This oral history was transcribed verbatim, off the tapes by Peter Smith and Murray Davidson in June 2017. Any information not recorded on the tape but are part of the oral history found between brackets on this transcription is extra information added by the transcribers.

**Interview with Huw Gethin-Jones conducted by Captain Barry Nobes on 27 May 1997.**

BN. Huw, would you like to tell me your full name, where and when you were born, and your parent’s names for the record?

HG-J. Huw Gerald Gethin-Jones, I was born on the 24th of January 1926, at Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. My father was James Gethin-Jones and my mother was Gwendolyn Margaret Gethin-Jones May Lewis, my father was an Army Chaplin from 1915 until 1946, so my early days were very much at the behest of the Army and when I was about nine months old we went to Egypt for a period of five years and lived in Cairo, Ismailia and a year in Khartoum, Sudan, after that we came back to UK and lived in various places again army bound until 1939, when my father went to Singapore with the army and we lived in a rented place in Camberley in Surry.

BN. By that time, you were what about thirteen and the beginning of the war and starting your senior school?

HG-J. Yes, right, just before that I’ve spent from the age of eight until thirteen as a boarder at a prep-school called St Neots in Eversley, Berkshire, not far from Camberley and then in, just three days before the war started I entered the Royal Navy as a Cadet at Royal Naval College *Dartmouth*. The war years in Dartmouth were quite exciting from time to time as we were subject to bombing from time to time and eventually in 1940, early ’43 I think it was very early ’43 the College was bombed and I spent my last term as a naval cadet at Eton Hall up in Cheshire.

BN. Which was where the College was evacuated to, and so you were then just about seventeen I suppose or so?

HG-J. Just on seventeen, yes. and then of course went straight to Midshipman and um, I joined my first ship which was HMS *Nelson* the battle ship in Plymouth about I think, about March or April 1943 the day after I joined we sailed for the Mediterranean, we were the Flag of Force “H” and we had Admiral somebody (Algernon) Willis was our, was our Admiral who was on board, on arrival in the Mediterranean we were going for the invasion of Sicily and was based on Malta which had just had the siege raids when we arrived there. This was the first time I saw my father from 1939 as he was the Senior Army Chaplin in the Garrison in Malta.

BN. Now, you joined *Nelson* presumably with other ex-cadet Midshipmen.

HG-J. Yes, I did and the two I joined with, I always thought it was a bit unfair, because I was the only Dart and the other two was a chap called Balfour and John Treacher who finished up as a full admiral and of course they were eighteen months or so older than myself which I found a bit un-reconciling as a really junior midshipman anyway um, the first really big operation that took place, that we took part in was the landings on Sicily which we covered and um, fairly unscathed we were attacked by German aircraft and um, no damage was done. Subsequently we returned to Malta to top up………...

BN. Can you tell me what sort of job you had on board, were you at action stations that kind of thing?

HG-J. At that time, I was Navigator’s Tanky and so um, I was on the bridge for very long hours um, during the actual operation, which lasted about well two days I suppose. I think one of my memories of that particular landing was, it was the first time I’d ever seen landing craft rockets in use, a very frightening looking machine which just discharged one huge number of rockets, close range rockets, listing at about thirty degrees on firing and then was absolutely empty of any fire power and had to return to reload at Malta. After landings we returned to Malta to top up with ammunition we subsequently sailed and bombarded Reggio off the toe of Italy which was towards the end of the Sicily campaign and from there we returned to Catania on the east side of Sicily which had just been taken by the British Army, not a very pleasant experience as I had to go ashore to get charts for the Navigator and walk through a city which had just, just been taken after heavy bombardment by Army artillery, once again back to Malta.

BN. In what way was it an unpleasant experience can you………...?

HG-J Well quite a number of dead bodies all over the place, women and children and so on.

BN. And what was happening, were they being squared away?

HG-J. Well, just being cleared up they had troops, they had only just got in, it was in the last couple of hours and um, we only stayed long enough to pick up these charts. I can’t recall why we needed them so urgently, but.

BN. Where were, how would the charts have got there now?

HG-J. Well they were Italian charts.

BN. Oh I see.

HG-J. We went back to Malta then, Malta was our base um, and then the next operations was the landings at Salerno up on the south west side of Italy. This was quite an exciting operation um, we were with (HMS) *Rodney* um the cruiser (HMS) *Newfoundland* and a huge screen of destroyers and two aircraft carriers who was giving support to the landings as the Allied airfields were out of range of this particular part of Italy the Fleet Air Arm had great trouble because there was no winds and even with the high speed of the fleet aircraft carriers there was insufficient movement for aircraft to land, so many of the Seafires had to ditch after their operations. During the night we were attacked by eighty, roughly eighty, um, Junkers 88s which fired a number of torpedoes at the covering force, not one of which hit. I recall that during the night we were using blind barrage for firing over the screen and the next morning on the patrol line there were no less than twelve little rubber dinghies full of German airmen, so it was a very affective blind barrage, we never saw the aircraft in the air. We had to close in very close to the beaches as the Americans were having problems establishing a beachhead and um, we were actually firing 16-inch guns over open sights at tiger tanks on the hilltops.

BN. What picking up individual targets?

HG-J. Well actually firing full salvos they weren’t individual there were quite a number of them it was very affective. Anyway after landings was established or beachheads were established we returned to Malta, but we were in fact just before that attacked by the very first aircraft carrying a flying bomb, radio controlled flying bomb, which landed, oh about a hundred yards ahead of us and there was no damage at all, ah but um, *Newfoundland* was hit by a similar type bomb. These bombs were launched from Junkers which stood off and then controlled the bomb by radio. Um, on our way back to Malta we um.

BN. Going to this actual action, *Newfoundland* was hit I believe on the stern, wasn’t she?

HG-J. Yes.

BN. Did she, was there any danger of sinking or anything?

HG-J. Oh no, no I don’t think so. Actually I do recall seeing, I think I saw he was probably a depth charge sentry becoming air born, well that was the end of him. So we went back to Malta and um, re-ammunitioning etcetera and then we went from there to Algiers.

BN. Can we just talk a bit about re-ammunitioning, I mean you are taking about a battle ship with 14-inch guns?

HG-J. 16, 16.

BN. 16.

HG-J. Yes, we had 9 X 16-inch guns.

BN. And um, this must have been an enormous evolution, what sort of ship’s company did you have on board?

HG-J. We had something like nine hundred from memory (1) and these 16-inch shells weighed a ton each. As a matter of fact, digressing slightly after the war about 1946 when I was on a submarine at Chatham, my elder brother who was in the Army was serving in the unexploded bomb disposal squadron in London as a Detached Infantry Officer and one his, he had a bunch of German POWs who used to dig up the bombs for disposal, one of the German Sergeants in his squad had actually been in Reggio when we bombarded it and gave a bird’s eye view of a very terrifying experience.

BN. How many of these shells would you carry on board, on the *Nelson*?

HG-J. I really can’t recall, um, um, I know we fired at Salerno, we fired every single 6-inch brick in the ship and 4.7s on these blind barrages against Junkers whilst they are under attack. Anyway back to Algiers um, we had a short time there we went to a place called Mostaganem along the coast of Africa from there, I do recall one of the jobs that I did as a Midshipman was to run the anti-human torpedo boat at night time and um, used to set off in a battleship pigboat with a couple of volunteers on board and a couple of marines and we just used to throw charges over the side going around the outside of the fleet at anchor. We never saw anything or had any reason to believe that there were any charioteers near there.

