

## **Research to Remember: In Their Own Words**

Recorded histories by West Vancouver Veterans.

*November 1, 2018, West Vancouver, B.C.* – For the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of the First World War, the Library is launching ***Research to Remember: In Their Own Words***, featuring video interviews with three West Vancouver veterans: Harry Greenwood (Royal Navy), Ted Langley (British Army) and Barney Nunns (Royal Canadian Air Force).

“These interviews preserve for future generations the histories of veterans in our community who served in the armed forces,” says Peter Skinner, President of the Royal Canadian Legion West Vancouver Legion. “The recordings of their personal experiences offer deep insights into the impact of the war on their families and communities.”

The permanent virtual exhibit is online at [digital.westvanlibrary.ca](http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca) where the interviews with each of the three veterans may be viewed in full length or in short segments by topic. The interviews are also fully transcribed and text searchable, making this an invaluable new resource for researchers, teachers and students.

“By hosting the interviews in a virtual exhibit on our Library’s website, we connect local family stories to the collective history and memory of the war that are in libraries and archives across the country and beyond,” observed Library Board Chair David Carter. “The online exhibit of the recorded videos makes the interviews universally accessible.”

For Shannon Ozirny, Head of Youth Services at the Library, the interviews provide meaningful connections for learning and reflecting on our history. “We are fortunate to live in a time of peace and liberty steeped in the values of equality, fairness and justice for all people,” she says. “Recording the stories of our community’s veterans honours them and ensures that youth of today and tomorrow will be able to appreciate how hard people fought to protect these freedoms.”

### **Research to Remember – Background**

Since 2015, the West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) has undertaken a series of Research to Remember projects to connect the community with local history. Starting with a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage’s World War Commemorations Community Fund, WVML created primary research packages for 24 of the 91 fallen soldiers noted on the cenotaph in West Vancouver’s Memorial Park. Each research package contains a brief history on the soldier, copies of papers, photos and documents from the soldiers’ service records, and questions to guide discovery and learning. These research binders are available in the Youth Department year-round and may be borrowed by all Library cardholders.

WVML also offers a [Research to Remember school program](#) for West Vancouver secondary students. In the program, which was aligned with the curriculum by two West Vancouver Schools Social Studies teachers, Youth librarians guide students through the primary research packages, teaching them to navigate historical documents and think critically about the past and the present.

## Barney Nunns

Alan Earnest "Barney" Nunns, Royal Canadian Air Force, Second World War. Barney served as a wireless mechanic and "kicker" aboard DC-3 Dakota cargo planes in the Burma Campaign. This is a transcript of an interview with Barney Nunns. This interview was with Tristan Thompson on December 20, 2017.

+ Who are you? [1.0]

Well, my name is Alan Nunns, but better known by everybody in my life as Barney. "Barney Google" was, I guess, one of the songs in those days so that's where it originated. So, I was born in Cumberland which is a coal mining town on Vancouver Island and my dad was in charge of the railway there and I used to hang around on weekends with the dad when they were still working on Sundays and Saturdays and I would, you know, go out on the train and all the crews on the trains knew me as a kid growing up, so, I had a good life there and when the war came along I took advantage of going-- getting-- going overseas. And Cumberland was a coal mining town, as I mentioned earlier, and you know the people were of all-- there was Italian, black people, white people, of every kind, every [unclear] in that town in those days.

+ What was a normal day like for you in high school? [1.1]

Well, a normal day wasn't very good. I never did like high school very much, but as I say I was a leader or we were being treated like children so we decided to go out and strike, all the fellas, And we-- I was ordered to-- I was one of the instigators of it I guess, and I remember after he got home that night my dad came roaring to my house, or to our house and said, "What the hell have you been doing?" And I said, "Well, nothing very much. I just had a little fun at school." so we ended up having a... He said, "Well, you've gotta report to me, to the people that run the City Hall, in the City Hall. "I have a meeting," he says, "and you're called to it." So I said, "Well I haven't done anything and I just told him what it was, and he says, "Well, the school board has asked that you come." I didn't know what it was all about so

anyway we went in and they had this meeting and they talked to me about it and a couple of other people as well and the next thing I know I was suspended from school for five days. I couldn't believe it so I didn't to worry too much about it because I went down to the local farm-- local hardware store and I fixed bicycles for the whole three days or four days that I was off, but it was a ridiculous thing and it could have been solved without any problems but they treated us like kids and after that they learned a lesson. I guess they didn't realize what they were doing that we were old enough to look after ourselves and go up to school and and be active without interfering with the younger children. So, that's my story so far there: troublemaker.

