden there were two whacking great bangs all the lights went out all the crocks and everything went flying I thought well we've had it I really thought we were down, we were finished cause only the emergency light came on and was sort of a flicker light you know any way you could see... you could see anyway my instinct... it was only instinct I run to his bunk, his hammock I knocked him out of his hammock literally I knocked him out and he come down and as he's landed on his feet he grabbed his tin hat and his lifebelt and stuck it under his arm</p>
01:25:00	<p>and I'm pushing him in front of me to the cat ladder to get out the hatch cause we were down below. I said get up there get there get there he gets halfway up the ladder and I burst out laughing and he turned round to me and says what the bloody hell are you laughing at I said I didn't know you only had a short vest I said and you've got your arse in my face and I'm pushing him up there and I've got his backside hitting me in the face as I'm pushing him up this ladder anyway he gets to the top and there was a chief... well a petty officer and he was going to have a bit of a laugh he says hello why you coming out the hole for just like as we got to the top. So Bernie said to him what happened then so he says ah he said it did happen he said but the bombs cause bombs always come down that way, two bombs come and they missed the craft but they went onto the seabed at more or less mid ships to the craft the blast lifted the craft but it come down bonk instead of going down that way or that way it came down square so it didn't sink cause otherwise we would of gone under you see, all depends where you've been hit but it didn't hit us it was just a blast but it threw everything out of bonk you know anyway so I'm going back to bed and he went back there and got in his bunk and had a good night sleep.</p>
01:26:42	<p><i>Does a near miss like that freak you out?</i></p>

01:26:44	I had to go on watch I did its missed you... you just take it in... you take it in your stride there was another story that linked to that as well. A nice sunny day and we were at what they call stand easy or double stand easy well I'm lying on the foc'sle, I'm the only one on the top deck apart from the skipper, skipper was in the bridge with one of his aids and they was just on and the lookout and I was laying there just in my swimming trunks and laying on the foc'sle well you haven't got a great deal of room cause your moving area is very limited what with the gun turrets and so forth and I was right close to where the pom poms were but laying so I could put my hand into the water because it was so low in the water and I'm lying there collecting the sun and where... what happened was a shell came across from Le Havre cause there the guns that go in and out of the cliffs and they must of come out and said look at that old bugger or that bugger laying on that... that foc'sle on that craft... anyway the shell went to the side of me but into the water it didn't... it missed me by inches
01:28:29	<i>Could you feel it?</i>
01:28:29	No I just felt the shush and as that exploded as it hit the sea bed it threw all the crap up you know that was underneath the sand and muck well I got covered in that but it threw me against the... the blast actually threw me against the gun turret I was bruised but I hadn't broken anything so I didn't report it cause I didn't want to leave ship anyway I didn't want to leave me craft so... but I'll tell you what I did do that did frighten me because I got up and I didn't stay there I thought if I'm going to die I'll die with the others down below with the others, the rest of the crew they said... there answer was your covered in crap, I was I had to have a shower
	Start of Film 4
01:29:22	<i>Describe LCF (Landing Craft Flak)?</i>
01:29:23	The reason I liked the LCF's were because they were bristling with guns and there was four pom poms and eight oerlikon's. Oerlikon was a Czechoslovakian gun a very good gun... very good gun but of course the pom poms were very good as well marvellous and you always felt secure but course you can't stop other shells hitting you and it's a very strange and... fear everybody gets afraid you've all got an element of fear even when... cause you hear things coming across you know near misses or there hitting something else but don't forget I was stuck out there for seven weeks, seven to eight weeks altogether because the hadn't taken Le Havre cause they were too busy concentrating on taking Cairn see they want the ports they needed the ports that why the other unit came into action later on the next operation that we were going to go on after D-Day. We didn't know at the time but that's all to do with The Battle of the Bulge and ????? all there.... What do they call it they couldn't get their equipment there because they stretched their lines so much along the coast Montgomery had.