BN. This is after the attack at Alexandria was it?

HG-J. Oh yes, long after that.

BN. So this was a standard routine?

HG-J. Yes, yes, when she sailed to go to Gibraltar we had on board a whole bunch of Germans and one Italian General who were being repatriated to England as Prisoners of War.

BN. Look quite cheerful in that photograph!

HG-J. That’s one of the jobs as Midshipman I’m so very proud with a small pistol wrapped under the waist on the quarterdeck while they were exercising being the sole officer in charge. I forgot to mention when Italy surrendered we were in Malta and um, the peace treaty was actually signed on board the *Nelson* and we had a very large number of VIPs on board. Marshal (Pietro) Badoglio was representing the Italian Government, Ike Eisenhower, General Alexander and many others, MacMillan was the British political representative and my job at that function was on the bottom of the gangway receiving these distinguished gentlemen and making sure as they stepped out of their boats that they didn’t fall over the side. Interestingly enough on that occasion the only person who spoke to me was General Eisenhower who said “how old are you, sonny?” I said “seventeen sir.” And he said “you are too young to be at war.” So I said to him, “The future President of the United States.” Um. After our return to Gibraltar we were then Force “H” was withdrawn from the Med. and we returned to Greenock in Scotland where we went into Gare Loch.

BN. Now what month and?

HG-J. This is about December 1943, December ‘43.

BN. All this has happened in about five months?

HG-J. Yes, so um, we went into a virtually a sort of maintenance period and um, at that time I was sent off with a number of other, no that’s wrong um, I think it was in December or January of ’44, I was appointed to HMS *Devonshire* which I joined at Scapa Flow with quite a number of the midshipmen who’d been in the *Nelson* not all, and the ship had just commissioned and the other section of the wardroom were ex the (HMS) *Norfolk.* Which had been in the action against the battle that sank the *Bismarck.*

BN. That was a lot earlier, that was a lot earlier!

HG-J. Yes, no it was the one after um.

BN. What the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst?*

HG-J. *Scharnhorst* yes. Um, including Lance Bell Davies who became a very great friend of mine he was the same term at *Dartmouth* as well. Operations in *Devonshire* were reasonably quiet we were based on Scapa Flow, mainly escorting or covering carriers that were trying to sink the *Tirpitz* over in Norway, so we were on the Norwegian run virtually continuously, we never actually got into any close engagement during that period.

BN. When you said you were on the Norwegian run, did you patrol the Norwegian coastline or you weren’t actually with the convoys altogether?

HG-J. No, no, no we were a task force of mainly fleet carriers which were mounting attacks on the *Tirpitz* I do recall the time, early mornings when they normally took off, if we were close to one of the carriers you could always smell the bacon and eggs wafting out on the wind as the aircrew were being stoked up before they went off on their journey. I think many memories I ever have of them they are fairly vivid memories, some awful crashes, landing crashes on the carriers. Sometimes by people who have been shot up, others just by bad weather or human error, so that took me to the dreaded moment when one did one’s seamanship exam and um.

BN. How long did you then spend as a midshipman?

HG-J. About twelve months

BN. Right.

HG-J. Served about thirteen months. I did my, I remember doing my seamanship exam on board the (HMS) *Duke of York* in Scapa Flow and then from there started my small ship time I joined HMS *Verulam* which was one of the modern “V” class destroyers in the 26th Escort Destroyer Flotilla. This was quite an exciting period of my life um, we did one Russian convoy which was JW60 and RA60 from Loch Ewe to Murmansk, we had, it’s quite interesting we had it, was a fairly large convoy mainly American ships going out and there was no less than ten destroyers in the escort, and the battle ship the *Rodney* in the background in case the *Tirpitz* came out to attack the convoy, I remember the weather was appalling after passing Bear Island which was the danger area for U-Boats.

BN. Now what month of the year was this?

HG-J. This was in September 1944, we actually sighted a U-Boat on the surface at night time, but we were unable to effectively done anything about it. Um, in those days the close escort to the convoy was usually corvettes, frigates and they keep the destroyers at the front as a, forming a great screen ahead hoping to pick up the U-Boats before the convoy got within range. Um, the stay in …. with berthed in Polyarnyy in North Russian which was quite an interesting naval port and um, this was reasonably cool weather not all that cold certainly no snow about, I remember one of the worse things was the attempt to get on with the Russians and we divided our wardroom to two/elevens and I being a young fellow was in the second eleven and we used to go to the drinking parties at lunch time. The first eleven took on the evening bouts. I think one of the more amusing episodes I had a cabin which I shared right aft on the destroyer with a Gunner T who was a fairly ancient bearded gentleman, and one of the evening parties on board, the Captain told me to show the Commissar who come on board with a bunch of Russian Naval officers show him around with a stroll, but keep him away from his other men and sonar offices and so on and um, we had an interpreter with us and um, the Commissar wanted to know where I lived, so I took him down into my cabin and the Gunner T was covered in blankets fast asleep snoring away and on the bulkhead of the cabin we had one or two card photographs which wasn’t unusual in those days and this Commissar pointed to these and I was trying to indicate they weren’t mine they belonged to the Gunner T, and he thought we had a woman on board, it took some sorting out.

BN. Were you the only Acting Sub on board?

HG-J. No, I was a Midshipman!

BN. Still a midshipman!

HG-J. Oh yes. So we were there for about a week from memory, waiting for the next convoy form up to come out. Other memories are the Pilot we took on board, the Navigation Pilot, to go into Kola Inlet to get on Polyarnyy, it was a woman and the other memory was as we arrived towards Kola Inlet we had no cover from the Russians at all, it was very close to German territory and this was in Norway and as soon as we got in sight of land out come all these Russian fighters flying around at high speed, but doing absolutely no good at all. The other thing that we had was the daily air-raid because the nearest German territory was only about thirty miles away or forty miles away, they used to come over every day before daylight and drop a few bombs and laying aft of us was a Russian destroyer which looked prehistoric to me, but they were always well dressed and wearing shiny tin hats, never very affective in their anti-aircraft fire.

BN. Now what was your job on board?

HG-J. I was plotting officer and again assistant to Navigator and watch keeping with First Lieutenant. Um, the convoy back was a little bit more exciting we were attacked by U-Boats, we lost three ships, two American, one British and one German U-Boat was sunk it was the U-921 (2). Which was actually sunk by the Swordfish from a Woolworths carrier which was with the convoy the (HMS) *Campania*.

BN. How did you sink her dropping depth charges?

HG-J. By dropping depth charges, yes. We had bombs not depth charges they put it on the surface. Anyway the only other thing we saw on that particular trip was the fact that the captain who was Lieutenant Commander Thomas who’d been in command throughout the war of destroyers went round the bend, and it was quite unpleasant really. Um, the First Lieutenant Dickie Endon eventually placed him under arrest and took over command and um, he had a complete nervous breakdown and you know, couldn’t follow on as captain.

BN. What were the symptoms?

HG-J. One night he said we are going to be attacked by U-Boats, I want every officers on the bridge all night, and um, including the Doctor who was a Canadian RNVR and that sort of thing, losing his temper and flying into rages and being quite irrational. A very difficult decision for the First Lieutenant, I think.

