

Interviewee: William (Bill) Gladden

Interviewer: Malin Lundin

Date: 22.10.2010

Interviewer: This is an interview with Bill Gladden on the 22nd of October 2010 and my name is Malin Lundin. So would you be able to tell me your date of birth please?

Bill: January 1924.

Interviewer: And how old were you when the war broke out?

Bill: Fifteen.

Interviewer: Fifteen. And where were you living?

Bill: I was living in Woolwich and I was in the building trade. And then we thought there be no work in the building trade so I went to work in Woolwich Arsenal until it got bombed on that Saturday which was a very bad they when they bombed all the Woolwich Arsenal, Woolwich Dockyard and all that. Then I came out there and back in the building trade till I got called up when I was eighteen.

Interviewer: Ok. Can you remember the first day of war – when war broke out?

Bill: Very well.

Interviewer: The 3rd of September. Would you be able to tell me?

Bill: I can remember being indoors and the siren went and we all went out the streets and it was really – it was a practice and that's the bit that always sticks in my mind about that. But the bombing was pretty bad.

Interviewer: So you had almost a year before the bombing started. What did you feel affected you most that first year? Cos you had the blackout starting in –?

Bill: Well, yeah. It was only blackouts that really affected us, I mean, until the bombing started but even then I used to – I still used to go out. I used to love dancing. I used to love go dancing. No, it never really affected us. I mean, I used to go there – you'd go to work on a morning and the air raid's still on and the all-clear hadn't gone and you'd be cycling to work, perhaps, when the all-clear went or you'd get to work and the all-clear were going. So – you saw it as a part of life.

Interviewer: Did you have a shelter at home and a shelter at work that you used?

Bill: A shelter?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bill: We didn't have a shelter at the time but next door to us was an empty house and there was one in the garden there, which we used occasionally. But mainly we used to sleep in our beds. At work when I was in the Arsenal I was in the danger buildings. That's where you wear all different clothes and you wear different foot gear and you of – what they call the dirty (?) – the floor. If ever you fell of the walkway down there you had to stay there until you'd done [taps shoes] shoes because of ignition, you see. But whenever the siren went they always brought us out, we had to come out the danger buildings then. And all – when you'd come out you – of the Auxiliary Fire Service – they used to sell you a cigarette for a penny cos we all smoked in those days. You never used to go to the shelter, we used to stand out there and have a smoke [laughs].

Interviewer: Why do you think that was? Why didn't you go down to the shelter when you when you were at home and when you worked?

Bill: We had to watch it go on, you know. Despite all the shrapnel that used to be flying around it's – I'll give you – for instance in the local paper about, close on a year ago, they were asking for eye witnesses to a Spitfire that crashed just on Woolwich Common. Top of – you know Well End Street? Well, when you get to the top there's Fraser Street, Hill Reach, Repository Road, well, it crashed just there. I was in swimming in – in Market Street in Woolwich that afternoon, the siren went, they cleared us all out. So we could see the dog fights going on and we dashed in to Well End Street and we saw this Spitfire come down so we belted up Wellington Street just as the AFS were there putting it out with the foam. These people in the paper were asking – they wanted to get the exact place where it happened because they put little monuments. Anyway, I wrote my story and I had a letter back some weeks later saying they had about a dozen replies and they all said the same point as I did so hence a little monument went up there.¹ But you used to watch these things, you know, I mean, it was something going on you didn't want to miss watching.

Interviewer: How did you feel when – when you were watching this? Do you remember?

Bill: I can't say I felt as if – the only thing I can say was that I could – I was doing nothing, only working in the Arsenal making munitions and things like that. That's about all I can say.

Interviewer: Were you not scared when you had all this going on?

Bill: Why – I don't think so. I mean, when you're young it's a bit different. Possibly I wouldn't at my age now. No, I can't say I was scared. I was scared when at a night time, if we went to the shelter, next door, I used to sit with my old mum and she used to hold my hand and when you heard a bomb coming down, you could hear it whistling down, she would [squeezes hand]. I can sense it now. She would grip my hand until you heard the explosion and she'd release it and that was being scared because you're in a confined space as well, you know.

Interviewer: What did your parents do during the war?

¹ 5 min

Bill: During the war? They just carried on as usual. My father, I remember, he used to get very aggravated at times because he couldn't hit back. He'd been in the army since 1908 to 1920, he was in Africa when the 14-18 war started, he was brought back and he served in France and Italy and that. He used to say, you know, 'There's nothing I can do! I can't hit back'. He used to get quite frustrated. He lived on another – to the age of 93, he did, my dad. Yeah.

