

New Forest Remembers WWII Project

Oral History Team: Transcription Document

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00-00-00

The reason I'm doing this is because someone at your place was talking about after we'd loaded at Lepe Hard, why didn't we disembark and come back in again, you see?

(sounds of unfurling map to indicate where vessels were moored)

And here you've got the layout and here you've got all the ships that were anchored in the Solent.

So which ship were you on?

I was the one up here, LCT629, which was on No.1 Trot, which is way up the Solent. [*Trot moorings are arranged in a line and the boats are tethered fore and aft*] We went right far up past the – right up in the Solent.

So was that by Southampton?

Yes.

So that's - yes, that's up there isn't it?

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Yes, that's Gosport. Yeah, that's it, straight up there. All these came up round here and of course on here was also the big concrete portions of the new harbour. But the harbour was put up ...

The Mulberry Harbour?

... the Mulberry, yes.

So that was up Southampton Water as well?

Yes, yes.

So could you tell me a little bit about the ship that you were on?

It's a craft. It's an LCT landing craft tank. 172ft for'ard; from stern to for'ard, 38ft wide, drawing 3ft aft, 1ft for'ard and 2 when loaded and then when we're loaded it's 4ft stern and 4ft for'ard. So when we beach, we have to be careful to put the mullocks out so that the things getting off are not sunk in the water, because we got 4ft of water there. OK?

Right, thank you. How many crew would have been on the ...

Twelve; lieutenant, the skipper, the first lieutenant was a lieutenant and then there was a – in the engine room a motor mechanic, a first class stoker and a second class stoker. On the crew side there was the coxswain followed by able seamen. There was a wireman, a signalman and the others were able seamen doing seamen's work.

And what was your role?

I was "Jimmie the One", which was the dogsbody to make sure that everybody was where they were supposed to be - under of course the captain's orders - and to see that watches were kept. To see that the craft was shipshape. The other thing was of course to see that you've got stores on board and everything else that makes a home go, because it was our home.

00-04-48

What sort of accommodation did you have on there?

Sparse! There was a cabin on the top, which I can show you in the photograph, and then aft there was an entrance that you went straight down an upright ladder into the mess room, which was also there with the hammocks for the crew. And then after that came the

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engine room. And in the engine room you had your three staff that I mentioned before.

So it was very cramped?

Yes, but we managed. Yeah, we managed. Down below aft, it may seem funny now, but we only had a coal burning stove for all the food to be made or hot water to be gained. So you had to sort of give a shout (chuckling) if you wanted anything. But in the cabin; it was in two parts. The after part was for the two officers. There were two bunks and a wash basin and a cupboard. Then there was the door into the steering area where the coxswain stood at the wheel because the voice box from the bridge came down into that area with the instructions. And of course there was a giro – there wasn't a giro on this one, I'm getting mixed up. But when the coxswain turned the wheel he could see which way he'd turned it on a post - on a pointer on a post - and then he knew whether he'd gone because the poor man can't see right for'ard – rather blind. There was just one door at the side – there we are.

00-07-56

Thank you. So during the preparations for D-Day, how long were you in Southampton Water and what sort of exercises did you do?

They were varied. On one occasion the whole flotilla would go out all together because it was the 31st LCT Flotilla, and we were part of that. We would go out into Southampton Water and practice in that area for doing all sorts of things. On one occasion, one evening 629 and another LCT were given notice that they would set out at 06:00hrs for an exercise and would follow the launch. The officer in charge of 629 (Lieutenant Alan Good from New Zealand) had gone ashore and did not return in time to set sail. The First Lieutenant (E Bentley) and crew set sail. All went well until we arrived at Bracklesham Bay, when both craft were ordered to beach. 629 unfortunately landed on a ridge of sand and broke its back. When the senior officer in the launch realised what had happened he ordered the LCT officers to report to him. A dinghy was sent ashore and we were transported to the senior officer on the launch, who realised that 629 had an accident.