+ What did you do outside of school when you were growing up? [1.1.1]

Back in the school days of course I, I have this photograph here of our Cumberland high school and this was in 1939 and we won the Dominion championship for St. John's Ambulance first aid and actually this photograph was our instructor here, who was a local gentleman that lived in the town and these were kids that I grew up with. I'm trying to remember all of them, but Bill Nicklaus is one and Jackie Shortt, and he was shot down overseas. I saw him in Montreal on the way through. He was going over and I met him we had lunch together in Montreal and then he took off. They went over and he was shot down in the first month he was over there. you knew all his family very well and this is my friend Tom Scott whose father and mother were great friends of mine and Trevor Jones here and as I say our instructor and the medals we won for the Dominion championship. It says: "Provincial Championship", I'm sorry, "Cumberland Junior High School, First Aid, St. John's Ambulance". So I keep that close by. You know, all that-- you all learned in Cumberland, a coal mining town, that first aid was one of the important things in town.

+ What impact did the war have on your life before you joined the military? [1.2]

I, uh, when the war came along they they were short of people working in the fire department so I immediately joined the fire department even though I was a youngster they were accepting us to go in and help so whenever the fire whistle blew, but usually at night when you were sleeping you'd have to get up and run to the fire hall and my dad would laugh at me after the first time because we had to go to a farm about five miles out of town and it was the middle of winter and we were laying on top of the hoses on the fire truck trying to when we got to the farmyard where the fire was we stepped out and I immediately got into, onto an ice pack and I went down to the water up to my waist, which is something. When I got home that night my dad was sitting there laughing at me, he says, "That'll teach you to go when the fire whistle blows. You go later."

+ Did you know any Japanese Canadians when you were growing up? [1.3]

Part of it was Cumberland was a great town and we-- you know, the kids of every we had Japanese, course, were all there for the time that they were allowed to and then they were shipped out of Vancouver and I remember going down to the down to the station where they took them on the train and shipped them by boat. It was terrible way they that was handled and a lot of them did very well after that someone went to Toronto and some of them went different places back east and the ones in Toronto of two or three of them got-- became doctors.

Amazing how they survived and they got along like that and after the war. They were great and then I haven't ever seen any of them again. They shipped off, as I say, to different cities across Canada where they had their lives, so. Well, I went to school at all these kids, yeah. I remember going down there before I joined the air forces and having see them go off in the train but you know taking them and, you know, they were kids. They were great kids. They just didn't understand what was going on. A lot of them were young then but they all ended up - most of them I ever heard of, later - all ended up in pretty good jobs they got couple of them are doctors went to Toronto and they became doctors. I know they're down there now, but you didn't know in those days. It was in the way, the way the government handled it was terrible but you know, that's politics in those days. But, occasionally I've run into one or two of them because the Chinese and the Japanese are-- we had-- they have their associations here know that we all sometimes get together with them particularly the Hong Kong veterans or see them some of them, the few that are left.

+ Tell me about your decision to join the air force... [2.1]

We had this problem at the school but that was finally settled and then I went through high school of course after that and when I graduated the war had come along and I had a choice of going to the Air Force or the Navy or whatever was the -- You know I wasn't going to be told where to go. I wanted to go where I wanted, and so I joined the Air Force and I went to Vancouver Technical School for about 6 months and was taught to do how to do code and radio equipment and that kind of stuff. And it turns out, when the war was on all the code we learned then, we never had to use it because it was all more more modern by the time we got finished there.