Interviewer: Did he used to talk to you about his experience in the First World War?

Bill: Yeah, I used to love to listen to him because it was all horses, cos my dad was with the horses and I loved tales about horses. Anything to do with horses I love and my Linda's the same, she rides. We used to have a riding holiday every year down at the West Country. Marie and her sister-in-law, who we used to take with us, they used to go walking and Linda and I used to ride every day. That was lovely holidays, beautiful. We've ridden out on the Quantock Hills, Dartmoor, Exmoor, we had some lovely times.

Interviewer: So did your dad have anything to say about you joining the war effort? Was he –?

Bill: When I went away – yes. When I went in, I always remember him telling me, he said, 'Don't try to beat them because they'll always beat you. Do your best. Do as you're told and enjoy it'. Which I did do and I loved the army. A little bit of discipline doesn't hurt anybody. In fact I think it would do a lot of youngster a bit of good today. That's – that's the frame of mind I went in with and luckily, well, unluckily for me, it didn't last. I was invalided out – if they knew you were going to be hospitalised for a long while, they chucked you out, unfit for further military service. So that was it.

Interviewer: How long were you at Woolwich Arsenal for?

Bill: Roughly a year I think. Yeah, roughly a year I worked there.

Interviewer: What was the best part of that work?

Bill: The best part? I think coming out when the raid was on and having a smoke [laughs]. No, I can't see that anything was – you can pinpoint as saying made you happy.

Interviewer: What was the worst – what was the worst thing about it?

Bill: The worst – the worst experience in there – we went in on one morning and the talk went round, 'Have you seen where Jerry came down?'. There was a bomb had landed in Rubber Street, Plumstead and there was one came down in the Arsenal and two of them bailed out. One, he shooted out and he came right through the shop next door to us. Right through the roof and the big benches we used to work on, the body smashed the benches² as it went down. I think that was the most horrible bit that – about me staying there. One they chased across the marsh cos they caught him, he was still alright. But that's about all. That was the worst time.

² 10 min

Interviewer: Did you have a lot of near misses around where you lived?

Bill: Oh, yes, there was quite a few because the opposite street there was landmines. That's where they came down on a parachute and as soon as they hit the ground they – it was all surface blast. They didn't make a crater, you know. What with the dockyard and the Arsenal they was all right – cos the little house I was born in was roughly where Woolwich Dockyard station is now, just a few yards up from there. During the war there was an old branch line, off the railway, went into the old dockyard, they had a big ack-ack gun on there. At night time they used to bring it out and fire and they were very often hanging around trying to pin-point that was, cos we had a few near-misses around there that way. We were lucky, we only had a few slates off and a few windows broken, you know.

Interviewer: Did you stay at home – living at home until you joined the army?

Bill: Yes, yes. Yeah, I was, 49 Henry Street, was the old address. As you come down Frances Street at the bottom there used to be a fork. There was a Britannia pub there, Chapel Hill went down there, which is still there but Henry Street went there which is all built across and that's where I lived down there.

[Bells ring]

Interviewer: So when you left –

Bill: Sorry, do you want me to quieten it?

Interviewer: No [laughs]. So when you left – left the Arsenal you went in to – to the building trade again.

Bill: Yeah.

Interviewer: How long were you – were you working there for before you –?

Bill: I would say roughly a year there. We were on First Aid Repair in the Plumstead area, Eglinton Hill, Dallin Road, Genesta Road, Nithdale Road replacing all the roofs and that, you know.

Interviewer: What was the best thing about – about that job?

Bill: Putting things right for people, you know. [Pause] That's about –

Interviewer: Was there anything you didn't like about it?

Bill: Well, there was one place I remember in – in Brinklow Crescent, which is still there. We had a few repairs to do on a house there where the front of the house had had fragments of the bomb coming through and decapitating one of the ladies sitting in the room there and we had that mess to clear up. That was – that was about it.

Interviewer: How did you feel doing work like that? Cos it must have been very gruesome?

Bill: Well, I mean, that was the only time that happened. Mostly, as I say, we were on doing the roofs – on the roofs. You – it's like – it's like when two of our lads got killed in Normandy, you – you don't – how can I put it? You respond to the – what's needed. You were down there picking them up and carrying them over to the old [unclear] was still in the air, you know. It's – had you thought twice about it perhaps you wouldn't have done. But you did it instinctively, you know.