Later, when the rising tide had refloated 629, we all set sail for Southampton, where on arrival I explained to Lieutenant Good what had happened. In a very short time, 629 and crew were collected by a tug and taken to Portsmouth. 629 was taken into dry-dock where a piece of metal was put across the underside of the craft to make it seaworthy. Little did we anticipate that on D-Day, 629 would beach and pick up a mine in France on this metal strip and it would explode as we approached Portsmouth. There was a lot of damage but we did not sink. The enemy had planted – thanks to the happening at Bracklesham Bay.

What date was that? Do you know?

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Yeah, before D-Day – couple of months – about that time.

So you were based in Southampton Water for several months then?

Yes, really.

00-11-35

How many vessels were in your flotilla when you all went out?

I've got them all down here.

(much shuffling of papers)

Don't worry, we'll come back to that.

(much shuffling of papers)

I should know this.

(more shuffling of papers)

Don't worry, we can go back through the papers afterwards, perhaps.

(more shuffling of papers)

Never mind, we'll have a look through all the paperwork afterwards.

(continued shuffling of papers as he counts the vessels)

Haven't you seen an LCT before?

No. No, so ...

(counts the number of vessels)

There were sixteen in the flotilla.

Right, thank you.

Got it all there for you.

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We'll look through all that at the end.

Have you got any other particular memories of those months when you were exercising in Southampton Water? Any other incidents that you remember particularly?

No, everything went well. Everything went well.

(more shuffling of papers as questions asked)

Can you describe a typical day then. What time you sort of get up. What's it like getting breakfast ready, etc, in the – not necessarily cramped conditions but you were saying about the coal stove – you'd got 12 crew did you say? Can you sort of describe a general day, what were general duties that happened on a sort of typical day in those pre-D-Day months.

There's all the crew down there and the propulsion and the armaments.

(more shuffling of papers)

So can you start with what was the normal wake up time on board?

(more shuffling of papers) I won't get it wrong. I don't want to get it wrong.

00-16-54

(more shuffling of papers)

Well we – 06:30 we would – you've got to remember that there were two different routines. One when you're alongside and you've got 4 or 5 LCTs all stationary as it were along in Southampton harbour. I suppose the main things were that we all got to know one another. Big thing! There was the getting up, tidying up, cleaning the craft, seeing that everything was spick and span along the decks, that the doors came up and down and that the ... You had two winding things to pull the wire in to pull the big door up, one either side, and that needed two men each and they needed a little bit of training as it were. The other thing was that we tried to keep the craft nice and clean. But it was, shall we say, a lazy time before the big bang and you all got to know one another and through your camaraderie you were all helping one another. That's the best way that I can put it.

So in that time which was a bit of a relaxed time you were saying, did you get to go out into Southampton as well or did you mainly stay on the boat and in the dock, or did you get to go out a bit?

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Both.

What was Southampton like?

What was Southampton like? Well it was a quiet place as far as I was concerned. We used to go ashore there and use the public bath because there was no bath on board. We used to go ashore for fish & chips (chuckles). I was very fortunate. I became friendly with a family down there and it was very nice being able to go there and have a little chat with them. He was one of the workers on the crafts, making sure that everything was alright from the landside and if anything needed doing, wiring or anything of that sort had to be renewed, he was the sort of man that would get the materials. So it was quiet. But everybody in the flotilla, well, we all got to know one another. We didn't play hop-scotch or ball games or anything of that sort, but I suppose it was a waiting game.

The calm before the storm!

Yeah.

00-21-14

Did you know what was going to be happening? You obviously had some idea. What do you think was the preparation for?

Well, we were told that we'd be taking the 13th Royal Canadian Artillery and we used to go down to Lepe Hard to pick them up, take them for a journey, and take them back again, so that they could come on board and make sure that they were all stowed correctly on the tank deck.

How many tanks would you take on board normally?

Three. When we were practising they just had the – well, when we first started, we started with twenty-five pounders. The twenty-five pounders were attached to the deck through bottle strops and they were fired over the front of the craft to the beaches and we used to do that over at Studland Bay. So we used to get over to Studland Bay from time to time. And then when of course it came the big day, or the time before the big day, they had a – we had a day when they came and they made sure that the vehicles and everything else that they wanted would go on the deck. Then the next time we saw them they were there for keeps, or not going off in this country. So that was it.