+ What was your job in the air force? [2.1.1]

So, when the war came along, of course, I had the choice of deciding where I wanted to go. I could go in the Army or the Air Force or the Navy, and I wasn't happy about being on ships. I thought, "Well, I'll join the Air Force," so I became a wireless operator and a wireless mechanic and during the war of course we found out that they they were supposed to have-- our planes were supposed to be all loaded with East Indians to unload the supplies that we were carrying and they never showed up at our airport. They were busy fighting fighting the war below I guess and so we ended up-- some of us became "kickers", which there was never known in the Air Force before. And our job was to tie a rope around our waist, and they flew with the door open, and you kick the supplies out if we were parachuting stuff, supplies, parachutes were on-- they were attached to parachutes, or if we could land, we landed and unload the stuff. So, we became kickers and we got extra pay for all this, so. But it doesn't even exist today. You know, they have regular people that do this and look-- unload all the planes, right. And as I mentioned earlier I think we had a rope tied around her waist and flew with the door out and you got your feet up like this and you kick. Stuff was either parachuted out or went that way. If we could land, we landed, you know, depending. So we got extra pay for that, of course.

+ What kind of aircraft did your unit fly? [2.1.1.1]

DC-3 Dakota. Best aircraft they ever made. I'd go anywhere in it, and I've done everywhere! We flew all the way back, you know, we flew from England over and flew back with them too. You know, so. It took us four days to get back to England. You know, so. It took us four days to get back to England.

+ How did you feel about being sent to the Pacific theatre? [2.1.2]

You don't have much choice. I mean, you know, I didn't know whether I was gonna be in Europe or gonna be, you know-- the only thing that made me realize it when I was stationed I couldn't-- you know, I went to wireless school in Vancouver, then I went to Montreal at it, and I was shipped back to Vancouver again. We came back to, when we were sent home on leave and then we knew we were going to go somewhere because we had to have tropical shots. But they were very-- They wouldn't tell you anything about where you were going or what you were going

to do but we assumed that we were going to be more than England, because of the shots we had. And other than that, you know, several of my buddies were killed as well-- quite a few of them were killed overseas. Not with my squadron, but with-- and one of the guys, he's not in that picture, but he he joined the Air Force and we went to school together and he came--

going through Montreal, he knew that I was going to be on the plane or on the train I should say. I got a hold of him and we stopped and had lunch. The train stopped in Montreal and we had lunch together, and I said goodbye to him and that's-- I was the last guy of the family, you know. I saw him and he was shot down shortly after. Anyway. We were very lucky; we didn't lose too many people. We had a number of crashes, lots of crashes, but you know, you can land or something and people, you know, people were hospitalized. But I stayed on the good planes, I guess, I don't know. \*laughs\*

+ How was your unit's role different from the rest of the air force?[2.1.3]

It was quite different than what the rest of the Air Force did, but they, you know, they were in Bomber Command. We were-- had no guns on our planes. We were carrying supplies and that's all we did was drop supplies or landed and just unloaded the supplies, so. No armaments. We all had pistols and that kind of thing... Sten guns. That was all you carried on you. You had it strapped to you.

+ How much did you know about the people you were dropping supplies to? [2.1.3.1]

Nothing, really. Well, I shouldn't say that. We were dropping supplies to feed people as well as the army. But we never had much connection with them. You know, we had our own airfields, and the army was-- We'd fly over them or with them, where they were. If we could land, we landed. If we couldn't land.. So that was your contact with them. We'd fly over them or with them, where they were. If we could land, we landed. If we couldn't land... So that was your contact with them.

+ Did you think of yourself as fighting against the Japanese? As helping allied forces? [2.1.3.2]

Well, we weren't fighting the Japanese in the sense that we didn't have any guns. We were making sure that our army down below was getting food and ammunition. And if we could land, we landed, and if we couldn't land, it went out by parachute. And as I say, we had this door that we-- you got to, you were a kicker you got this rope around your neck, or around your waist, and you got your-- the stuff was all in boxes, and the parachutes or whatever, they'd open after you kicked them out. And if you could land, you landed and unloaded the stuff, so...depends.

+ What did it mean to you to be part of an all-Canadian unit?[2.1.4]

We were stuck together like glue because we know there were no other Cana-- there was individual Canadians serving in the RAF, but we were RCAF, and we didn't do much flying with the RAF. They were mostly-- a lot of them were in Europe and a lot of them were, well, in various other places in the world, but we were only sent to Burma, and that was to representative of our good friend that's they're talking about shooting: Sir John A. MacDonald. They're talking about getting rid of his picture, and here I've got it sitting in my living room. He was, you know, that old history too. It (Canada) was part of the British Empire those days so we we were the only Canadian unit serving. There was individual Canadians serving with the RAF and with the-- you know, the RAF and RCAF are quite different as far as we're concerned. If you were RAF you were under British command; we were under all-Canadian commands.