01:31:10	<i>Tell me a bit about the crew and the camaraderie?</i>
01:31:15	Well you see the camaraderie you see if you take the guys we were like brothers, we were like a band of brothers really you were always looking out for each other and nothing was too much trouble if you got a good crew and most sailors I don't know what it is but they are always saying to me that they're always ready for a laugh, they were always ready for whenever they went ashore there camaraderie was marvellous it was... I was saying it proved that even the point of fact when this lad I was friends with I pushed him in front of me I didn't get in front and run and look after myself, I pushed him in front of me I didn't know we hadn't been hit, I didn't know we weren't sinking I'd know idea when I was telling you about the bombs that came underneath because you don't ex... you don't know what's in front of you, what's ahead of you, you don't know what you're going to face when you get up on top, but that's the LCF they had altogether I would say our crew was about twelve to fourteen sailors of various trades like stokers, electricians, seaman and the rest were in the forehead area cause you got to imagine and LCF is an LCT with a top deck put on then bristle it with guns on the top deck below them where the tanks used to be when it was an LCT that was the Royal Marines billet, that's where they slept and they lived that was there mess.
01:33:23	We had the small area under the bridge in the aft position, in the stern in other words and very small area but quite adequate, quite adequate but I think myself it was the closeness that you had with the other sailors that made you so... a good unit the camaraderie and that made life bearable believe you me as I said to you when that shell landed the side of me into the water I wasn't badly hurt I was bruised but I was only to pleased to get down amongst my mates if I die I'll sooner have somebody round me when I die that was my attitude, that is how I felt at the time.
01:34:22	<i>When did you first experience death and how did you deal with that?</i>

01:34:26	<p>Your too busy, you see when you get a job don't matter.... Your under fire it could happen to you, you could be walking along and all a sudden you see somebody go down you don't know how badly he's been hit you don't know they lay there then the collector comes whoever it is to find out if he was dead or anything they collect them but your busy going onto your next job whatever you've got to do, you can't even stop you can't stop if you was to stop for everybody that fell down you know you'd been in trouble because you'd get it don't matter how good you are there... or how much somebodies looking after you... you see there's a difference between a sailor and a soldier a soldier has his self to worry about and his group that he's with but he's looking after... he's got to look after himself because he's got no one else really to look after him not actually because there all busy looking after themself, but a sailor is different a sailor is working as a unit on board a little confined area and when it gets hit such as forty two when... I've got to mention forty two cause that was are other craft LCF thirty nine LCF forty two that's two of them there number thirty five and thirty six as well but these are the two made ones for the...</p>
01:36:09	<p>One was the flotilla leader which was forty two the second in command was the thirty nine but I was on thirty nine but on forty two if I'd have gone on there I would of probably joined my friends who got killed because one of those shells from Le Havre landed on the bridge and the flotilla officer lieutenant commander Alfred he got killed... he was killed my friend, my best friend I would say on forty two was Al... Al Woodhead I go to his grave every year he buried in a place called Hermaville it's a small type cemetery and I stand there and I think of all the times we would go ashore and the times we used to have together as friends the same camaraderie and then there was the bunting tosser he had his head blown off he was the eldest guy out of our crew I always remember it I see him now he was about... he was the tallest one out of all of us and cause he had a shiny bold head and he was... I think he was twenty nine he was killed but he looked a lot older you know being bold as well made it look that way, but he was a lovely guy but in that particular melee his head was blown off... the skipper had half his backside blown away.</p>
01:38:03	<p>lieutenant Smith the signals officer scrabbled off the bridge and the shell landed practically at the side of him he never got a scratch now how can that happen, there all dying around him five of them in terrible state yet he comes of that bridge he walked around the upper deck and fainted well he out it was shell shock cause they grabbed him put him on a... on the boat and he come back to Blighty because he was... he was in a state of shock which was he was no more good as an officer at the time because he got to be looked at seen too and he came back.</p>

