

Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where did you grow up?

Ooh, I grew up in Edwardstown. And I went to the Edwardstown school. I'm going to stutter. Ummm...I went, from there I went to, it was not unley high, it was Unley Central and they taught you things like ummm, cooking, sewing, things like that. Well, soon as I was 14, I left school, got a job in a office. And err...stayed there till I a, was about 16, then I went nursing, I enjoyed that. It was very, very hard. Then I left there and went to the, Olympics pool, Adelaide and there, I stayed there till I was 18, then joined the army.

And what did you do in the army?

Err..Nursing. I, I remember I was been, we had to do different little exams and err, when the officer came back, he looked at me, I wassss, I wanted to be a nurse, but he looked at me and said, he said you'll never make it, to a mechanic, so I don't know what I did, but I've never driven a car in my life and never even wanted to ta drive, so, err whether it had anything to do with it, I know Ive got, got no idea of mack, mackets, (stutter) I cant the word out.

Where was your training?

At ummm... ummm..., (in victoria?) Yes, in Victoria, same place that a, err...well known doc, jocky come'd from years ago. At ummm...ummm... I knew it before I'd come here but, this will happen to me, because I've, I just keep forgetting, and then I can remember later you know.

Can you tell us a little about the training you did in the army? What sort of things did they put you through?

Oh...., just ummm..., the temperatures and taking pulses and umm, making beds I suppose and umm, in those days ummm mostly you go ummm, they would sick, had to do a full ummm wash and you would, start face and they, they don't do it now. Soon as you were able to, they give you umm, like, hot towels and then next day you get up and go and do a shower, but now they don't do the full...ummm..... Wash. But that was very hard.

What other things did you learn while you were there?

Umm, ool, ummm..., injections and a we started of we had to do inject ourselves with the, with a needle, nothing else in it, and each other. I didn't, like that. That aaa...W a mome.....no, I cant remember if actually what of....We didn't do it that much because we had to, real nursing sisters, we just did the other bits and pieces you know...

So apart from nursing training, did you do Army style training there?

No, no, no.....no....

And you were there towards the end of the war, how did you find out the war had finished?

The....wer're, ummm...3 ...weeks into my ummm basic training and we'd on a bigger, bigger wrap, oh. And ummm, a ambulance pulled up and a doctor flew out and yelled out, the wars finished, got in and walk, went off and we just sat down in the sun and do, didn't do a thing for the rest of the day.

So how, how did that feel knowing the war was over?

Ohh, It was very nice, and we thought, they wont need us, but ummm....we were sent ummm....buttick....2 or 3 weeks, I was sent to ummm, Northfield. And....not the

...infectious diseases where the civilians went but around the ...err....road....next to it, behind it. And err, they had ummm,lots and lots of wards there and we had mm, most of all the ummm...and, prisoners of war that were in Japan. And of that with when they come ou,t they realised they were, most of them had TB and we had to ummm, nursed them. And we stayed there with them. And when they closed the r, the r, the ummm....the hospital there we, went to the 105 at Daws road. And we stayed there till the end. And then the the ummm, repat took over. And I went back into the repat for a while and err, I stayed there and, I went up to ummm, green ummm, oh,.... place in Bris, Brisbane. And err....stayed there 9 months and I went to ummm....place in Sydney, and stayed there for a while, and then I come back to ...Jaws...., Daws road for a while. And then I ummm....Mum, Mum wanted me home.....and so I umm, left there and err....., I went back into the office.

So did you continue nursing after that?

No (over the top), no, no.....I did a bit, bit the umm.....St Johns, for a while but not for very long. I met my husband and errr... so that, that was that.

How did you meet Leo?

Ummm, square dancing, yes. I was into a ss, ummm, sss, this square, this square but not him. And errr...and after it was all, we war, we like umm...in contests you know and ummm....I didn't, we didn't, we ddd, umm....they had a boat from America was a ss, was a square dance caller, but.... very popular one. And umm...he come over and that night, out, "One Square One" that night, we, got the photo on the photo of the Advertiser. Was a terrible part, photo.....But, ummm ummm... and after that the sort of, it umm, finished, you know they got finissed...and just a few people had a clubs and that, that's where Leo and I met....