+ Can you tell me about your photos from your time in Burma?[2.2]

So this is a picture of all our-- most of our ground crew guys and air crew but some of them were flying when this was taken, but this was one of our squadrons, and one of our aircraft. And, matter of fact I pointed out where I happened to be you see how few clothes we wore. We were just called in to make a picture one day. These are some of the officers in charge, and these three, there were three of these fellows had bailed out one night. They didn't know they were going to get them back but they got 'em back the next day. This is the kind of aircraft we flew in. Dakotas. DC-3s. Flew with the door out. Not in this case, but... And that's a picture of us parachuting. We parachuted food or ammunition if we couldn't land. If we could land then we unloaded this stuff just like anybody. We all pitched in. And this is where we first land-- went-- got into Burma. This is our first week. We got there and we landed in there and there was no people to unload our planes or do anything. So, a photograph here of us starting to assemble everything out of the aircraft you can get ready to-- That happens to be a picture of me right there and we ended up building, you know, fixing up tents and spent about three or four days doing that before we're able to do any flying. And this is a one of the jobs I had as a "kicker".

You flew with the door out and you had a rope tied around your-- on a static line, down the centre of the plane, and you were attached to it and you had the door out. That's not a very good picture of the door at the moment. You can see the supplies below and and you, you kick the stuff out. You didn't go with it. This is a interesting-- it gives the sort of idea. These-- First week we were there, the commanding officer and and three of his men got lost and they had to bail out. The C.O. was the last to bail out; this is him in the centre. And this is the guys that-- They all landed in the river, and they found one another on the next day. And here the commanding officer, well the head general was down to present them-- to welcome them

and look after them. And the commanding officer of the airfield was right there. One of the things we'd do was-- we had a lot of-- we didn't have very good facilities for washing and everything so we usually ended up by a river or something, and we always-- This is a picture of our guys swimming in a "chong", we called it a chong, on Akyab Island. And you can see how well we were dressed. And this is over, over Mandalay. The road to Mandalay as we called it in those days. Anyway this is our big supply drop over there and there are the army below and some of our guys are-- after we, if we could fly we dropped this stuff and then we ended up having our pictures taken some of us. I wasn't in on that drop. This is a Japanese flag that one of the guys got ahold of. My buddy, Johnny Klie, he's no longer alive but he and I were great buddies, and we found a Japanese flag, so. You can see the tents in the background; that's how we lived.

This is some of the officers. You had to dig a slit trench beside your tents as well. So this is watching out to see what's going to happen. This is when the airfield we were-- Second airfield, we're in Ramree Island. You can see all the water and the runways just. We're in the middle of the monsoons in those days. And one of the guys was quite a cartoonist so he pictured, showed us with the aircraft and when that boat-- plane we had to call "Watchbird" and it used to go out every morning, early, check the weather conditions. This is just a cartoon they made of one of the Watchbirds. And then our entertainment was terrible. We never had any movies at all, or very seldom, so the guys decided to have a group. They'd be all dressed up as ladies and everything else, and it was called "Monsoon Follies", and this is a picture of some of the fellows. They're all dressed as women. Great, great life in those days. And we had a big Victory Loan day and we collected one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, in those days, so \*laughs\*. You know, we were being paid, and nobody had the use of money, we had nowhere to spend it so you can see our tents in the background and that's a picture, or thing we put up to show what we'd won. And this is on VJ Day when we heard the war was over. You can see we're in the church, one of the small churches they had there. We always had a church for different religions and this is if when we heard the war was over they had a nice service after, which I'm in there somewhere. I guess that's it.

+ What was the most difficult part about life in Burma? [2.2.1]

Biggest problem was the living. That was really rough. You know, you had a lot of bugs caught and different things, and you had to be in the medical office quite regularly and, you know, you look back, and...it was great. You know, you think it was but that time sometimes you wouldn't believe that.