01:38:52	As an example you report to sickbay they gave you a pill and they called it the number nine pill and I know fact I didn't know one day I was having my breakfast and it was herrings and tomato we lived on herrings and tins of tomatoes and I didn't know all of a sudden I opened my mouth and blood poured out of my mouth and I didn't know I was only... I wasn't a doctor and all I did the guy said get to the sick bay cause we were ashore at the time and I run to the sickbay and he said ok open your mouth had a look he says you've cut your throat apparently I had a bone of the fish and it had cut the inside of my windpipe throat not badly damaged but enough to make it bleed like that and I poured blood out of my mouth and he said... cause that's when I had my first number nine pill I said my toilets alright cause apparently it makes you go to the toilet.
	Start of Film 5
01:40:10	We had to stay out there all the time Le Havre was operating from.... For the benefit of the Germans so until Le Havre was taken we couldn't come home unfortunately on board a landing craft you can't store fresh food so your living on corn beef and hard tack, that's biscuit and this is what actually happened on the particular day I met a new guy called Harry Card at the time because we was coming away from the beach area to get out to the open sea as the HMS Swift, which is a destroyer was passing us on our port side and we were waving to them one minute the next thing it was cut in half as we more or less got level with it. We were a far way away from the explosion but it sunk very quickly because they cut it in half this destroyer and course a lot of the guys were in the water and obviously our skipper made as near as possible he could get and we started picking up survivors and I was in and out of the water because I was a good swimmer anybody needed help, we was assisting them
01:42:00	but that particular morning was rather unfortunate because in a way in two ways because we had a fisherman on board who knew all about fishing and during that day before this happened to the Swift we've gone round with wicker baskets as we were sailing round and picking up stunned fish like from depth charges any explosions that were in the sea stuns the fish so we got fresh fish for breakfast in the morning. Well we'd done... this guy prepared the fish so we were going to have we'd still have hard take but we'd have fresh fish for breakfast and it was all laid out on plates and we were going to sit down and have a darn good meal. When all of a sudden the Swift got blown up and all we had on our plates afterwards was blood and cotton wool where we were tending the wounded as we got them on board.
01:43:12	<i>Did you hear the Swift explode?</i>

01:43:13	Yeah we saw it, saw it happen oh yes bright sunny day it was... we was watching it we didn't know it was going to go, we didn't know anything was going to happen were just waving as they go by any ship that goes by you always wave acknowledge, don't matter who it is. Queen Mary went we'd still do the same because don't forget all sailors line the foc'sle when there entering harbour or leaving harbour.
01:43:45	<i>And what do you remember of the scene of the carnage?</i>
01:43:50	No it was just chaos in as much you got there was a seventeen year old I heard about this one afterwards because he was under age he apparently was only seventeen year old and he was standing next to the boiler when the boiler blew and he was a bubble he died. You see I can't remember I think they lost forty... killed on board at the time the rest was survivors, which we collected as many as we could and then we handed them over to the hospital ship and away it went and that's where I met Harry Card cause he was one of the guys we pulled out because when I met him sixty years later at the... in Barnet actually in a pub he was visiting with the Normandy veterans and he said to me I recognise you, I said so do I recognise you but you I said I can't try and think where it was I said because I've got a marvellous memory for faces I said and I've seen you before he said was you on the landing craft and I said yeah... so I said with that were you on the Swift he said yeah... I said do you know you're the first one I've met since the war who I ever came across who was on the Swift... he said yeah you was one of the ones that pulled us out the water. That was Harry Card we've been pals ever since and I've met him sixty years afterwards.
01:45:38	<i>Did you ever get fired upon by planes?</i>
01:45:40	No actually no... German planes kept away from us you didn't see many planes at all it was just... a rogue one had come in and our skipper just opened up oh the marines had a chance at opening up at them and they opened up at it, he soon knocked off though
01:46:01	<i>What do you remember of that?</i>
01:46:02	Not much... not much at all about that really it was in and over in a matter of minutes they fire... funny thing they took a photograph of the firing that went on at the time.
01:46:17	<i>So all the time you got marines below deck is that right?</i>
01:46:19	Yeah about thirty marines cause there manning what eight... four pom poms and eight oerlikon's.