BN. Absolutely. What happened to the?

HG-J. He was, we went back to Loch Ewe actually and he was taken off, he went to a hospital apparently, he was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Thornton from there we went up to Scapa and then, probably the most exciting experience I had during the war we sailed with (HM Ships) *Myngs* and *Algonquin* and *Kent* and went over to Norway and we closed in at night to near Stavanger and then steamed south looking for a coastal convoy which we eventually found. We had a very exciting night action, um, when we sank all eleven ships in the convoy included three “M” class minesweepers off Egersund, which was south of Stavanger we actually fired our torpedoes um, which was very unusual for destroyers in World War Two, and in those days you had to fire on the swing this is about two in the morning, I remember we were being engaged by one of the minesweepers, and the Torpedo Officer a fellow called David Winton RN Sub-lieutenant who was actually looking through his target binoculars they were hit and torn off his face and anyway we fired eight torpedoes.

BN. Did it damage him?

HG-J. He had a black eye, but he gallantly carried on we fired eight torpedoes.

BN. You say on the swing, that is to give a spread isn’t it?

HG-J. Well also, you fired 90 degrees to the fore and aft so you had to come round to aim your torpedoes, one torpedo hit and sank a tanker and the other seven ran on, we were only just over a mile off shore and um, hit the cliff and apparently brought down three coastal batteries which was quite a surprise for the Germans, so we probably did more damage to the land than it did to the convoy, but we sank all the ships.

BN. Were these coastal batteries actually participating?

HG-J. Oh yes, we were quite badly mauled, we had thirteen killed and about twelve wounded.

BN. From gunfire?

HG-J. Yeah, we lost, very close engagement with one of the “M” class minesweepers and um, and I was plotting in the chart house because we didn’t have radar in those days and we one, actually I think it was bigger than a 88 millimetre shell came right through the passage outside which rather disturbed the lookouts waiting to relieve, fortunately hitting no one, but went straight through the side.

BN. Without exploding?

HG-J. Well it exploded outside, yes. Anyway we lost two of our 4.7 (guns) put out of action by gunfire.

BN. Out of how many?

HG-J. Out of four. Anyway we disengaged, um, by this time I went up on the bridge, one of the saddest things was one of the lookouts was a gallant seaman who’d been very badly hit who died on the sponson, um, I was then sent down to try and help the doctor who was having a hell of a job in wardroom, we had all the causalities in there making sure everything was in order, and we returned to Immingham on the east coast of England for repairs, um. It was a very exciting action. *Verulam* incidentally went out to the Far East after I left her and was in that action when they sank the Japanese cruisers so she was one of the few destroyers that fired her torpedoes in anger twice in action during World War Two.

BN. Was that the action where, I forgot what they called it, Star attack was it where lots of destroyers firing individually or at the same time though at the one target. The action she did against the Japanese cruiser.

HG-J. I think it was, yes.

BN. That was the only time that particular manoeuvre ever happened in war time. Where abouts are we at this moment actually in time?

HG-J. Um, about October 1944 that operation was Operation Counterblast (3) which was rather an appropriate name for it.

BN. And you must be also approaching the time where you’ll be leaving the ship.

HG-J. Yes.

Due to a fault in recording, the start and most of side two of the tape was un-transcribable accept the information below, before static resumed near the end of the tape. What was not heard on this tape was his schooling for Sub-lieutenant and his specialisation course in the Navy. However, it has been recorded in 1944 Huw was appointed to submarines based in Trincomalee in Ceylon. On VJ he was part of the force that occupied Hong Kong. Huw was appointed to HMS/m *Tally Ho* in 1945.

BN. Did you come across the French?

HG-J. Oh yes, within Vila I remember HMS/m *Talent,* and *Tally Ho* went in to Vila we anchored alongside each other and we had a cocktail party on board and we decided because of the heat, we had no real air conditioning in those days to have it on the after casings of the two submarines. And the British Resident Commissioner got very, very, very tipsy and um he lived on an island in the harbour and he came in a very grand little skiff with two natives dressed as sailors with his wife and I remember the captain telling me get rid of him, he said, no he’s going to cause trouble and um, I had to sort of put on my diplomatic hat and um suggest it was time to his wife, the wife of the Resident Commissioner that they went home. She said I don’t know what’s wrong with my husband, it must be because he got a touch of the sun. Anyway, he went off in the skiff with his wife singing there will always be an England in a rather raucous voice and the party went on, we had a French judge and an English judge on board and all sorts of people, but suddenly it started to rain and um, there were cries of “plong au bleu” from all the Frenchmen and of cause the main access was down the engine hatch, I was sent down, I was duty officer that night to make sure none of the guests fell down. I had the most marvellous display of pre-war bloomers coming down the engine room hatch. It was a fun place I must say in those days and um. We had one nasty experience one of sailors I’m afraid had drunk too much um, fell off the after casing and um, severely damaged his head and he in fact died. I can remember having to go ashore to get a doctor and the French doctor had been to a dinner party and wasn’t in the best condition to attend to anyone that was sad event anyway.

BN. That wasn’t the party?

HG-J. No, no it wasn’t the party this was another night. The only other thing I remember about New Hebrides was we were desperate, we were getting desperately short of supplies, having no depot ship around us and um, we filled up one of the meat safes with fresh lime, I still have a great love for fresh lime juice as a result. We went to a place called Bushman’s Bay on the island of Malakula and there were two, there were only two big estates there, proper estates one run by the French family, one run by an English family. And we happen to be there on the 14th of July this one, so we invited the French family on board at lunch time to celebrate the Bastille, we had one bottle of champagne un-cooled on board only, so they opened that to celebrate of course. In the evening we were invited ashore by the English estate to have dinner and um. The fellow who had this estate was a First World War retired Gunner Colonel, his wife asked us to come ashore in mess undress which you can imagine would not be easy on a non-air conditioned submarine in the tropics any way we did this and we had a marvellous dinner. He was, the old colonel was in his regimentals and um, and we told him we were desperately short of meat, he said, “well that’s no problem we’ll go and shoot a couple of pigs.” So we had a very good dinner as you can imagine with all the usual pomp and ceremony toasting the King’s health and so on. We set off in a jeep in our mess undress with a couple of 303 rifles and I actually managed to shoot, shoot a wild pig on the estate which we brought back on board in a dugout canoe strung up on the after casing on the jumping wire and turned out an electric stoker PO who was a man of many parts to shave the pig and cut it up with hacksaw.

BN. This is tape two, third side. Huw you were in the Pacific?