+ What was one day in Burma that you still particularly remember today? [2.2.3]

But, you know, most of the guys are gone. I'm lucky to still be here. I guess I was known as the kid in our squadron, so I guess I was the youngest in the group to start with. But, it's a memory that you'll never forget, but trying to explain it to somebody and make sense of it doesn't probably go over as well as you want. But anyway, we hear from one another occasionally, the few that are left. Bob Farquharson, a good friend of mine in Toronto, or outside of Toronto, and he has written this book that I gave you a copy of earlier. And so when the book's has my picture happens to be on the front of it. How come, I don't know. I remember the day, and the incident that occurred that day. After we'd had-- the guy took our pictures, we were sitting-- standing on the side of a pagoda and there was a bunch of buildings nearby and they were all burned. It looked like they had been fired badly. Anyway, we were wandering around and I looked into one little place there on the floor and I found this ornament here, which is out of one of the native...not churches, but. And this was sitting there on a burned out floor, burned out house and this was sitting there so I picked it up and threw it in my pocket. And that's where I-- ended up bringing it home, and it sits in my room. Everyday I look at it and wonder about it. Who it might have belonged to, what religion it was. Here this was sitting on the floor right where we were standing. No people, none of the natives around. The whole place had been abandoned, you know? And here it was sitting there, so I just picked it up, put it in my pocket and I carry it ever since, and as I say, it sits in my room right now.

+ What did you think about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? [2.3]

As far as I'm concerned? First class! I'm glad they did. You know? What the hell? I mean, sure we killed thousands of people, but the Japanese asked for it. I mean-- and they're certainly a thriving company now or group worldwide, you know. And, you know they were they weren't going to hold anything back to-- on us, if, you know, we lost a number of planes and they weren't from, they weren't from anything but Japanese. You know, or sometimes crashes occurred, caused by yourselves sometimes, you know. Airport-- Right on the air-strips, you know, and sometimes landing. And you never know where you might gonna land. If you could land, you landed, but if you couldn't, you parachuted stuff or unloaded it. It was quite a heavy job but that didn't mind me in those days. But no, I, you know, I had a lot of good Japanese friends at school we went through Cumberland was a coal mining town on the island. And you know, the Japanese were there in the mines and-- had been, originally. They were kicked out, but then my dad ran the railway and he hired a lot of the guys that couldn't work in the

mines. The Chinese, particularly, too.

+ What was it like returning home to Canada after the war? [3.1]

And be happy to land in Canada and see the welcome we got at all the various cities as we were coming home. And particularly when in Vancouver, where we landed here. My family was all there \*laughs\*. You know, the thing you don't-- y'know, you forget them now but a lot of things you remember about them but trying to put them all together's not easy anymore. We landed in Halifax and took a train right across country. Yup, yeah it was interesting too, but people were out at every place we came to see the guys and wave them. It's like when we went to England, you know, we had gum and cigarettes and all this and the kids are in in Scotland were standing there waiting for us. You know, we're throwing the candy out and everything, cigarettes. "Chum? Any gum, chum?"

+ Did the members of your unit stay in touch after the war? [3.1.1]

But that's our life, and it was very primitive in a lot of ways. Always slept in tents. We never got out of tents the whole time we were out there. Four guys to a tent. We became great friends, and I guess of all the guys we had a reunion-- I started, instigated having reunions after the war in Canada with some fellows from Toronto, we had, Vancouver-- I organized a starting reunion after we got home, first year we were back. We came to Vancouver, started-- had a reunion, and we found out those guys in Toronto were doing the same thing. So, we ended up after two years, we merged it, so we go to Toronto one year, or Halifax the next, or British Columbia the next. We went a number of times, we went up to the Harrison Lake, Vancouver area, and always had some great reunions there. They come from right across Canada to attend them.

And we guess we did it for nearly 50 years, but, suddenly there's few of us left, so...you know, can't tell you how many, but I'd say, as far as my squadron is concerned, probably the most would be 25 that are left. And some of them aren't able to get out, even, you know?