Interviewer: Then you – were you called up or did you –?

Bill: Yeah, I was called up when I was eighteen, yeah, in 1942. I did my training with the Royal West Kents at Maidstone and then I – the first regiment I went to was the 154 RAC, that's Royal Armoured Corps just near Bury St. Edmonds. Then I went – I joined the 79th Armoured Div. on the coast of [unclear] Ness³ on the East Coast where we perfected all – Hobart's Funnies, he was a Lieutenant Colonel and he invented lots of things for D-Day. The Flower Tanks, Bangalore Torpedoes, where they fire lengths of torpedoes through barbed wire and exploding and make a path through. A flame-throwers on the tanks, flame-throwers on the Bren Gun Carriers, big carpets that un-rolled from the tanks up the beach to make it more secure. The aprons that fitted round the tanks so they could swim ashore. We did all that and then they were asking for volunteers for the Airborne and I volunteered for that and I went in the Airborne Armoured Corps where we took tanks over by glider. Now that's a – [showing image of glider]. It was the biggest aircraft in the world in those days. It was bigger than the Halifax towed us, 17 ton. We had to get off the ground. We had to have a mile runway to get us off the ground.

Interviewer: What kind of training had you receive?

Bill: Well, for that? Well, we had – I didn't need much training because I was on the bikes and we did recce work on the bikes but we had to have swimming [unclear] drill in case we come down going over. We went to Yeovil on a swimming course for that but if you could swim you just told the NCO and they gave you the test and you passed out straight away, which I did cos I could swim. But I did – I'm glad we didn't come down the [unclear] cos we had a bit of weight onboard and we wouldn't have stayed afloat for very long.

Interviewer: So – so can you tell me a bit about what you did in the airborne?

Bill: Where? In Normandy? Well, our work was mainly reconnaissance. We used to go out on the motorbikes and, of course, we – we landed east of the River Rhone which was about twelve mile inland and so we were well behind the German lines on the first few days. And we used to go inland quite a few miles on recce work, find out the strength – where the Germans were and all that. The day I was – I got this – we'd just come back. We'd come back in the Orchards of Romeoville where we harboured all the time since I was over there. I was just tipping out the water for the Dixie [unclear] up and a Tiger Tank come in to the orchard and started blasting us with these 88 mm, his machinegun. I don't know what hit me but something hit me and that was it. That was my luck. They carried me over

³ 15 min

to the old barn, where we carried my mates in the past and then I had emergency operation. I think I told you my little story – story about when I come back. I was due to come back ‘air lying’, that’s on the stretcher by aircraft but the storm – a big storm broke up, which broke up a lot of Mulberry Harbour over there. So then I was put on a Tank Landing Craft and we – we anchored just off the Normandy coast and picked up by a convoy in the morning and come back to Portsmouth. During the night, my first night at Portsmouth, Haslar Hospital, Portsmouth, I was awake at – during the – my bed was up. I had an operation over there and I came to on the stretcher lying on the grass, spew me heart up, all over me it was. Anyway, that night – during the night orderlies comes along and they took the blocks away from my bed so I asked what was going on and they said, ‘You’re due for an operation’. I said, ‘Well, I already had one yesterday in Normandy’ and on the ticket – they put a ticket around your neck and they start the history of what you’ve had done to you and the first thing I read on this ticket – this was while I was in Normandy, was about the – my wound and they considered amputating⁴. That’s the first thing that went through my mind when these orderlies come and took this chop – chops away. So I told them that I had an operation over there so they put the chops back and they went away and came back and took a Canadian in the bed next to me and when he come back, he was minus his leg and I always said, ‘Had I not been conscious I would have had the amputation’. But luckily I didn’t. I’ve got a – a note here if I can find it of – [pause]. The note or part of the note that was on the ticket round my neck [pause]. These are all my bits and pieces. That’s a letter I wrote to my mother two days before D-Day.

Interviewer: Ok. Did you know where you were going when you went over to Normandy?

Bill: Yeah, we knew we were going and they said they – they would hold up –. That’s a piece of shoe that landed in our orchard at Romeoville and I embroidered that on cos that’s the insignia we wore. That’s my two pals. I can’t see it now. But there’s a – [pause]

Interviewer: So how did you feel when you knew that you were going over to Normandy then?