HG-J. In the Solomon Islands and yes in Malaita and we took one of the island chiefs to sea overnight. It was quite interesting he brought his body guard with him and he spoke very little English but the, I can’t remember the name of the fishing village that we came to, we anchored going through the reef to get inside, the second coxswain would board a dugout canoe and take soundings and we used our asdics to find a hole in the reef to get in, all very exciting. Anyway at this particular village we um, they’d laid on, this chief had laid on a feast for us. And um, we went ashore in the evening just the officers and um, they put on dancing and so on and we asked if we could bring some sailors ashore so they sent a boat out, or a canoe out for half a dozen or so sailors, and they had their visitor’s dance and all the rest of it, the food was not, not very nice, I suspect we were eating island rat, but it was all barbequed and um, eventually we came round to the west coast where there is a very large harbour, Urasi Bay which had not been surveyed, so the CO told me to do a draught survey of the harbour which I did with Mike Griffin the engineer who paddled the canoe while I was taking soundings and sights to fix the position and we drew up a draught sketch, plan of the harbour because it was an ideal fleet anchorage and that is actually on a chart which now has been resurveyed, but for many years I’m very proud to say at the bottom it had compiled by Sub-lieutenant H. Gethin-Jones and Lieutenant E.M. Griffins of HMS *Tally Ho.* Anyway that was a lot of fun. And there we went on to Guadalcanal ah, which was quite interesting because huge number of wrecked landing craft and the residue of the war there, quite a large American presence and an incident occurred which was typical of modern diplomacy, the Americans had given the Guadalcanal islanders a fairly large heap of free rice and the news got across to Malaita which was about I suppose sixty miles east of Guadalcanal that there were rice to be had so the Malaitians decided they were going to have a part of this and they set out, they were spotted by an American aircraft about eight war canoes coming over to Guadalcanal so there was a great panic and we eventually, we set off, we slipped and sailed and dived and headed towards these war canoes where we were told they were and we eventually sighted them and we surfaced in the middle of them and fired a star shell from our 4-inch gun and there was great amazement they’d never seen anything like it before and they all turned back. So gunboat diplomacy paid off again, but that was typical of those days. From Malaita we sailed for Fijis to Suva were we joined up with (HMS) *Adamant* and the rest of the Flotilla um, again a very interesting visit. I remember in those days there was the usual rows, problems of who to invite to cocktail parties and we had to submit a list to Government House before we could invite anyone but we had a lot of fun though. Once again it was interesting to meet all these, and there was a big crowd of people living there, Europeans, but they were all wearing pre-World War Two clothing, completely out of fashionable date. Um, from the Fijis we sailed for Japan and um, the submarine I was serving in *Tally Ho* had, as you may recall been hit by a Japanese destroyer on her first commission and as a result of that collision the, one of the engine beds was slightly distorted and we had a lot of trouble with big end bearings we were always having to change bearings anyway we sailed as a complete flotilla from Suva and once again one of our big ends went and eventually another one went.

BN. Now, when you say a complete flotilla how many boats were there?

HG-J. Eight, eight “T” boats and um, we um, eventually we were taken in tow by the *Adamant* whilst we were doing these repairs. I remember we went alongside first on the motors and we took on board about eight spare big end bearings, landed three ratings who had the dreaded disease and for treatment and then were towed for about five or six days while we got all this work done and um.

BN. You were heading north?

HG-J. Heading north. I remember we went past Oroluk Lagoon and the Agrihan Islands but of course remained at sea, and when we completed our repairs the tow had to be slipped and we were right out in the middle of Woop, Woop in the Pacific and Ben Bryant Captain S/m decided when we stopped that he would pipe hands to bathe from the depot ship, we were instructed to have an armed sentry on the periscopes to stand and keep a lookout for sharks, there must have been about a hundred depot ship people in the water and a whaler with a PO in charge from the depot ship, we were lying off when suddenly this huge shark came in or saw the fin going in, straight in towards the swimmers, and was actually in between the whaler and the swimmers I remember Ben Bryant screaming from the bridge of *Adamant,* “There he is coxswain,” and I can’t repeat what the reply was, “what do you expect me to do f\*\*\* it.” He couldn’t open fire because the sailors in between them, anyway the shark sheared off and all was well. So on to Japan and into Kure we weren’t there for very long, but I remember going to Hiroshima with Lance Bell Davis we went, we got a lift in an army truck, in those days we were given no instructions about fallout or anything, we were told not to eat anything or drink anything.

BN. What month are you now?

HG-J. July ’45, *yes it was.*

BN. ’46.

HG-J ‘46

BN. So July ’46 and of course Hiroshima had nothing done to it.

HG-J I took that with a box camera.

BN. Photograph of almost total devastation.

HG-J. So, nothing else much happened there.

BN. What were your serene thoughts?

HG-J. The awful when, when you went past the Japanese they all bowed and scraped and so on but after you’d passed them you could almost feel the daggers in your back and it was an unpleasant feeling really. Things were very cheap there, I was and always have been very keen on classical music and I managed to buy all of Beethoven’s records all of his symphonies for a tin of cigarettes.

BN. Now, those would have been 78’s wouldn’t they?

HG-J. Yeah 78’s and they were made by Nippon Telefonica but they were of a German orchestra so they were very good.

BN. They must have weighed an enormous amount.

HG-J. But I got them home safely, months later from Kure we went to Osaka, Nagasaki um, yeah Nagasaki, the bomb hadn’t actually fallen right on the town but there was devastation outside and um, I’ve forgotten how long we spent up there about three weeks altogether, I remember the inland sea vividly it was the most magnificent scenery anyhow,

BN. Did you go to Tokyo?

HG-J. Tokyo Bay but not to Tokyo itself.

BN. So you weren’t able to compare the devastation of Hiroshima with the devastation of the fire-bombing of Tokyo?

HG-J. No, I do remember actually going back to Kure in one of the big dry docks there, there were about fifty Japanese midget submarines all completed. But from Kobe, we went to, we visited Kobe which is a Japanese capital and then we went back to Hong Kong where we remained for a time. Once going back on anti-piracy patrol, um, anyway I think I can remember the 11th of November we were relieved by an “A” boat an “A” boat came in a week before. I think it was (HMS/m) *Amphion,* yes it was the *Amphion* she had no bow balance attack. And we sailed at about eight o’clock at night, from Hong Kong to go back to England the CO was well away by the time we sailed, we been there for Guy Fawkes night we set off flares on a jumping wires to the sails and set fire to the ensign and off we went. Called into Singapore where I met up with my older brother who was in the Army there and um, by this time the CO who’d had a very tough war and he’d commanded (HMS/m) *Unruly* in the Mediterranean and then (HMS/m) *Trusty* um, was obviously showing signs of having had too much of everything and um, he was drinking very heavily and um, it was a great experience for me because I used to sort of drive the boat out everywhere and more or less take over as temporary CO.

BN. What were you on board?

HG-J. I was Navigator.

BN. What was the first lieutenant doing?

HG-J. He was almost the same as the captain. Next stop was Aden where we got into a lot of trouble because the CO misbehaved at an up market cocktail party ashore and he in fact took the submarine out of Aden Harbour he hit a buoy on the way out, but only a glancing blow and then on to Port Said and this is quite an interesting story. At Port Said we befriended two Army Majors from the Royal Sussex Regiment who were down on leave from Palestine and they, they told us they’d been demobbed by the Territorials and were trying to get home, so we offered them a lift home. So they came on board, we had a new coxswain um, or fairly new coxswain called Johnston who decided to save himself trouble he landed all the wet weather gear in Port Said or flogged it and we sailed, we found we had no wet weather suits on board, into a huge storm in the Mediterranean not only were there huge seas, fifteen foot waves so on, anyway the punishment for the coxswain he was made to keep a watch on the bridge with wretched officer of the watch without wet weather gear, and we went into Gibraltar where of course we picked up wet weather gear. Now at Gibraltar we had big fun and games, because first night in um, I was the duty officer, the CO and Engineer and the two Army officers went ashore and um, my first recollection was being called by the trot sentry at about three in the morning to say the skipper was in the motor room and he’d just put the motors at full ahead group up, I could feel something happening in the submarine so I rushed into the motor room by this time the POTO was around and he pulled the switches, I told him grab the captain, I went up on the bridge and we had a rope around the port screw and we were in the middle, or middle, off the jetty.