I know you had to wait till you were 18, before you could enlist, what was it that made you decide to enlist in the first place?

Errr...My brothers in the Navy. And errr... I don't know, that just, I thought I liked to..... be in it you know, so...but I did not know it was going to, ummm, end so soon, But errrBut I was in there.. ummm...for a while after and we'd, umm...were subject to ummm....people...saying, you know, what are you doing in Uniform now, yo, you know, the wars over, but they, you couldn't take everybody and give them a discharge unless they've had medicals. Once they had a medical they had to get anything they had to be fixed in the hospital and errr.. we had to stay there until, they, they didn't want us any more.

How long did that process take?

Ahh... That's was be to, about 19, err 47 I think. When the errr, umm, whats the ones that took over the umm, cant think of the name (repat whispered), at the Repat, yeah.

What sorts of things were you doing with those people before they were discharged, was that just health check?

Oh yes, there were things that had to be fixed up you know, and, umm.... lots, Oh, you know, o, TB persons, patients, they came out to 105Ah well when I ummm... and there was ummm... ummm... a lady, a nurse there, very ummm, I cant think of her name, she was umm, one that phoned, they shot all the Indian sisters and she pre, made out she was dead in the water. And errr... finally they found her and put her into the errr., the errr.. POW pant, Camp but umm, she survived, she got TB and I, willth, If Lera was here, she would know who it was, I forgotten it. But she was very, very, very not nice lady.

So did you think that you changed or grew up, changed a lot in your time in the army?

One girl, girl friend of mine said I err... looked ...that I highly ss, err.... putting err, on the gossh, you know, something I'm not but I cant remember doing that....

Did it changed the way you looked at the world and looked at other people around you, having to care about all these people?

Ahh....no but I fff, did umm, I know that the PO in the , prisoners of war , they were very, very surprised when they found out there were so many women in the forces . They hadn't heard of it because they, you know, they're over in the prison of war cram. But umm, yeah, they were very, very surprised you know.

Were there a lot of women in the service, apart from nurses, that you saw come through? Did you see a lot of women, beside nurses who were serving?

Er..r no, (over the top) we umm....no, youse always people that were, err, in the hospital. Yeah. I, I didn't see umm, any, navy umm, females, but I've see a few air force, but umm, that's about all. Yeah, apart from the, the army.

So what sorts of thing have happened to you in your life since then? (15mins 59secs)

Well when umm, I left the army, and, with the repat, I went to ummm, o, what was it, up to.... Queensland, and that come home, and then housing was very, very short. So we, my sister, myself, and my mother, decided to build our own, so we did that. And now, We lived up at Rostrevor, until I got married and, and Leo and I was able to get our, our own house.

I heard earlier, Leo was a military policeman, was that right?

Yeah, he a , he'd in thee umm... uummm.. provo's yeah.

Did you find that you having been a army nurse helped you to have something extra in common with him?

Ahh... Oh yes he enjoyed the milliteere, he used to be in the CMFin those days as it was called. And umm.. he used to take his holidays and go onto camp and he enjoyed it , and it was extra money for us. So err... he got worked in the world.....

So what were you doing in Brisbane?

Ummm... I walked, worked in some of the wards and err, I was there in one of the sisters quarters and a, things like that we were ummm, like, more like house work I think.

Were you in the infectious diseases unit then?

No, no they didn't hve any there...no

Do you think that your life is different because of your having been in the army?

Oh, probably yeah..

What s different about it?

Ummm, well umm, they were a different type of, err, girl and err, it was a dryfull them, when I was working, afterwards, In the offices and that, they were very sorta of catty..... so, I suppose that. Different.... Just sorta umm,aaaa..... I cant put a meaning to this out.....

Some of the POW servicemen in the hospital. Did they tell you any of their stories?

No, no

What was that relationship like?