+ Could you tell me about your medals? [3.2]

As far as the Burma Campaign, there was very few Canadians that served in it. Just the two big squadrons and then individual members of different parts of the Army or Navy that were serving with other, you know, as well. but we didn't see many of them but we did have-- we got these medals after the war. They didn't-- these were different metals that were awarded to us. The Burma Star, right here, which we honour very much. And these were the British Columbia medal and the federal, I got the first and second medal. One of the things that we

didn't-- We were never honoured about-- We served in Burma. Well there were so few Canadians served we all got the regular medal that we were entitled to, and this came along three or four years ago. They realized that they hadn't given anything to the Burma veterans especially, so this is the medal it was presented and it's the Knightly Order of St. George, which I'd never heard about. And there was about 50 or 60 of us all received it in Ottawa. We were down there for a special part and there it is, so I can wear that if I want on a parade or whatever it is, but very few of them around. And of course these are the regular medals that we earned. And this medal is into a different field altogether in that I've been a Freemason. Last month they had a big do for me, and it was 70 years I've been a Mason in British Columbia, the oldest they still alive in BC, so this is a medal that I was presented for the 70 years. I'm now 71 years, actually. So, anyway, I'm proud of it and happy to have it although it still says "60", they haven't given me a new one.

+ Tell me about receiving your Order of St. George medal...[3.2.1]

This was a medal that-- they didn't give us anything for all that, and then they suddenly, four years ago or so it was, we were presented with this. There's very few of them, because there's very few of us left at that time. But that's what it is, and anybody I know around here has never seen it before, cause it's-- I'm probably one of the few that, you know, I suppose 50 of us altogether from across Canada got it, but that's all there are left of us, or was at that time. It's "Knightly Order of St. George", it's called. And when I was in parade here, for the veterans' day, I had it around my neck. And of course the Burma-- I worked very hard on the reunions after the war, and two of those medals are, you know, for the work-- a number of us got them for the work they did. Well, they found out they hadn't given anything to the Hong Kong veterans. You know, they were-- weren't-- didn't get any proper awards, and we happened to be the only Canadians that had anything in touch with their survival as we were parachuting food to help them and feed the army that was fighting with them. Because of that, I guess they decided they better put this on. We didn't know anything about it. As I say, we went to Ottawa, and suddenly we were all asked to appear in, well, a big dining room, and they called us all out. We thought we were going, you know, for-- it was a great party, we enjoyed ourselves, and then to get presented with that at the same time was, you know. They paid our way down and back. Had to take somebody as a helper, one of us had to take-- my cousin I took. He went with me. You know, as you get older they want to make sure your health is OK. So, thanks to you guys and the government.

+ What do you think about on Remembrance Day?[3.3]

Well, you think about that-- where we were, and things that, well... I don't march anymore. I used to march for the-- up from the Legion to the-- but I don't, my legs don't do me that well, and I end up, you know, getting a ride down there and then they-- We always put the veterans in a special place at the Cenotaph, and this year I carry-- I was asked to present a wreath, which I did and had to walk back to my place in the, where everybody was and it was a number of guys were doing that so we all ended up in the same, you know, doing the same thing, the Legion-- You know, honour the guys that are in it but very few march anymore so as that's the story as far as the Legion. I like it but I don't want to be bothered going down there guys there's a lot of guys are all they're doing is drinking down there which is-- it's an open bar and I don't you know I like to drink at night and that's it so.

+ What are your thoughts on the Legion? [3.4]

Well, I belong to the Legion, which I have, but I'm the only one of my squadron that's in that Legion at the moment, the West Vancouver Legion. I belong-- I've belonged to it ever since the war, I guess. But I don't go very often. I-- They gave me an award, I was-- My picture's down there with a whole bunch of pictures of guys and I'm on that veterans list but, you know, I'm supposed to go tonight or tomorrow I think it is there's a-- I don't think, you, know I've been through the chairs and some of these things. I know what it's all about. In my age I just, you know, I keep my membership up. I'll pay my bill, you know, whatever I'm owed, every time. I go once in a while, and that's it. Y'know, the Legion has changed a lot. Most of the people in there are not veterans anymore, they're people that want to party and that kind of stuff. Well, I think my partying days are not what it used to be. I like a drink. I usually have a good drink every night, of scotch or if I'm having dinner with two or three people I got a bottle of wine, you know.