BN. You broke away?

HG-J. Broken away yes. And um, the worse was so far, we had to get alongside which we managed to do on one screw and of course we had no breasts or springs they had all parted and um, the second coxswain clambered onto the jetty and found some, sufficient ropes to tie us up. Looking around this was at three in the morning, there were two destroyers alongside each other which had floated off the jetty they were floating in the middle of the harbour. What had happened was, the CO and his party had all been up to the Rock Hotel and had gone on board the inboard destroyer which was the (HMS) Quality I think, no I can’t remember which one (HMAS) Quickmatch.

BN. Australian?

HG-J. No, no it wasn’t, it was “Q” class, I just can’t remember its name. Anyway, they’d demanded some drink from the wardroom, there was no one there so they help themselves and they had set off a couple of glowing heads on two of the torpedo tubes and then when they went ashore, the wire were, of all the breasts and springs were slack they just took them off. So when we went full ahead group up in the submarine the wash from our screws washed these two off the jetty. Anyway I was up on the casing at half passed six the next morning looking at the devastation when a staff car pulled up and a Commander called out “tell your captain he is to be up at Vice Admirals quarters at nine o’clock.” So he showed up at quarter to nine and he went off and I saw a car come down from and when he came back he said well I’m going to be courts marshalled, we’ll celebrate it as I was no longer duty officer, so I went on the run ashore with he and the soldiers up to the Rock and there was a marvellous scene in the bar of the Rock Hotel and the commander of the “Q” class destroyer that had been washed off the jetty stormed in and said to the captain. “Who and what are you?” the captain said “My name is Fyfe and I’m the captain of the submarine Tally *Ho.*” And this commander said, “Well I can tell you the next time when you are in the same harbour as me I will double up on the breasts and springs and put rat-traps on the gangway,” and stormed off. Anyway we sailed for Portsmouth or Fort Blockhouse and arrived alongside just before Christmas ’46 I think we were the first submarine to return from the Far East, because we’d gone out before the war had actually finished, we were not to be greeted by FOSM or even Captain SM, Commander SM Pat Steel was there to meet us, there was no champagne party in FOSM’s quarters and subsequently the captain was courts marshalled. And lost two year’s seniority.

BN. As a lieutenant?

HG-J. As a lieutenant.

BN. Now you were?

HG-J I was a lieutenant by this time, just. I was made a lieutenant, first of September ’46.

BN. And you were a witness?

HG-J. Yes, on board the (HMS) *Victory*, a very difficult situation um.

BN. Quite an experience!

HG-J. It was. Anyway John Fyfe actually resigned very wisely and he kept his decoration DSC and Bar and he resigned as an officer and he was married to a very wealthy woman, Elspeth Bunty whose father had the Alexander buses in Glasgow so they were, anyway John Fyfe became a member of parliament, conservative member of parliament and um unfortunately he was killed in a car crash so that was the end of *Tally Ho.* So coming away from the Navy, my father had retired from the Army and taken up the livings as Vicar of Sandgate in Kent and um, I arrived. I was duty over Christmas and was due to go on leave after Christmas so I rang my father to say I was back home, and um, I apparently had the wrong number because when I rang I could hear lots of laughing and shouting the most un-vicarage sound that was one of the pubs in the village. Anyway I went home on leave, met my step-mother for the first time, my mother had died when I was fifteen and err.

BN. What right at the beginning of the war?

HG-J. 1941, and um, so the Admiralty in their wisdom decided to give all RN officers a month’s end of war leave. Which was right off we had very little leave during the war. So that wrote off any entitlement. And I had a very pleasant, I spent a month with Lance Bell Davis who had a small estuary sloop, estuarial sloop called *Lindy* sailing around the Solent and um, I spent a fortnight doing that with Lance them um, went home again, and eventually was appointed to join the (HMS/m) *Anchorite* which was building up in Vickers in Barrow.

BN. Right, that would be sort of March or …………

HG-J I haven’t got the exact date, but we were quite a long time in Barrow, the Captain was Lieutenant Commander Peter Harrison who was a very distinguished wartime DSO, DSM, DSC and Bar, Michael Hickey was Lieutenant and I was the Armaments officer, Lance Bell Davis was the navigator

BN. Once again!

HG-J. Yeah, and the engineer was none other than John Beau Chambers so in five officers we had one DSO, and four DSCs and I was three of them. Building in Barrow was a lot fun I must say err, I was there for about three months standing by the boat and um, we lived in digs the famous VPH hotel, Victoria Park Hotel all was great of course. Whilst we were there, there was a strike in Vickers of all the firemen and it caused quite a problem, and we were invited to act as firemen during the night, so we didn’t get any money for doing it, what we got was grog and a very good meal in the dockyard. We used to do duty for the fire chief in the dockyard which was very helpful on our reduced pay. We commissioned.

BN. Why did you say reduced pay?

HG-J. Well not reduced pay, but very little pay.

BN. I was wondering the way you were talking perhaps you didn’t get submarine pay?

HG-J. Oh no, we got submarine pay, yes sure. We joined the Third Submarine Flotilla, HMS *Montclare* at Rothesay spent time in Derry of course and summer wars in the Atlantic usual things, I must say Rothesay was not a particularly wonderful place to be, there was nothing there, there was nothing else to do ashore except play rugby and drink beer.

BN. Very good golf course!

HG-J. I didn’t play golf. Anyway I eventually left *Anchorite* in Londonderry and um.

BN. You didn’t spend long on board?

HG-J. About a year. I volunteered for “X” Craft, midget submarines. I got this appointment to join *XE8* down in Plymouth as Operational First Lieutenant.

BN. That was *XE8,* what month or year was this?

HG-J. This was the end of ’47. I had over a year in *Anchorite,* early ’48 sorry, early ’48. I always remember actually the big, I was relieved by Peter Harper of all people and we had a big farewell party on there, and I remember I had to get the train to go to Larne to get the ferry to go across. I got on a train in Scotland and went down to Plymouth, with many changes and joined *XE8* which used to be alongside the old (HMS) *Defiance* there were four sub, midget submarines, *XE7, 8, 9, 10* the senior officer was none other than Lieutenant Commander Herbert Patrick “Percy” Westmacott my CO was Matthew Todd and um.

BN. Now had you volunteered for X craft, you had to volunteer didn’t you?