So I know there was a false alarm. How did that day go? How far had you got through the procedure of preparing?

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Well, we just sat there. It's off, so it's off!

Right, so you hadn't set out to sea at all.

00-23-45

We were full. We'd been to Lepe Hard and the craft went and picked up the tank crews that we had practised with, came onto the various craft. So we were ordered in one of the first to go in. So when we came out we went straight up into Southampton. Then, as you say, it was called off. Well then we waited until we got the go.

You just moored up and waited until the next day.

Yeah.

What do you remember of Lepe? Did you go ashore or did you see much of what was there at all?

No.

No. We knew it was a good Hard and we knew that there was water and oil there – water and diesel oil. Right! And that was what we were - drinking water, yeah.

Of course, when we set sail to go – I'm jumping – when we had – (background shuffling noises) when we first started, we had the same crew - we had the same soldiers and we got to know them well. But when it came to D-Day they were on board, but in those days we were 'Tail End Charlie'. We were always 'Tail End Charlie', but when it came to going for D-Day we were about the third craft. But we had to stay there because we all ... (gets upset) yeah. So there we were going out there ...

00-26-20

Yes, would you like to describe the crossing over for D-Day? What was the weather like? How did you feel?

Well, (chuckle) it was typical heavy seas and we kept station and what we didn't know then but there were buoys were being put out, and those buoys had been put there by the mine laying vessel – Royal Naval vessel that did the mine laying. They went out and put the buoys down, so that we were all in the lane together as it were. We didn't know where we were going, we just had to keep on following the buoys and it was ...

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(gets upset)

Shall we stop for a minute? Do you want to stop for a minute?

End: 00-27-58

Keywords: Ships, Solent, LCT629, layout of landing craft, Southampton Water, Mulberry Harbour, 31st LCT Flotilla, Lieutenant Alan Good, D-Day, 13th Royal Canadian Artillery, tanks, Studland Bay, Lepe Hard, mines, sea crossing

File name	T-B	007	_0002M0.WAV	Interview date: 10-08-15
<p>00-00-00</p> <p>Yes, we didn't know where we were going on D-Day, but the Army did. After we were loaded – as we were loaded, so a soldier got on board, armed, and he stayed on the ship – or various soldiers came, but there was always a soldier there to make sure nobody went ashore to spread the enemy, give the enemy the tip – very necessary.</p> <p>So we went down following the buoys, all in line, and then we turned to port and then we got to the various stays. We then had the signal to come in line abreast. So this lot went, then this way and then it went to port and the other line went down and went to starboard. So then we were all 15 craft going straight in for the beach. We started firing at about 10,000yds off or 9,000yds off and then they just pounded the beach. At a certain time we turned – told to turn. This lot went to port and that lot went to starboard. The idea was to go round and then come back in again to the beach. But it didn't quite work out.</p> <p>As we went to port we hadn't got these things called mullocks, (shuffling of papers) these things. They were called mullocks. They were on the – they were attached to the door to give it – for the landing – so that it went in further, trying to give them a dry landing, but it didn't work out. Well, we hadn't got ours out, 629 – this is 574 - and when we went in and we turned to port and as we did I was going to let the door down to put the mullocks out. A big wave came up, caught the door, went bang down and it actually broke a link in the big chain, and so the door went straight down. So we immediately had to go astern. It was about a couple of hours that we had to go astern before we could get the big door back up. But we did it. I've got quite an interesting photograph about that.</p> <p><i>We'll have a look at those in a moment shall we?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>00-04-00</p>				

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So once you'd sorted out the doors, and the mullock?

We then went down to, I think it was Red Beach – Mike Red – where the Canadians had gone ashore, but we couldn't get in because the beach was so crowded. So we couldn't go in. However, 574 had gone in and we were down there and we thought "right, well nobody said you can't go", so we went. But they had to wait until the tide had gone back far enough for them to get off in safety, and then of course off they went. So we were then sat on the beach and what we didn't know at the time was that that's where we sat on the mine.

You picked it up on the metal strip.