+ What do you remember about going back to visit Cumberland after the war? [4.1]

I could always remember living in Cumberland, there, at Christmas time, my dad would, you know, he was running the railway, and he hired all these guys. It was his job, or he was in charge of it. And all of a sudden these Chinese would start walking down the street, coming to my house. And they came into the house my dad said-- He didn't even know they were coming. He's the "bossy man", you see, and they all brought, you know, nuts, and candy, and, God...turkeys! You know we couldn't even refrigerate turkeys. I've seen as many as 12 turkeys hanging up in our basement. Dad was giving them out to people. But this is the way the Chinese-- They respected him and they knew he was the "bossy man" sort of but he treated them very well, and as a kid I used to go out with him on Saturday and when he was-- They worked Saturdays in those days-- and they all, every one of these Chinese guys knew

me, you know? There were probably about twenty-five or thirty of them. And then there was a big Chinatown there anyway from other people that worked in the coal mines earlier. But anyway, I went away and got married, and went back when I got married to Cumberland to see... to meet my parents and have a visit with them right after I got married. And one-- this evening a door knock came, and in came three Chinese guys that knew me, and they presented me with a cheque, for I think it was three hundred and fifty dollars which was a gift to me. \*laughs\* My! They insisted I take it. I didn't want to take their money, I mean, because I was....They knew me as a kid! Remarkable people, you know, I couldn't believe it, but anyway. I, finally, I took it, but I didn't want it, and you know just to have them remember me as a kid you know, from here up, that come back from the war and it was, you know, but they still were living up there and they have a pipeline, I guess. They knew I was coming up there. Yeah, amazing. They used to bring us lychee nuts and all these damn things that were gifts, Christmas time. My dad, being the bossy man, that's what they all did. But in those days it'd be 10 or 12 or 15 of them come down to the house. Turkeys, too! We don't-- couldn't eat turkey-- didn't even have proper refrigeration in those days.

+ How did you and your first wife meet? [4.2]

Oh yeah, well, I met her, well, she was a war widow with two kids, and we ended up-- I found out she was, you know, she was on her own. I found out her husband had been killed. I had been introduced to her and I thought, "Oh, she's very nice," and so we talked about different things, and I decided I'd come and help her, you know, so I put in a garden and I put in trees and I put in-- painted, painted the house and I put on a-- built a garage. And then after about two years, year and a half of going out with her and taking her out, we decided to get married. So we got married in this little hotel right down here now that's a big hotel right on the waterfront here in West Van called Saint Mawes-- used to be called Saint Mawes Hotel, but it's now the big restaurant where you walk out onto the-- Have you been down to the waterfront here? Onto that pier that's out there? Well that was called the Saint Mawes Hotel when I married. And that's where we were married in there, and it was just a little tiny hotel. We lived-- you know she owned the house. I was helping her build it; I didn't, you know, when I met he, she-- So I volunteered, and put in the garden, and ended up marrying her. But the unfortunate part was that I never had any-- she had two children, but she politely told me the night I got married to her that she couldn't have any more kids. Kind of shocked me, but we went ahead with it, and we had a good life but she had a lot of health problems after that. She ended up with Parkinson's disease. She was shaking and shivering and it's a terrible thing. Anyway, she passed away from that, then I remarried again after that, and of course it was too late. You know, I raised her kids; they went to school and high school while I was still

there and then she died after that and then I remarried again. And of course it was kind of late to have any children for her, you know, when we got married, so. She was a little-- I'm a little-- I was older than her, too, but anyway. That's been my life, so. I've had the odd girlfriend here and there. Occasionally I go out with a girl here, but-- or we have dinner together and that kind of thing.

+ Can you tell me about meeting your second wife? [4.2.1]

When she was in the latter part of her health, in the hospital, I met another lady. But I didn't marry her at the time. But the two kids that I raised, they just decided they didn't want to see me any more. You know, I miss them, they're good kids, I raised them, I never gave 'em any reason to feel-- but, because I had met somebody else at the time, and I knew she wasn't-- she knew she wasn't coming out, too. That's what happened. Those are the things that, you know, you'll regret them in a lot of ways, and you don't regret them. I mean, I had a happy marriage afterwards, but it was not easy. And of course, the daughter of the lady I married to, I mean, she's my daughter as far as I'm concerned, too, because I hadn't any kids from the first one and I wouldn't have any from this lady but she has a daughter who's coming out to have Christmas with me. She lives in Victoria. So I'm blank as far as family is concerned. I'm the end of the line.

\*laughs\* I still have lots of, well, cousins and that kind of stuff that I can claim through marriage.