Bill: Well, we wanted to get it over with because there was no - ah, there it is! See that picture. See that as the original, I never had one taken in the Airborne so I had that blown up. I scratched all this out and I painted all that on and had it photographed again.

Interviewer: Ok.

Bill: But that was the – [pause]

[Shows hospital label]

Interviewer: Ok.

Bill: So when I read that I wasn’t very happy [laughs].

⁴ 20 min

Interviewer: Do you remember being hit?

Bill: Pardon?

Interviewer: Do you remember being hit?

Bill: Oh, yes, quite well. Quite well, but all you got was a warm feeling, you didn't get the pain at first. But then they – when you get the pain they give you the morphine which knocks you out. I never fainted in my life, never.

Interviewer: So you were in hospital for quite a few years weren't you?

Bill: For three years. I was in Portsmouth at Haslar, at Portsmouth, and then we went to Basingstoke, Park Prewett Hospital at Basingstoke. Then the bombing was still going on in London so to get us out of the bombing they put us on a hospital train, we went up to the Municipal Hospital a Sunderland. Then I went to Sedgefield and then to another hospital in Stockton-on-Tees and in between operations they used to send us to Eggleston Hall in the Tees Valley for convalescence. That's a lovely big house, beautiful. I took Marie back there once, we were at Baden Castle and we were on holiday and the farmer, whose farm we stayed on, said, 'Well', I was telling him about my life, you know, and he said, 'Well, Eggleston Hall is only just down the road from here'. So I was able to take Marie and show her the room I used to sleep in and everything, you know. It hadn't changed a bit!

Interviewer: How was it returning?

Bill: A bit nostalgic, yeah. Then when I finished there the bombing eased up cos I only ever had one visitor when I was up in the Midlands. That was Marie, she was still in the army but she got a leave. She found out where I was and had a leave pass made out to the Midlands and she come up and visited me and then I came back to Orpington Hospital. That was via transfer nearer home. The trouble is with this, is it was so deep and the foot was just dropped like that, it wouldn't heal up⁵. A Guys surgeon, Dr. Eckhoff, saw it and he said, 'I think they could help you in East Grinstead, where they did all the plastic work. All the – they had what they called 'The Guinea Pig Club' there, all the burnt RAF blokes were treated there by the world famous plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe. He had hands like hams but he used to do all the little intricate operations, a line of hair for eyelashes and things like that. Anyway, he saw me, I went down there and he said, 'Yes, we can help you to fill that in'. So what they did was they raised the flap on this leg. They cut it there, there, there and lifted it then sewed it back and then that was the first op. The next one they lifted it and cut all round there and sewed one end into the other. So I was like that all in plaster with a big bar there for three weeks while it grew from one to the other and that was the – that was the donor area. There see.

Interviewer: Ok, yeah.

Bill: That was the donor area and this was the – see that patch there?

⁵ 25 min

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bill: Well, that – that used to be on there. Then I had pins grasped from there and there on to there and then I had a tendon transplant, took it out the side and put it in the front so that I could lift my foot. But then fifteen years ago I was getting so much pain with it I went to the hospital on Woolwich Common, it was a Military Hospital there. The orthopaedic surgeon there Brigadier Stocks, he said, 'I've got to give you what they call half a thesis (?), that's fix the ankle. It stops you from having a lot of pains so I had that done. This is a photograph you haven't seen. That's – that's what they did for me.

Interviewer: Ok.

Bill: See –

Interviewer: They're big screws.

Bill: See the fibula? See it just hanging there?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bill: They took five inches from that and granulated and ploughed it into the ankle and it all solidified [laughs] and the Brigadier he gave me that. He said that's a little reminder for you [laughs].

Interviewer: So how did you spend your days in hospital for three years?

Bill: I used to draw a lot and that sort of thing. But most of the time I was up and down in between ops I was in crutches and we used to go out quite a bit you know. But – did you see the internet stories there about –. When my wife – when I had my wife ill here one of the carers, she came in one day and said, 'Here Bill, did you know you're on the internet?'. I had no idea what she meant, it was my story, which you've got there which I sent to the Tank Museum in Bovington. They put it on the internet. I didn't know. Well, then a few weeks after I lost Marie, in March, this Vicky, the girl who found out my story was on the internet, she knocked on the door and said, 'Here read this'. It was from that, did you read that from that Sarah, the Sunderland Echo. Then a few days later she comes along with the actual drawing from the actual diary that I did.