We had a hundred and seventy odd feet and the old Germans could have put it a yard either way and if they had, we wouldn't be here. There you are.

00-05-46

So once you'd been on the beach, how and when did you return? And did you return back to Lepe or did you return to Southampton.

Oh no, no, no.

So am I right that you were on the beach, had you grounded in the sand and that's when you got the mine, when the tide went out?

Yes, yeah.

So that would have been during that day. Could you talk about coming back home again?

Well, whilst we were there we'd now got to bring in 574 – 574 was there, and we went there. We'd also got to bring in 717 because 717 was up on the beach and when it went in at full ahead together, the craft went onto the iron defences and of course on the end of the defence was an explosive. So 717 went off and it killed everybody in the engine room.

(noise of checking map and photo)

So 717 crew went onto 574. So you got 574 and 629.

They were side by side on the beach?

Yeah. Then we got bombed, and the bomb went there. They'd already got 3 dead on board from the 717 and then I was on this one when I heard the aeroplane and I was up on the bridge with that chap there who was the Second ..., but he came on for D-Day for the

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engine room, and looked up and saw this thing coming down – this bomb – so I got hold of him and we put out heads (chuckles) under the chart table on the bridge. And really I didn't hear the bomb go off because we were right down (chuckle) – luckily we got the metal of the bridge and we're right down there, we didn't really hear it. (more shuffling noises)

What had happened was that the bomb exploded and it killed one of the sailors from 717 and one of the crew of 574. There's always been a little bit of a (sighs) – it was difficult to get - that man from 717 was killed on 574, but it was sorted out afterwards, but for some time official records didn't get it quite right. Anyhow, it's alright now.

00-10-23

So, 629 pulled off 574 and we then stayed there overnight and the next day with others we came back. It's all down at the other thing. And then when we got back to just before coming into Portsmouth Harbour, the mine went off underneath us. Then 706 I think it came along, or 574, or both of them came in because we'd had two or three little bumps and we then went to a buoy and waited to go up into Portsmouth where they took the craft out and put it up on the shore and then set to to mend it.

What sort of damage had the mine done? Nobody was hurt were they?

No. No.

But how much damage did it do?

A lot of damage and had they realised how much damage there was before they took us out of the water, we would have been condemned. So that's why it took extra-long time for them to get us prepared to come back to sea. That's our bit of luck! There we are.

Roughly how long did it take to repair before you could go back to sea again?

It's all down here. (refers to logbook)

00-12-42

So then you did another crossing over the Channel did you, on the same craft with the same crew?

Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

What were you taking across that time?

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Well, it will have it down what we took, but we had to take all sorts of things. On one occasion we even took a steamroller and we had a job getting it over the metal stop guard right on the front because it was iron against iron (chuckling) trying to get it on board. Then we had to get some sacks, get that underneath and remember to keep the sacks on board so that it would come off again. (laughs) There you are.

So after the initial - your first initial crossing and landing for D-Day - it wasn't taking any more troops, it was taking backup supplies was it?

I can't say that straight off. I think we took some RAF people over because they were going to build a runway somewhere. But apart from that I can't tell you off the top of my head because we would go alongside merchantmen who got all sorts of stuff to bring ashore and they landed on us and we'd take it ashore and that was it. In the evenings, landing craft, we had go and secure ourselves round the side of the battleship who was anchored there so that if anything came down, they would hit us and not them. That was good because we were able to go on board and get a loaf of bread. We didn't mind that.

So did you say you went back to Portsmouth each time after the initial crossing? You didn't go back to Lepe at all?

Oh no, no, no. We went to Lepe – I can't answer that because we may have been down to Beaulieu but it's all on – it's all in writing.

We will look at the diary, yes.

Have you anything particular – any questions? No.

00-15-50

Are you OK to carry on or do you want to have a break?

No, no, I'm OK.

Can we go back then to your journey through to Lepe. So you'd been going to Lepe a couple of times beforehand as part of training and the exercising, etc. On the day of loading up, which was obviously before D-Day as it were because it was postponed, can you describe coming into Lepe and then the loading, what was loaded onto the vessel, etc? Can you talk a bit more about that from what you can recall – that loading procedure ready for D-Day?