01:46:30	<i>What was the camaraderie like between the marines and the sailors?</i>
01:46:32	Oh no they more or less kept to themselves, they were friendly because when you... especially under fire... friendly they'll be the first to go in and help you if you was in bother, but they wasn't called upon not in our situation anyway cause luckily we didn't get hit, well we did we took... we took a very small shell holes below the water line because I know that... that got me out of trouble cause I was the one that went and put the Marlin spike in the hole
01:47:05	<i>What was that just from Le Havre was it?</i>
01:47:08	Well it was a... I didn't even see it happen I just heard about it cause somebody put these... somebody gave me the Marlin spikes, gave me three and all I had to do was the force of the water because are bilges couldn't take... apparently wasn't clearing the... the water in the bilges quick enough, the water was coming in too fast so they had to block the holes up and that always stuck in my mind because I got in trouble after D-Day and I was on a charge and I had a... luckily I said... it wasn't lucky for our original flotilla officer he got killed but the new flotilla officer was a lieutenant Grillock and he took over when we come back to Blighty. When he took over he introduced his self to me because I was marched in front of him on a charge I won't go into that in detail because I was a naughty boy and I was going to be punished and he was going to be my mentor in other words he was going to dish out my punishment and it should of gone in front of the commander but the commander let my flotilla officer who was in charge of all of us to hand out the punishment and luckily for me I finished up with fourteen days number eleven, which was bad enough... that's a...
01:48:54	<i>That's because he knew about the fact that you..... ?</i>
01:48:59	That's right because he asked actually doing the... doing the process he didn't know anything about it he asked if anybody had anything to say in favour of the rating that is on charge I said and lieutenant Brown my mentor who was with me on D-Day he stepped forward he said... actually he said Buster this is the rating your referring to now he said he was the one who dived over the side of the ship, the craft he said and put three marling spikes in shell holes that were becoming hazardous... he said that puts a different light on it he said but he said he won't go into cells he said. He said because I'll take that into consideration but I'll give you fourteen days number elevens that's running round with a full pack and a rifle for an hour, every night and murder that is but course I was pretty fit but...
01:50:05	<i>Can you remember what you did and how you felt?</i>

01:50:10	Relieved... great relief the point... you wind down but I think we were all suffering from what they do today call this stress what do they call it post-traumatic stress but course those days it wasn't looked upon as a... serious as it is today because they got to have proper medical treatment and there shipped out straight away when they're getting too bad but on those days I tell you a number nine pill had to work wonders but we weren't any better because I know for a fact I come home I couldn't sleep. I couldn't unwind in seven days, takes years
	Start of Film 6
01:51:08	<i>You then realised that you were off on another mission is that when you went...?</i>
01:51:11	That's when we went to OostKapelle
01:51:13	<i>That's a much longer crossing as well?</i>
01:51:16	Oh yeah... well we done it in two parts cause we went to Oostende first well that's not far from the Skelt its only just round the corner well I say round the corner it's a journey but they knew we were coming but that was a different ball game, that was different to a.... see there's never to battles the same don't matter where you go
01:51:42	<i>What made WestKapelle so different?</i>
01:51:44	So much more action... so much more action for instance there was one particular craft. I'll give you an idea
01:51:56	<i>How many craft are going over are in this flotilla?</i>
01:51:59	Oh there was quite a.... we filled Oostende harbour up let's put it like that, there was enough of us because there was ML's as well motor launches, there was two or three MTB's I noticed in the bay and we didn't... I never saw any destroyers but they didn't always come in because they stayed outside the bay area cause all the landing craft had to come in because of the protection in-case the weather gets bad because don't forget they easily tip over you know, we have lost a lot. They found one a few weeks ago didn't they in the Channel and it's still got the crew and they been laying there all those years, it's a war grave now.
01:52:49	<i>So after Oostende then you're all heading out?</i>

01:52:51	<p>Oostende then we... they sailed out I forget what time, they actually started at about ten o'clock in the morning, which was a bad time to start anyway there was so much.... Everybody was too busy trying to hide and get away from shells because these landing craft, they came back like pepper pots. I mean the young fella that came from Chingford who was onboard he was holding onto the shield of his gun he had a... he was a gunner on a oerlikon cause it was an LCG you hadn't got so much... all you had and LCGL had two 4.7s guns that's all they had apart from three oerlikon's, two forehead one aft and he was on the... he was on the aft oerlikon and a... always remember him, he'd finished firing and they were turning away to come away from beach and you can see... we saw it all happen we was on ten... I was on ten at the time and a... cause that was are FO our flotilla officer was on their lieutenant Grillock and... but he was mad he sat on the cross member of the mast during the action and he finished up with a shell taking his back out cause I know he was the one that gave me them fourteen days number elevens I didn't hold no grudge, it wasn't cause he done that to me but he... a lot of things go through your mind when anything happens to somebody whose dished it out.</p>
01:54:49	<i>So this guy that was on the gun anyway?</i>
01:54:51	<p>Yes he's standing there and he's holding the shield just waiting if he's called on again to fire and with that as they turned a German shell hit the gun shield he was holding and it took his hand off and one of his legs, but he died of shock he was nineteen... cause always remember him in particular why that sticks out in my mind because he was the one who said are you going ashore Bus I said yeah he said get me some of those foreign coins would you. They didn't do him a lot of good got him some, give them to him.</p>