But at one time, before I had this filled in, I had what they call an outside T-iron. That was a half iron and a drop-foot stop, it stops your foot going right down. I used to go dancing in at the Daylight Inn at Petts Wood with that on. I used to love dancing, really love dancing. I learnt early part of the war. I used to go with a girl from Abbey Woods and she said to me one day, she said, 'You're gonna learn dancing'. She said, 'I'll meet you in Powell Street Sunday evening', at the end of Calderwood Street. Well, I turned up and to be honest I was hoping she wouldn't. I thought I was gonna be a right fool dancing. But anyway, I met her and we went and I never regretted it because during the war there was always dances going on. I had some wonderful times dancing. For instance when I was down⁶

⁶ 30 min

near Livermere, Livermere Camp near Bury St Edmunds, we found out there was a – the Land Army Girls had a dance going on in the village hall at Culford, a little village. Well, a pal of mine and myself we went out and found this village and I never forget as long as I live as we went up this lane, as we turned the lane there was a mass of green. It was all the Land Army Girls, cos they had green woollies. It was all their woollies. They said, 'Men!', there's us two! Two chaps walking up there [laughs]. We used to go every Saturday after that, we used to have a grand time till the Americans found it and they spoilt it. They come in bringing their nylons and chewing gum and everything. But we used to have a good time. They were the Timber Corps Girls. We used to – at the Saturday night dances then the rest of the week when we were out with our tanks on Thetford Common, they used to be out there felling trees, we used to – brought one tank up and knocked the tree over for them. We used to help them out that way. But we used to have a wonderful time there.

Interviewer: How did you feel about the Americans coming over then?

Bill: No, they spoilt it for us cos they had more money than us, better uniforms than us so they could catch the girls [laughs]. No, not really. In a way you envied them. You did in fact – on schemes we often used to meet them and we had some wonderful times over a little drink in the little country pubs with them and that, you know, had some good times with them. You didn't really bear any grudge, it was just that you were a little jealous I suppose.

Interviewer: So how did you feel about being injured and having to – having to leave the Army before the war was over?

Bill: I was a bit hurt because I joined the Army, as I said discipline, I didn't mind discipline. In fact I enjoyed it. When I've met up with some of my old friends now, I met one in Normandy this year. I went to the actual Pegasus Bridge which was captured the first day of D-Day. They had to replace that to let bigger shipping come up the canal. So the original bridge now is in the museum grounds. Well, on the 6th of June every year they have a little service on that bridge so this year I was over there and I went to the service. When it finished I thought I'd walk over this bridge cos I've never walked over before, when I came over it before I was on the back of a [unclear] carrier brining me down to put me on a boat to bring me home. So I walked over and as I walked back there was two chaps in blazers with Airborne berets on walking towards going [waiving?] and as they came up to me and they put their hands on my shoulder. I said, 'What is this in aid of?' They said, 'We got one of your regiment, we left him in a wheelchair in the museum [Pegasus Museum] and when we left him he said if 'you see an Armoured Corps [unclear] in an Airborne beret, grab him and bring him to me!'. It was one of my old squadron – Alan – can't think of his surname now – Alan is his surname. Anyway, they took me back to – oh, Wally Alan, Wally, he was in my squadron, B-Squadron. Now, we – that's the first time this year, June, this year, first time we met since June '44 when we were in Normandy. It was quite a little get-together and I envy all those because all those I speak to who saw the war through when that was over they all disbanded and they went to the [unclear] and they went out to Palestine. So they had an extra medal, the Palestine medal. I went to one reunion at the near Burley (?) up at Gloucestershire or was it Worcestershire. One of our officers had a hotel there, the [unclear] Hotel, we

stayed the weekend there. I envied them with some of the stories they went through which I missed out on. The Ardennes, I missed out on the Ardennes. They all went back on that job. The Rhine crossing, I wasn't at the Rhine. Our regiment were the first ones⁷ to meet up with the Russians, the 6th Airborne Armoured Recce they were the first ones to meet up with them. So I missed all that. So I was a little bit sorry that I missed all that. But it just wasn't for me.

Interviewer: So how did you feel? You were just a very young man when – when the war started. How did you feel the war changed you as – as a person?