HG-J. Yes, oh yes, I volunteered yes. Actually I found it was, she was, I’ve got this slightly screwed up I joined her in Portsmouth Dockyard she’d just done a refit and so forget about the *Defiance* for the time being. We went, we were put on a train, this was a very amusing incident in my life, with a third class carriage as an accommodation block and what’s called a crocodile had the X craft which in those days was still fairly secret, so it was covered in a tarpaulin and we were towed at the back end as an extra heavy load behind a goods train and headed up for Scotland, and we had the crew on board ERA Roberts, LEN was Wiggy Bennet who lives out here who you probably know and Leading Stoker Phillips, Matthew Todd and myself. I remember we had many stops, it was quite exciting, see we slept in hammocks in this third class, we each had our own cabin, and we had paraffin stove and lots of tins and stuff eats. We had a EA with us to help with electronics or electrics he was not a submarine rating, but he was quite a good cook and we normally used to turn out a decent meal at night. Which we normally spent at a siding and when we were outside Wiggin and this could only happen in the submarine service, the three ratings said could they go ashore, and I said “well, it’s dark, there is absolutely nothing in sight, where do you want to go there’s fields all around.” “Oh we know where to go, sir.” “So OK don’t be late getting back you don’t want to miss the train.” About three hours later they came back with sacks of beer they’d found a pub they’d obviously gone straight to it where they’d taken on the locals at darts and won their match and they were given all this beer, so we had half a dozen bottles of beer, on to Crewe we got the mail and Wiggy Bennet’s promotion to Acting PO had come through so he was actually rated by Matthew Todd in corridor of the third class carriage. That must be a fairly unusual event in the Royal Navy I think.

BN. Now, how long would a trip take?

HG-J. It was about three and a half days, yes. I remember going across Scafell up in the North of England.

BN. The boat was hoisted on somehow or other with a crane.

GH-J. Oh with a crane yes, in the dockyard yes.

BN. In the dockyard, onto the flattop and that was hitched onto a train. HG-J. Every day Bennet had to go on board and get under the thing and hop on board and check the batteries and so on.

BN. Was the third class carriage a special one?

HG-J. No, no just a typical standard accommodation, anyway we got up to Greenock sorry to Grourock and um to Loch, what’s the big loch.

BN. Lochs Striven, Goil.

HG-J No, no, in um in Glas…. no in the harbour, Faslane for want of a better term. We were hoisted out by a crane there and put in the water and we steamed around to Loch Goilhead to do our noise, to do our deep dive and noise range, we did the deep dive because the X craft dive to three fifty feet we did the deep dive on the horns of a boom defence vessel before we got to Loch Goil were the waters are extremely deep. I remember we wired up two wires in the bilge right up to the claxon, because the first dive was done without anyone on board just to check the hull and if there had been water, the claxon would have gone off we’d have heard that through the sort of field telephone, and then we did the static dive with the crew on board and there was a terrible shortage of drawings in those days, it was quite hard to work out how everything worked or happened. I remember two hundred feet there was a whistle went off and I said to the ERA what the hell is that, he was a Welshman like myself he said “No idea sir” he said, in fact what it was, was a little alarm to tell you to shut off the circulating water system at that depth, so we found that out, anyway all went well and we went into Loch Goil alongside the fishing jetty there and we lived in the pub. I remember I had share, there was very little accommodation the sailors had one bedroom and Matthew Todd and I had the other, we had to share a double bed with pillows down the centre and it was quite fun at breakfast saying harbour stations in five minutes’ time at the crew at the next table. And we did our noise range, it was a lot of fun I must say. We made friends with a retired Black Watch Colonel who lived right on the Loch and we’d go alongside at 1100, we’d go alongside his garden, we only drew six feet and his wife would come down with silver tray with tea and coffee and biscuits, so that was that and we um, completed our trails and then had another train journey back to go down to Plymouth and um. We went east about for some reason via Edinburgh or Niddry which was a big rolling stock depot there. I remember we were stopped there for the night and I was sitting in my compartment with a white submarine sweater on, I think I had a glass of whisky in my hand and I was reading a book and um, and suddenly a trilby hat appeared in the window, this bloke in a raincoat said what are you doing here and I said I’m in the Navy and I’m looking after that submarine, which was just behind us. And it turned out he was a detective, a railway detective and he didn’t believe me. I had to go around unroll the awning to show him what it was all about. Anyway we got down to Plymouth safely and that’s when we joined *Defiance.*

BN. This is side four. Huw you have returned done south.

HG-J. Yes, we are in Plymouth alongside the old *Defiance,* which was a three old warships all tied up together (HMS) *Andromeda* 1860 cruiser which was where we actually had the wardroom, we just used the place as a convenience for berthing, but we lived on board the *Andromeda.* And um, we used to operate out, outside the harbour err, mainly in Kingsand Bay, that area with the MASB the Motor Anti-Submarine Boats, MASB were converted air sea rescue.

BN. Now you would go to sea on your own power?

HG-J. Oh yes!

BN. How long would it take to get round there I mean what sort of speed?

HG-J. Our surface speed was five and half knots and that was about the speed we’d do when dived as well and um, we could dive for six hours without worrying too much about the air on board that was about the limit.

BN. Did you actually check the air?

HG-J. No, no, no, actually you could I remember doing, being, I was towed up to Portsmouth I was CO of the X Craft and um, and I’d stayed down a little bit too long and it was quite frightening I think it was about seven hours, we stayed at sixty feet below there, towing a submarine which was air starved when we arrived there. It was quite hard to wind the induction, the snort mast up, which was hand wound.

BN. You were suffering from oxygen shortage and I suppose monoxide poisoning or dioxide poisoning?

HG-J. That taught me a lesson not to leave it too long. Um, towing was quite exciting, I remember by this time we had a passage crew as well as an operational crew.

BN. Was that the same number of people?

HG-J. No, the passage crew was one officer, one a third hand and three ratings.

BN. And, how long would they stay on board?

HG-J. They could stay as long, as long as they could, come up every six hours and recharge the batteries and so on. It could be one, two or three days. We had a range of five hundred miles on our own and um, when I was towed up to Blockhouse by (HMS/M) *Acheron* actually it was the fastest tow we ever done, we were doing something like ten knots. Because an X Craft dived at six and half knots automatically it was a hull design um, we attacked Plymouth harbour that was quite fun. I remember Matthew Todd was captain, it was a penetration exercise and we actually hit the breakwater going in a hell of a thump because he was trying to get close in so he wouldn’t be seen by the sentries, so we decided a break to get over that shock. And um, we sat on the bottom for about half an hour or a bit longer I always remember we could hear this funny noise sort of like water rushing we couldn’t think what it was and when we came up to periscope depth which was six feet we suddenly realised we were very near to where the lighthouse keeper was and it was the loo flushing. But um, we didn’t go very far and Portsmouth was the longest trip I did from Plymouth, that is being towed. Very unpleasant on the surface in rough weather. I remember once we were going back into Plymouth from about fifteen miles out and um, every time your bow lifted your engine inlet came out so you got an airlock and the engine stopped.

BN. What were your jobs on board?

HG-J. Well as operational first lieutenant you were obviously electrical officer around the boat, you actually manned the hydroplane, after planes, having got after planes and you operated the motor. The ERA was a helmsman strange enough because we had no real seaman ratings. Bennet, sorry Phillips the stoker he was a diver he was the chap, he used to get in and out and um, he was a very, one incident because we didn’t have a wardroom when we went to sea, every time we went to sea for a day the officers got a tot of rum, and um, some archaic admiralty instruction, and I always use to have mine because it would get terribly wet on the casing and um, I had a very tatty old uniform I stood, I have a spare uniform down at the harbour, so I used to get into one of those huge old baths in the *Andromeda* fully booted and spurred to get the salt out of my uniform and sip my tot when I got warm. Anyway from X Craft um, by that time I was first lieutenant and I re-joined *Tally Ho* in Plymouth, Devonport, refitting.