(rustling of papers)

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Right. We loaded 2 half-tracks, 2 carriers, I've got 4 SPSs whatever that was, 3 tanks, 3 officers, 61 men of the 13th Royal Canadian Artillery and I've got RCCS and 8 CMs, whatever that was, and Lieutenant Hogg was in charge. We started loading at 21:15 and we finished at 22:30. 22:34 we slipped from the Hard and proceeded independently via North Channel to No.1Trot in Southampton. Visibility good. 1st June 1944.

Brilliant. So from that loading point you basically then had to wait?

Yes.

Can you describe a bit about how you occupied yourself, what thoughts were going through – I mean, did you know this was something different to the training exercises or did it just feel like an ordinary exercise?

Well, we hadn't been told we were for the off but we sort of realised that things were getting near and we were just a good happy lot of men. You know, we were just there for a sail and if it got to be done, it got to be done. As I've got here (reading) Proceeded independently via the North Channel to No.1 Trot. Visibility was good. 23:14 Calshot Light floater beam; 23:20 Calshot Castle beam; 23:40 Queenlands buoy; 23:50 Dean's Elbow, a beam; 24:00 No.1 Trot and we went alongside 574. And there we are.

00-20-00

Is there anything specific that you'd like to talk about or you'd like to tell us? I've got a few more questions to ask – to explore. Have you got anything else that you particularly would like to share with us at this point?

(rustling noises as refers to logbook)

Well, on the 2nd of June the flotilla officer came on board and it was 'Open at 1', so what we had to do – you've got to realise that we've got all this iron on board and we've got a compass. So we've got to make sure that the compass is reading correctly. So the flotilla officer came on board – it was called 'Open on 1'. In other words we were permitted to open the first envelope. At 15:16 we slipped and we went to Hythe Pier and swung for compasses whilst under way. We returned and secured at No.1 Trot alongside 781 that time. 16:00hrs we were secured. We set quartermaster's watch. One army hand posted a sentry over army equipment so - (rustling papers noises) and then we set watch and everything else.

On the 5th of June, 7 o'clock we called hands, 9 o'clock we fell in, cleaned ship, 10:55 Operation Neptune starts. We slipped and proceeded in company. There are all the courses that we took and the times. Heavy swell, wind North West, strong. And then when

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we altered course to the south at 20:30hrs, and then we got to a certain position 'BB' and then we altered course again. (turning page noise) There we are coming in. Visibility good, heavy swell. 04:45 altered course to south. We were steady on that course until 06:46. We were in the second division and we altered course and then we manoeuvred in position for this firing. 07:17 we opened fire at 9,000yds. 08:03 we ceased fire, range approximately 1,000yds. Shots were observed to fall onto regimental target at Courseulles. There was one army casualty. The breach block hit No.1 gun crew on the side. First Aid was administered. Don't forget that this is a moving platform and it's, well, 'rock-a-bye-baby'. Then we - 08:05 - signal are you carried out the previous orders; 08:30 issued army personnel with 8 pints of rum. Up spirits! 08:32 lowered door to put out mullocks extension. And then, as I've told you, that was where things went haywire. We didn't get it ready until 10:20. That's two hours later.

And then we had to go into the waiting position and then 3 o'clock – 15:00hrs beach Mike Red, unloaded military. 15:02, 574 beached on our port side; 15:15 stuck on beach dried out. 17:15 air attack, live bomb fell on, etc. We had slight upper structure damaged. Oh, and the philco receiver, oh dear! Anyhow, you can take – there's copies of this for you.