No, they would not speak about it. They umm, I remember when I was at the Northfield, umm, there was some lot of food there, and err, they were going to throw it into the what's its name, and if they can, they used to come in and help you to , wipe the dishes or something like that, or anything they could, you know, help wise, and that, this bloke, I said to him, would you mind tipping this in the dust bin, and he's no, I wont, he said , he said if the, a couple of weeks ago, he said, I would have given my right arm to umm, eat that. He said I can't throw it away. Yes. But they would not talk about there experience, but they had a terrible time I believe. Yeah.

Was it difficult for you to work with people who had been through that experience?

Yees some..... aaa..., You had to be very carefull, ummm....., you so, what you say and that to you, cause next thing they will tell you there in love with you or something like that and you cant afford to do , you know, take any notice of that. And they'd just come from, over there and have'nt seen women you know, so you just had to very be, be very, very carefull. Yeah.

Did you manage to keep in touch with any of the girls you served with? (repeat)

Oh, for a while, but then they get married, and you have got time, and haven't seen any, I don't even know if they are alive.

Did the men with TB in the hospital, did they get better and leave?

Yeah, its funny umm, when err, we changed over from, army to the Repat, people coming in work, refused to go into the wards, used to wear white gowns and masks and that, and you had, you know, they'd got TB and we were never allowed to take, umm, any chocolates or things like that, they offered or they could, we could, but we had to take them out and put in the bin, we couldn't eat them. And we knew they had TB and nobody got it. But you could go to any restaurant in umm, Adelaide at the time and you could pick up, Tb by umm, the way they, there ummm, washing their ... dishes and that you know. You could pick up there, and people didn't realise that and we were safer in the ward there, with those TB posters than they were.

Introduce yourself?

Oh, Hi, Your Kimberley, I'm Barbara. I was in the army err, then in those days I was known as private Arber (Barbara). I'm now Mrs Sandercock. I'm, Its my Birthday today. I'm 88, and err, what...

Where did you serve?

I served in the, err.....umm.....military hospitals, 121st AGH at Northfield and 105 at err..... Daws Road.

How long were you in the Army?

Ah, I cant remember. It would be on that (over the top) photo of mine. I cant even remember (over the top) my memory, I cannot remember my army number. I know it ended with a 13, that's all I know.

(Unuseable)

1945 to 1946, that would be errrr... bout..... , I don't remember about ummm I think it, the what, is ended on the , ended... ummm.... end of 1946 sometime, but I cant remember.....

Show photo

Errrr.... Oh....., Just a me....., Everybody had a phototaken of yourself and , in the , if you were in uniform, and that's it.....

So what can you tell me about that young woman in the photo?

I was very skinny, ha ha ha

How long had you been in the army when that photo was taken?

I should say a couple of months I think, yes,

And what were you thinking your future was going to be? Did you think you were serve overseas?

Ummm.....no,no,no, no I couldn't because ummm, err , my age. If I was over 21 I prob, could've gone overseas but not, because I was only 18. So....

What sorts of things at that age, at that stage of your career , would you think you would be doing as a Army nurse?

Errr, no, I don't really know, just err, I , I enjoyed the army, I just liked the lifestyle. I would have loved to stay in, but they didn't want us, you know. Once umm, the war was over, there was alright because the, the officers, the sisters were train, were trained nurses , we weren't, you know...so err..., we didn't really have a future .

Did you have a plan after the army?

Err no....no, I was trying to think...ummm..... I was, went back in the office, yes...

What sort of skills did you learn as a army nurse?

Nothing really, no, no.

Do you have a story for us? (15min 38secs)

I was on night duty one night at 1 hundred err...new zzz, ...ummm... , 121st, one, hospital, and err, there were I, I was in the ward when the men had diff, different thinks, skin diseases and that, very, very irritable, I wasn't there fault you know. And err, then I was off that, I was on, , I was off , you know it was a , my time off, and err when I came back one of the blokes there had committed suicide. And the nurse that took my place while I was off, she found him, so I was glad it wasn't me. But ummm, that's about the only one I can remember. Yeah... We had umm, in the, closed clamp, camp, on Monday nights and we had a , a dance , and you could umm, in this hall , that was very good. But umm there was nothing really yeah.....