BN. Now what year and?

HG-J. Well this is 1949, I cannot remember the month and I had Senior Commissioned Engineer Bert Pinch he was a wonderful old engineer as my engineer officer he’d actually served in “K” boats as a young ERA and um, I think there were four of us refitting and um, one day I was, of course living ashore in digs apparently we weren’t welcome in the barracks in those days, I got a phone call from my old CO, Soft Joe Harrison at Blockhouse who was doing officers’ drafting saying would you like to go to Australia and I said “I’d love to, yes.” He said, “right you’ve got three days’ notice” and I said “what’s the problem.” He said “Well the chap who’s supposed to be going a fellow called Derek Foster, he’s married with three kids and um, and it would be a financial disaster for him to be sent out there, he’s due for overseas service but if you are happy to go you can go.

BN. Two days!

HG-J Three days I had, I was very lucky, my step-mother in Sandgate I rang her up, I rang up my parents when I was off and I said to my step-mother would you mind terribly going to my room and getting all my white uniforms out and getting them laundered. She said we’ve already had that done for you, everything was ready. Anyway after a very good run ashore in London with my elder brother who was in the Army, we set sail in the RMS *Strathnaver* on E deck the cheapest first class accommodation available to an amateur and I joined (HMS/m) *Thorough* in Sydney, I really enjoyed my trip out, it was quite an experience and um, I can’t remember it was right at the end of 1949 or early ’50 when I got out to Australia I relieved Philip or Peter Hay(4) he was going home to do his Perisher, *Thorough* had only been out in Australia for a few months the captain was Lieutenant Commander Fovargue, I was a Jimmy, Henry Ellis was a weapons officer and Mike Badham was a navigator, and a fellow called Roger Percy was an engineer. Again it was quite a culture shock to join (HMAS) *Penguin* I always remember the first breakfast there looking at the menu and seeing something called lambs fry on the menu having no idea what lambs fry was, anyway it was a very comfortable base and I had virtually two and a half years just over two and half years as first lieutenant of the *Thorough* um. A few months after I joined, we went to Singapore for refit had eight months up in Singapore and again that was quite pleasant up there, the Malayan Gangga war was going on, we were seconded from doing the refit in terms to drive a HD and L for the Malaysian Navy from Johore doing anti-bandit patrol up the west coast of Malaya. I did one two-and-a-half-week patrol which I really enjoyed going up as far as …? with a complete Malay Crew on board and a policeman and um, that was a good diversion, the refit was in fact very hard going it was so damn hot, but anyway after the completion of refit we sailed.

BN. And you lived ashore?

HG-J I lived in (HMS) *Terror.* In those days of course I think we had one Pussers bicycle to the boat. There was one quite amusing incident um, the CO was I think the only married officer on board, of course left his wife in Australia and of course he had absolutely nothing to do during the refit, and told me he was learning Italian as a pass time and one afternoon he told me he was expecting a parcel from his wife in Australia and he’d like to have it delivered as soon as possible, it arrived in the mail in the afternoon and I said to the signalman “look nip up to *Terror,* take this parcel to the captain because he’s waiting on it urgently, it’s from his wife,” and I said “when you get to the wardroom go up the stairs take the left hand turn and it’s the third door on the right that’s were his cabin is.” Now I heard him telling the coxswain the conversation what actually happened “I gets up to duty stairs up to *Terror* to the wardroom goes up the steps turns left knocks on the door the third door, no reply so I knocks again still no reply, so I thought the only thing I’ll do is to go in, so I opens the door and there he is flat on his back floating away at both sides.” He was having a sleep the um. After the completion of our refit I said we went to Sydney we didn’t, we were sent to Hong Kong, the Korean War was on at this stage and I think we had about three and a half months in Hong Kong um, alongside (HMS) *Tamar* when we were in harbour basically working up frigates and destroyers going to the Korean theatre, which was a very enjoyable period actually, because I’d been in Hong Kong as I mentioned before for quite a long time, just after the war and it was good to see all the changes that were taking place there. And um, we sailed from Hong Kong having completed that tour, there was one little incident which was worth recording, we were actually operating with two RN frigates and a Dutch destroyer about twenty miles south of Hong Kong lovely flat calm days, sun shining and we did a four-hour dive for the first part of the exercise then we had to surface and um, then commence some other exercises that was going to last for two hours and that was the program for the day. When we surfaced the captain said to me “you open the hatch Huw,” so I went up and stood by and when the time came I opened the hatch I looked up the bright sunlight, right over my head was a large snake wrapped round the aerial on the periscope standard, which was a bit of a shock. Leading Seaman Barrows our signalman he has arms and legs on the conning tower ladder, I said “would you like to go up first” he said “no way sir.” Anyway the snake eventually fell off onto the deck so I went up and um, it was obviously stunned by the drop as it was immobile, but not moving thank God so I opened the voice pipe and announced the fact we had a snake on the bridge, which no one believed and I opened the gun tower access door on the front of the T-boat bridge and I kicked, I had sea-boots on and I kicked the thing down onto the gun platform, it was about, well three-foot-long with green and yellow stripes. Anyway up came Steve Fovargue he was a delightful bloke and he signalled to the Dutch frigate or the Dutch senior officer, “regret will be delayed in diving for the next series due to the presence on our bridge of a water snake”. And within a second back came “are you sure it’s not a gin snake”. Anyway the engineer did have a camera on board and he came up and photographed the snake which was identified when we got back to Hong Kong, it was a fairly deadly sea-snake and that was the end of that little period, we now turned back to the Fourth Division in Australia and um, on the way down we were told to go into Sorong in Dutch West New Guinea, to do of all things an intelligence survey and the reason given for this was apparently um, it took so long for information to get from Singapore via London and The Hague, that it was quicker for us to do our own thing and send it back to Singapore. Sorong comprised of a hospital, army beds and that sort of thing. Anyway when we arrived it was a big show I don’t know if you’ve been there, it’s a very big Shell Depot and um, there was a Dutch mine-sweeper anchored, the officer of the guard came out in a boat and it was none other than Flip De Muir, who later on did the same Perishers as me, as a submarine officer doing his general service time. We had quite a lot of fun, we played tennis against the locals and so on and down back to Sydney where we joined the Division. Did the usual clockwork mouse running and so on. We went across, the captain was relieved, went home and Howard Clutterbuck took over, if you recall him? We had quite an exciting trip to New Zealand for three months and um, mainly operating out of Auckland, um again down to Wellington where the Second Naval Member was none other than Captain Jacky Slaughter so we had a great welcome there we actually took the Prime Minister Dutchy Holland and the Minister for War to sea in the submarine for a day and a dive in Cook Strait um, we went down to Port Littleton, Dunedin, round to Dusky Sound and eventually back to Sydney.

BN. This must have been in, what ’51 now?