01:55:33	<p>Don't forget most of the officers are gung hoe, most officers are medal I always say there medal hunters I'm talking about cause if any like VC or any high ranking medal seems they always went to the officers, most of them did you get the brave guys as well. I mean I got apparently according to lieutenant Brown I was mentioned in dispatches, but I never heard any more but he told that Grillock... lieutenant Grillock during that problem I was having that I was mentioned in dispatches that helped me in my, against my charge that was against me so... but he was he only looked like a boy I had to go into the morgue tent to... that was another thing when we got back to Oostende they had a big morgue tent where all the bodies were laid ready to be transported back to... either to be buried in that area or some go back to England, which ever case maybe, but we had nothing to do with that we'd go in for identification anybody that's had there tags knocked off or anything like that you know cause sometimes they get blown off now they get tags round their necks and always remember seeing him lying there he was like a little boy cause he wasn't very big, but he was a nice fella, a great fella believe you me... he was a great guy, he was a good commander but they did say he was buried a Lieutenant Commander RN but I've never seen his grave, but I did read the book the ??? ???? I wish I hadn't lent it now to some body; I lent it and never got it back.</p>
01:57:35	<i>What else do you remember about that?</i>
01:57:38	<p>Well I wasn't out there... we weren't out there very long because once our battles done and they got all the a... marines landed cause there job was to take the ???? but they had the help the army as well was coming in by land they could get down... apparently there was a sort of causeway I never saw that I mean you're too busy when you're at sea you don't see everything that goes around you, you only really see what happens on your own craft or a craft that is firing alongside of you. I mean you often see what's happening on those sort of craft because your so close your only small and don't forget I mean most of our crew is only about fourteen in a crew so you can imagine.</p>
01:58:38	<i>That was in a... that was a very different experience for you then?</i>
01:58:42	<p>That was a different experience altogether, it was one I was glad to get out of actually because it was small, it wasn't as big as D-Day nowhere near as big but the same time cause don't forget D-Day as I tell you was on a forty five mile front it was the most massive landings anybody could ever can imagine</p>
01:59:09	<i>Why did you want to get out of there then?</i>

01:59:12	Well no actually cause it all started dying off once the army had got in there and the Royal Marine Commandos had got in there and it sort of died down a lot you know don't forget action goes on for a period of time but once you get the army on the... they overtake they take and they blow these pill boxes to Blighty don't they. See you can't do without the army irrespectively because there the boys that run up the beaches, lob hand grenades inside pill boxes and everything else once they put these sort of things out of action... but it's the damage they do to the shipping that's coming in and we were like pepper pots, shell holes everywhere
	Start of Film 7
02:00:05	<i>When you left was it particularly rough sea when you went back to England?</i>
02:00:09	Yeah... yeah cause we got blown and also we got attacked by E-Boats that night. When we came back from Oostende this particular time when we got back from Oostende we got on the landing craft even though they were damaged they were still sailable cause we've already sailed... those that were left sailed back from the Skelt down to Oostende then we got to go back from Oostende to get to Dover and we started we got outside and the weather was bad really rough and that's a long crossing from there to Dover and we would be blown our skipper reckoned would be blown onto the a... our own minefields he says we got to be careful apparently he was quite concerned anyway while we were in... just leaving Oostende tracers and everything were flying off of the a... of the E-Boats so there were two or three E-Boats trying to get at us but they didn't hit us, it's dark one conciliation that night but the weather was bad see and it's not so very good for those speed boats see even in rough weather cause a... there not... you'd never get accuracy in there firing when the weathers really bad
02:01:48	<i>And even in a duck I mean surely you were being thrown all over the place weren't you?</i>
02:01:52	Yeah but see with a landing craft your sort of skimming on the top you're going up and you're coming down bang and you're like a moving target it's not an easy thing to hit not in a rough sea but there very sinkable let's put it that way but the only advantage you got cause of the weight of the guns that was on there it gave us more of a draft so we got more in the water but then you become susceptible to mines got to realise that while you're up higher you go over the top of mines cause they lay on chains so far down cause what they done... there really done to get rid of bigger ships like destroyers and cruisers and battleships because where it was cutting through the water it doesn't hit the mine the wash pushes the mine out and it swings round and it hits you at mid ships comes back in at you and the horns hit the mid ships and... usually where the magazine is that's where it usually happens...