+ What do you think about the course your life has taken? [4.3]

Yeah, I'm here, trying to do my best to make it but, you're 74 years of age-- I shouldn't say 70. 90! \*laughs\* It's different to coming out of the Air Force and knowing everything that's been going on in my life. I've had a good life. I'm very happy about it. You know, I lost my wife. I lost my first wife, early, and a second, and piss on those kids. I've raised them, but they don't want to see me? That's their problem, not mine. I shouldn't say that, but I'm bitter about it because I think I gave them every chance. They went to university and, uh... that's the way they want it, so, anyway. I'm still here and my daughter I raised is in North Vancouver, but I haven't seen her. I know where she exactly is, I have her phone number but I've tried it. She just doesn't want to. That's fine. The rest of a family are all happy about it so, you know, then that's life.

+ Tell me about your transition back to civilian life... [4.4]

I could have gone back to Cumberland, the coal mining town. They had a job for me working

in the coal mine but I had done a-- had worked for a few months. My dad ran the railway so I had a job there to go back to, attached to the coal mine, but I didn't want to go back to that life. You know, something happened, you had to go down below in the mine and get the motor out of it or whatever was going wrong because I was an electrical then at that time. We fitted in damn well in a hurry! You know, coming back to Vancouver and getting off the train was... Train was all Canadians on the train and you know when you came across Canada and everybody was out! Every train! So it was quite a welcome. We landed in Scotland and when we went back to England and, God, the kids, thousands of kids. "Any gum, chum?" We were throwing-- this is when we went over, throwing stuff to them

+ Did you take advantage of any benefits offered to veterans, like free tuition? [4.4.1]

Coulda gone to university. I wasn't a student. You know, I graduated from high school, and that was it. I went and-- I went to work, and I went to work for the Vancouver... First job I had, first day I was interviewed, I was hired by the Vancouver Sun newspaper. And I was in the business office, and at that time, shortly after there I was-- I knew the top people that were running it; I was in the business office, there. And The Province newspaper went on strike, across the street. So, I was in the cash cage, working in the cash cage at the Sun office and we had all this money. People wanted to buy newspapers because the Province was out on strike, so the money was coming there, bundles of it. I was carrying it, packing it in meat packages that looked like meat packages, and I was walking past all the strikers out in the street, and if they ever knew what was in these packages! I'd run-- walk up to the bank at Granville and Hastings. \*laughs\* It was amazing how nobody twigged on to what I was doing, but they didn't pay any attention to me. They were too busy striking. So I worked at the Sun for, I guess, two or three years, and then somebody, you know-- there wasn't much chance of more promotion and I wasn't a newspaper guy, particularly, so, so I ended up-- A friend of mine told me about an insurance-- a job in the insurance business. And I had been boarding with he and his wife and she-- he was in an office downtown and he told me about this job and I, so I went to the Vancouver Sun-- well, I told you about that part of it. The Sun newspaper, but, anyway, I ended up deciding to go into the insurance business and I ended up buying a good friend of mine out. He was retiring and he had a small business, so I took his business over and I had a lot of clients who were giving me business on the side, and I was putting it with this chap anyway, so I ended up owning a business and getting licensed and I had my own business. I had a staff of about, I guess, not very much, about eight, nine, and this young fellow bought it out when I wanted to retire after 50-- I was about 50 years altogether in it. Different parts of the insurance business. I worked for an insurance company, as such, and you were learning how to underwrite, risk management and that kind of stuff

and I ended up, "I could do this myself", so I ended up buying this fellow's insurance agency, which is selling insurance. And I ended up-- he retired, these people were working for me, as I say, a few people, and I ended up getting out and selling the business to him. And I had a delayed payment; he was paying me back in two years or something. But I had an option to get out if I wanted to. Well, after he took it over he got-- I don't know, had two yachts, had big cars. He was not, you know, he was bringing business in but he couldn't keep up with it. He couldn't pay it, and I could see it; I didn't like it. So I said I wanted out. So he went broke. I said, "That's it." He couldn't handle it himself and he had a much-- a lot more business than I had, but he was another guy with him, and they were dead lost as far as I'm concerned. He disappeared. I've never seen him since. He owed over a million dollars to one of the insurance companies and he ended up getting, you know-- I never, as I say, he took off and I don't know if he's alive or not. But I enjoyed that business. I had a lot of training in it. Seventy-odd years in it, so.