HG-J. Yeah, ‘51 ’52, we went down to Tasmania, we had Sub-smash actually off Gabo Island we were exercising with a couple of Australian frigates and they lost contact and panicked and instead of waiting for us to come up um, raised the Sub-smash or Sub-smash was raised and um, actually I remembered when we surfaced um, extremely rough weather and there was a Sunderland Flying Boat, TEAL flying boat circling overhead and they flashed us on mirrors “are you alright” and we said “yes” and um, they said we’ll see you down in Hobart because they were going, flying down to Hobart. When we were in Hobart the King had just died and I remember having to, Steve Fovargue was a very shy person and um, he was asked to read the second lesson of the Memorial Service which he declined to do, so I was detailed off to do that, I always remember, had a fairly heavy night the night before at a party sitting next to the Governor who was an Admiral, a retired RN Admiral and his lady in the front pew hardly daring to breath out, having to read this lesson sight unseen. Um, about this time I met my future wife and um, she was nursing at the Children’s Hospital and I went back to England in December 1952 on board the QSMV *Dominion Monarch* around the Cape a very comfortable trip and when I got back to UK after a bit of foreign service leave, in those days you got one day for every month overseas. I joined RGP in Portsmouth which was a Reserve Group with ……….(5) as captain, and reserve for only two, I was standing by to do my perisher and um, I did the Perisher, started the Perisher in April 1953.

BN. Now you were a lieutenant what about five years in?

HG-J. A bit more than that, ’53 I was seven years in, I was promoted lieutenant December, 1st of December ’46.

BN. When you were only twenty?

HG-J. Yeah, and I was two and a half in ’53 when I was twenty-seven. Right well um, I did something don’t think many people does, I got married in the middle of my Perisher, because by then my fiancé came over to England she wanted to be married in England and um, I did it in between the Blockhouse time of the Perisher and going up to Rothesay.

BN. I don’t know how you’d have the energy?

HG-J. I even passed too, which is more surprising. But the Perisher as you know is a very exacting program um, in my Perisher we had Lance Bell Davis once again, Teddy Moss, Peter Holloway and Tony Bagley who unfortunately didn’t get through. And we had Ian Macintosh as Teacher. I often wonder whether the fact I had just married an Australian helped me get through the Perisher.

BN. Oh, I should think so!

HG-J. Anyway having completed the Perisher um, and had a little leave, I was appointed in command of (HMS/m) *Solent* refitting in Plymouth once again. I joined it, well I suppose June ’53 in Plymouth and um, I had an old ship-mate Oliver Sharp as my first lieutenant, and George Cole and RNR Midshipman and a Warrant in Reserve. Anyway after workup we joined the Squadron and um I think the only, I got seconded to Londonderry which is unusual for a slippery “S” because one of the “A” boats had broken down and I had two, two and half months working out of Derry, otherwise based entirely on Portland with one very pleasant trip to Rotterdam after summer war or something.

BN. You are mostly working, the ships working up?

HG-J. Yes, unfortunately. I did actually I had my daughter, first daughter, first child was born, July ‘54 and I actually heard about her birth in Weymouth Hospital with the hourly position from the Castle class frigate we were working with. After my first command I had to go back to General Service and I was appointed as First Lieutenant of the, it was a brand new frigate building up at Cammell Laird, it was the first of class, I can’t remember which one it was. Um, *Whitby*, HMS *Whitby. Whitby* which was actually not a bad job because it had a captain in command and I went up. I joined the dockyard, had one week there and the Admiralty rows everything had gone back due to strikes and I was going to spend practically all my General Service time in a dock yard so I was pulled out and sent to the HMS *Glory* aircraft carrier. I’d just been promoted to Lieutenant Commander when I joined her so that would have been about October 1953, ’54, sorry ’54. We went out to Singapore to take the new Jet aircraft out to Fleet Air Arm and bring all the superseded aircraft back and um, I must say it was a period I hated, everything seemed to be on the flight deck which was a long walk from the control room, anyway I was Snotties Nurse, Officer of the Watch leaving harbour and um, top fo’c’sle ……….. (un-transcribable.) I think it was. And um on the way back we stopped at Malta to pick up a Royal Marine Commandoes which was going home and also three ponies two owned by the Queen and one to Lord Louis and um, I remember the day before sailing I was duty lieutenant commander and Lord Louis came on board to sight the horses in the hanger, I last met Lord Louis when he was the Captain of the (HMS) *Kelly* when they were in Dartmouth Harbour and I got my rugby colours he gave me, went home to UK arrived back before Christmas ’54 and about that time I decided I ought to get out of the Navy, because my wife was not settling in England to well and um, so I’d written my various letters off and then, the *Glory* paid off I was appointed Chiefs and PO’s Divisional Officer at the RN Barracks, Portsmouth.

BN. You had accepted or what?

HG-J. No, I was still in the Navy still unaccepted and um, I was only due to do another four months in General Service before going back to submarines. And funny enough my, the commander was none other than Ian McGeoch who had been Commander SM out in Australia. Anyway they accepted my retirement at my own request.

BN. This wasn’t under the golden …….. (un-transcribable.)

HG-J. No, I missed that unfortunately I was more or less warned, Commodore Sir Charles Evans told me I was an idiot to get out and all sorts of things, as did Chief of Staff who was Gordi Hunt, but anyway I decided to go and I left the navy 12th of December 1956. So that was the end of my Naval career, do you want anything more?

BN. Well we’ve got about five minutes on this tape perhaps you’d just like to summarize what you’ve done since, if you could do it in five minutes, would that be asking too much?

HG-J. No, very quickly my wife’s father had a confectionary company in Australia and he asked me to come and join it, and they’d just tied up with a company called Barrett’s in London, very large organisation so I spent my first eighteen months learning how to make sweets and how to do time and motion study and all the other things about business before going out to Australia where I joined the company as factory manager in Sydney, was sent up to Brisbane where they had another factory up there. I was eventually made General Manager of Brisbane after about eight months and then brought back to Sydney because the company was having a few problems there and I was made Managing Director after eighteen months, it was an unlisted public company and I didn’t really enjoy it, although I was reasonably successful didn’t enjoy the work particularly. And in 1965 a chap invited me to join in partnership in a trading company called Williams Geddes and Company, so I decided to join that and um, I, whilst I was at Williams Geddes we were mainly exporting minerals I suddenly got invited to take on Shaw Brothers Agency for missile division in Australia and New Zealand as they’d had a fallout with their Australian rep, which we took on and that was extended to South East Asia and my partner went back to England or Wales where he came from without much warning and um, he wouldn’t let go of the reins so I decided to get out because I was building up a company and not getting the full advantage, so he bought me out and I joined Shaw Brothers full time as their regional sales manager South East Asia Missile Division, which I did for about ten years and then I was asked to move to Canberra which I declined to do, and so I got out. And went back to sea in the Merchant Navy which I never regret, it was a great experience and I thoroughly enjoyed it for the last eight working years of my life and finished up with BHP, that’s about it.

BN. Good, well timing is pretty immaculate, so for the record thank you very much Huw Gethin-Jones it’s been a most interesting talk.

Huw joined the Submarines Association Australia (SAA) and for his service to the Association was made Life Member in 1996. Huw’s service to the Veteran Community and the SAA was recognised in being awarded the Order of Australia Medal.

Huw passed away in Sydney on 19 May 2017.

1. Full complement of HMS *Nelson* 1,360 including officers.
2. Sunk west of Bear Island on 30 September 1944.
3. Operation Counterblast was the RN’s attack on the night of 12/13 November 1944 on the German convoy KS257 that Huw mentioned previously. The successful action was overshadowed by the sinking of the *Tirpitz* later that morning by the RAF Lancaster bombers and Tallboy bombs.
4. Peter Hay.
5. Un-transcribable.