

Transcript of Jack Netherstreet Video Clip

My sickbay was below the Oerlikon gun [laughs], which protected the bridge. We had three oerlikons and a twenty-five crew and each crew member had five jobs. Mine was rat catcher [Spencer laughs] victualing officer, paymaster, third officer on watch but never ever used it and I used to be responsible for all sorts of odds and things as well as the medical side of it. So I took this place, well, it was very, very pleasant I must say. When the sea was nice and we were just cruising it was beautiful. When there was or the weather was bad it was awful because being a flat-bottom boat it used to lift up at the front and come crashing down on the wave so you knew all about it. Now my bunks traversed the ship rather than going from bow to stern. Now, if you bow to stern you were going up like this but if you happened to be on a bunk traverse then you got shot off [all laughs]. If you're on the top bunk I was always being shot off [all laughs] cos my patients, if I had any patients, they were always on the bottom bunk. Fortunately we had no real trouble but we did have some nasty cases of malaria, bronchopneumonia and various injuries but all minor. But the bronchopneumonia case, of course, he had to go ashore and he had to wait for days until we came to a place, Chittagong I think it was, where we landed him. He went off to hospital from there whilst we went on to join the Arakan landing force. And the Arakan is in Burma and the landings took place from a little place called Akyab, Ramree Island and Cheduba. All those three landing areas we actually made a landing and fortunately we were lucky because the Japanese fled before we got there on each occasion. But we did see a Japanese soldier. We got lost in – going down south and he was looking after a jetty and he was standing guard there with his rifle and they had huge bayonets these – Japanese were immensely proud of their bayonets and they used to like to use them on the poor Chinese. Chinese were always a master to the Japanese, terrible really. Anyhow, this man he saw us coming and he ran that way and we turned round and ran that way because we weren't supposed to go anywhere near Japanese territory. This landing was supposed to be a surprise [laughs]. It was to him [laughs]. Then we – we – this really quite interesting story, the landing in – to catch Rangoon took place in southern Burma. They had to go across the Arakan mountain range to get into Rangoon and this was supposed to beat the Indian Army who were running down from north to south and it was very good. They – they did it alright but it took much longer than they thought. We by this time had turned round and gone back to Calcutta where I had leave and went up into the Himalayas which was very pleasant and was well needed and came back again to find an empty ship. Most of the crew apart from about the signals officer, signals rating rather, signals rating, the first lieutenant, myself, the chef and a couple of other boys were the only remnants of the twenty-five crew. The rest had all got their draft tickets while I was up in Himalaya and all been posted back home and I was left with a new crew which was quite a different thing entirely.