Bill: Oh, I don't know. Just experiencing war, I suppose. I mean, the bombing was a terrible thing for, I mean, the mums and dads to put up with. I mean, for every night for fifty odd nights. It was a bit nerve-racking; I think eventually it would have got them down. Well, it was getting them down. It was getting them down. That's all I can say.

Interviewer: Did – did your parents come and see you in hospital a lot then?

Bill: When I come to Orpington, yeah. Yeah, I was able to have visits then. It wasn't so bad then, a couple of bus rides.

Interviewer: How would you summarize your – your war experience? If you could have a few words to –

Bill: Well, it was an experience, which I wouldn't have missed. The camaraderie of the forces was a wonderful thing. You know, you sort of made friends in the Army that – well, I correspond – another one that Vicky, the carer, found for me was a chap I was with when I first met my wife. What they call the 'civvy club' at Larkhill where we were both stationed. He now lives in Australia and I correspond with him, well, he's a bit like Marie now suffers a bit with dementia, so I correspond with his wife and his daughter in Australia. The internet put me in touch with him. Hepworth, we used to call him 'Heppie'. So friendships that I had that are still going, you know. But there was only – in our regiment – our regiment was only small. There were only about just over three hundred in it and I only know of four of us who are still alive.

Interviewer: So when did you meet Marie then? What year was that?

Bill: I met her in '43 but we had – we used to exchange Christmas cards and birthdays cards. We broke up, she used to come and see me in hospital, and then we broke up. Then we met up again. We had a reunion at a pub in Holborn in 1951 and started going together again and then we got engaged. We had a long engagement and then we got married in '56. For many years she used to come to my place in Woolwich for weekends and I used to go to her place in London for a weekend.

I felt a bit sorry for my old mum during the war cos dad, although he was never cruel to her he never – he always found his money for his beer. He had to have his beer every night. I managed time up, I

⁷ 35 min

come back from a dance and there's a raid on and there's mum indoors, on her own, and he's at the pub, you know. I felt very sorry. There's my mum there with Linda as a baby on her lap. She was a dear. She was seventy-six when she died. I always said I lost the best one first.

Interviewer: Did your mum work at the Woolwich Arsenal in the First World War?

Bill: In the First World War, that's why she came up from Yarmouth, yeah, and her mother.

Interviewer: Did she ever talk about her experience working at the Arsenal?

Bill: No, not really. No, expect they get the hut. The hut they lived in at Woolwich Common, well over the back⁸ of the Welcome Inn. I had two – when I was a kid I had two Grans, Gran up woods, as we called, and Gran at Yarmouth. We used to spend Christmas at Yarmouth but lots of Sunday mornings as children, my sister and my brother and myself used to walk from Woolwich over to behind the Welcome Inn to visit the old Gran in the – she had a hut right next door to Castle Woods. They were lovely those huts, they were better than – more homely than the pre-fabs which were built for the same purpose after this last war, you know.

Interviewer: So what did your – your brother and sister do during the war then?

Bill: My sister she worked at Siemens on war work and my brother he was in the Army. He went in before me. He was captured at Anzio and, well, he was down as 'missing presumed killed' for some time. I was on leave once and my mother brought me up my breakfast, which was my treat, in bed and a letter from a nurse in High Wycombe and this letter told me that she - on night duty she'd been listening to the enemy forecast on the wireless and my brother's name was mentioned as being a POW. When I told mum and dad about we contacted the War Office and they said, 'Well, don't raise your hopes too much because sometimes these enemy broadcasts are untrue'. But a few months after that we had official notification that he was a prisoner in Poland, in Upper Silesia. He was captured at Anzio then taken on to Poland. Eventually he was released and come home, then he was sent out to Germany to finish his time and then he came home. My sister's husband he was captured at Singapore. He was a prisoner of war to the Japs and he had a very bad time. When he came home he was in a total mess. So my mother had a son-in-law in – prisoner of war to the Japs, a son who was a prisoner of war to the Germans and me who was wounded.

Interviewer: Did you ever fear that you would be taken a prisoner?

Bill: Well, yes it did cross your mind because I was only over there twelve days but we were operating with Germans all round us, really. There was no real frontline when I was operating we were delving into German held territory all the time, you know. But you just did your best not to be caught.

Interviewer: I don't have any more questions, is there anything that you feel like you didn't have a chance to talk about?

⁸ 40 min

Bill: No, I don't think so. I think you've covered most things.

Interviewer: I'm going to turn this little thing off now.

End of Interview.