02:03:12	<i>So you managed to get back to England when was this... what year was this?</i>
02:03:16	That was 1944 October... October to November that would be round about November I don't recall exactly the date.
02:03:29	<i>What did you do after that then what was....?</i>
02:03:31	Oh we came back... we came back to England and we got leave after that when we had another leave and when we got back we were assigned a lot of us were assigned off of the ships, off the craft and sent back to Westcliffe that was a... our sort of way station Westcliffe was you know cause we knew we wasn't going to be in anymore, we knew we wouldn't be in anymore action cause the craft... I told you the craft was full of holes, there were holes everywhere and only one... only one craft came back without a hole in it number nine, I remember that
02:04:36	<i>I guess that's when you start to sort of get the you know feel the effects of such a lot of combat?</i>
02:04:43	Yeah well the point was I came back then and I went to Westcliffe and I told that I had all my inoculations ready to go to the Far East cause we thought we were going to attack Japan with landing craft, we thought that all the landing craft that were out in the Far East and they were going to send us out to man them, we were all assigned to a troopship... I'd never had anything come back on me before but this time I suppose what it was they gave me a berry berry... I had berry berry, yellow fever... yellow fever, tetanus two lots of tetanus I had a load of shots at me put in and I had a reaction fell down the stairs I was out... I was out like a light sent for this doctor, police came as well. Police always used to have to come if you were going to miss a draft or you can't go back on a certain date strange. Anyway didn't get back they only just sailed an all I only missed it by a day, I could of done with that cause that really European war was finished then just after we got back to Westcliffe because I was down at Westcliffe when VE-Day came about and all the celebrations was going on but course VJ was still going, that carried on afterwards... that went on until September I believe am I right... surprising I can remember that one cause that's where I was going to go

02:06:47	oh that's when I went and.... I met my misses, my wife because the one I told you about Steve he sent for me while I was on leave and a... cause I was on leave cause I got fourteen days... I got fourteen days and I was alright that's what I couldn't understand cause I even went down to Bournemouth I couldn't understand why it went like that the reaction I had cause I'd been to his wedding as a best man, that's where I met my misses got chatting to her tapped her up and she ???? I said alright we'll start courting then and that was it that was my Waterloo.
	Start of Film 8
02:07:40	<i>You mentioned VE-Day what do you remember of it?</i>
02:07:44	VE-Day celebration getting drunk, everybody got drunk, everybody was standing outside pubs, singing, dancing and war was over... that war was over, but we couldn't really celebrate because we are going to go Japan really. I knew where we were going and then I finished up I didn't go to Japan as I say cause I missed the draft chit and I always remember going into the master at arms in his office he said Buster said what's that chief so he says you missed that draft chit he said they've gone out there on holiday just like that anyway he was only guessing cause he didn't know anything about atom bombs or anything none of us knew so he said but I got a good job for you... said you go up to Troon here's your railway warrant and you pick up and LCI Landing Craft Infantry that's a small landing craft three hundred and sixty tons and you'll be electrician on board there he said and you're going to take it to America... I said what didn't fancy that really anyway I got onto this LCI a lovely crew, really good crew got some photos there of... I think there still in there of the rest of the crew there's not many,
02:09:32	not many off us crew as I told you and that LCI used to carry a hundred and fifty soldiers it had three compartments and they hold fifty in each and they used to come down the side of the craft on ladders these ladders that came down the side right down and it had more of a pointed front it wasn't the flappy type you know like an LCT or a LCGs and it was a typical American craft it didn't have hammocks you had bunks lovely lovely sleeping quarters. They really go to town when they make... they make comfort not Brits the British when they build a ship they build it and they put all the armaments, all everything that's appertaining to war then they say where can we stick the crew this is the attitude that we've always accepted... we accept this and usually it's a cubby bloody hole and it's in a... terrible positions believe you me we never get... we never get a great variety, never did not for crew I think if you go back even Nelsons day look at the way they used to have to live.

02:10:59	Well the Americans they didn't want to take them across the pond they used to say... they used to send... because that Steve he was on... he went over there in the beginning he was a bit older than me and course he went over to Asberry Park in America and they gave him sixteen dollars cos they sent the British sailors out there to bring these across... the Americans wouldn't bring them across the landing
02:11:19	<i>Where did you go in America?</i>
02:11:30	I went to... I finished up in New York that's actually Staten Island I went passed the old Statue of Liberty and waved to it as I went by...
02:11:32	End of Films