Is that where you met Leo?

No, No, huh,... no....

Mentioned earlier about giving each other injections?

Oh yeah, well they've, started off with a potato, and you get the, the umm, needle and go jab, and then you do just your self and you do it for another person you know, but

umm. Where you were supposed to be jabbing , I had know idea we were supposed to get in the vein or what, at the time. But we soon learn't you know but err... It wer....it were rather peculiar.....

So what did you think of the training they gave you?

Very basic,

Was it enough for you to do the duties?

Oh yeah, yes yes.....

What did you like about the lifestyle in the army, with the nurses?

Oh just this comradeship you know, and err, you could go out and err, you know and, go to the pictures and that...Oh, when we were in Melbourne, in training, they had a big victory parade in Melbourne. And err, we went into Melbourne and err, marched , and err, we were rookies but were on the front of the this.... umm... I don't know what they were... they weren't all rookies, but, were on the front and they took our photos. And for years, I'd go see on the TV, I see my self marching you know. I haven't seen it for a while but err we were lucky (over the top).

What sorts of things happened at that victory parade?

Oh, no, no....We just marched right through and we got back on the train and back to umm The camp, you know.

Were you living in the camp?

Oh yes, we with umm, ones down the end were peoples from Victoria and umm, and the South Australians were this end, but we man, managed to merge and becust, become friends. But err, that they got there, they umm, would come in, in ordinary clothes. We had to err, come, come across from Adelaide, and we had to have our uniform, everythings in place, and err, when they seen us, with, they thought we were uniforr.., had been training and everything and the, the, the umm, suit, uniform, then when they found out that we were exactly the same as them, we hadn't learnt anything , it was alright you know. But err.., they didn't like it at first....

What was your accommodation like at training?

Err, same as what we, went into when we got to our camp, our hospital you know, wasn't much, the same .

And what was that?

Errr oooh, was we had a ummm, when we were in the camp we had what we called a "pallyass" and it was straw, and no matter what you did, by the time you , morning came you'd be nothing much underneath you, you know it was, it was horrible . But ummm, when you got to your camp you had umm, proper mattress.

Did you share a room?

Err we werewhole, ... umm, big, umm, like a great huge, big shed. And err, the umm, middle was like where you walked up and down, but you had your bed there, but you just, one there, one there, one there like, no privacy. No no....

How did you find that?

Ohh, it was all right after a while. You had to umm, wanted to go to the latrines, you err, you , you could come and gotion there, but it was over there and they had umm, no deep drainage or any like that. And the la, night cart used to come and you made sure you didn't ta, weren't going in there when the night cart come in.....

Do you live in Mt Barker?

We do now yeah.....

Do you come to the RSL often?

I (over the top) haven't been because of ummm, I had the stroke and err, and I ummm, had my hip and umm, I used to come for the meals. And err, while I could, I could, but err, after a while I had to stay home you know.

Do you enjoy the RSL, enjoy the people?

Oohh, yeah, yeah....

Why do you come to the RSL?

Oh, yes err, I enjoyed umm, the company and we had a lot of umm, dinners, but different places, and different RSLs. Francis used to come and join us, and umm, uummm, we have, every Friday night we have a dinner, here. We've got a umm, cook now. Where ist, the women used to do all the cooking. Ummm...

Leo likes to come into the RSL now? What does he get out of it?

Oh , (over the top) he loves it, Yeah. He doesn't drink but he likes umm, coming in and errr, You'll sit there and larn, and listen to all the yarns of the different people you know. But umm,

Is that his favourite part of it?

I think.....

Did you have any good friends while you were nursing that you had stayed in touch with?

Errr, for a little while, as I was telling (Kimberly, over the top)... They get married and they just cant, you got kids and things, you got another, under interests in the end, yeah...

Have you met other people here at the RSL or in the community that you can talk too about your time in the army?

Errr, No, I think about I'm the only one left, just about the female I think. There was a lot here you know, passed on and that, they dont come anymore, you know....

Hold the photo up please.

I can't remember being that young! (12 mins 53 secs)