And then we kedged off [*to move by means of a light anchor*] at 20:09 with towing 574, visibility fair, still heavy swell. 21:15 we slipped 574. We reported to HMS Hilary. 22:00 anchored. During the night shipping in vicinity attacked by enemy aircraft. One bullet in craft on starboard side. 06:30 called hands. 09:00 we weighed anchor. Low cloud, visibility poor, heavy swell, reported to Hilary. Then there were air raid warnings and this that and the other, and then 11:15 we set course north, heavy swell and all that. At 17:15 the army deck messed out. Two heads reported to have four inches of diesel oil. 18:04 vision, explosion heard as if under craft. Place and cause of explosion unknown. Exercise action stations. Starboard gun reported out of action. Trigger spring jammed. And then the buoys and then 20:19 the engines stopped, water in fuel. 20:21 engine started when we were near Nab Tower. (more rustling pages) And then 706 came alongside, took us in tow, secured the buoying area 27, and then we set watch. Then there were several days until we could get put ashore.

00-28-15

(much shuffling of papers during next question)

I think before we ask any other questions, we need you to do an introduction of yourself. We forgot to do that. The idea of this is literally just your name and if you're happy to give us your date of birth we'd appreciate it, but this will be placed at the beginning of the recording as your introduction to the person listening. So sort of 'my name is' and 'I was born on'. If you could just do that for the record, we'd appreciate that.

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(still shuffling papers)

My name is Edward Bentley – they call me Ted – and I remember my birthday because I was there and it was the 11th May 1923 and I'm still breathing.

Brilliant. Thank you.

How's that?

Lovely. Thank you very much. Could I just ask when did you join up and how did you come to be on the LCTs?

Very interesting. I got my calling up papers and at that time I was living in Oxford. I went to the place where we had to register and the man who was there said "Oh, you'll do as a sailor". So I said "Well OK". He told me what I was going to be. Then later on I got a letter to say that I was to go to – a letter with all the paraphernalia – had to go to Skegness. Butlins HMS Royal Arthur. When I got there I was told I was going to be a wireless operator. So I did the normal introduction of square bashing and then several of us – there were 40 altogether – there were 20 in our class and 20 in the other class – and we had, I think it was a three months' training and at the end of it we could read Morse at about 19 to 20 words a minute, on the Morse Code. We were also instructed how to do the – what d'you call it - putting things into numerics, and when we had the numerics we were shown how to translate them back into plain language. Oh, dear, dear, it's my age.

Is it putting it into code or into cypher ...

Yes, it was code.

Coding.

Yes that's right, coding. That's right. Oh, it's my brain!

Our 20, with our Chief Petty Officer, we were called out one at a time and told which ship we were going on and where we were to go. I was the one left in the classroom. So I thought "Oh dear, I'm going to be a stoker". But instead of that they said that the – to use a Navy term – 'trick cyclist' wanted to see you in the office. So I went in and I saw the gentleman and I was asked various questions and he said "You're for OPTU. You're going to be an officer". So from there I was then sent down to HMS – forgotten the name – down in Plymouth, where I did the navigation. From there I went up to HMS Lochailort - up to Lochailort in Scotland, did the unarmed combat and more training, seamanship and navigation, and then from there I went to – there were a dozen of us or so - went down to Troon, went onto LCTs. There we were shown how they worked and what happened. From

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there I was sent down to Portsmouth to join 629. That's it in a nutshell.

Thank you. Can I ask then, when you joined LCT629, your name, rank and number?

Yes, I was Sub-Lieutenant RNVR – Wavy Navy!

00-35-15

After going there I was then transferred to what was known as an LCGM, Landing Craft Gun Medium, and I went as a First Lieutenant. I went to a Sir William Arrol place in Glasgow under Jamaica Bridge to become conversant with the craft. Then from LCGM144, where I was First Lieutenant, after a time and before - we were then going to go out to the Far East - I got LCGM128 as the skipper and two ribbons. So Lieutenant (salutes), and you have to do it that way so that they can't see the swollen eye(laughter)

00-36-45

When you were going across to D-Day, what did the Canadians do on the LCT?

They just sat there and waited.

Literally?

Yeah. It's all they could do poor chaps. You know, they were all very keen that we got there. A very good question, but well, the officers, we had to do something. In Portsmouth where they've got the – oh dear – where you go in and see all the articles.

The dockyard?

No, Portsmouth, big building – oh dear, oh dear ...

The boatyards or hangars or ...

No, no. Down on the foreshore there's a – where you go and there's all these exhibits.

What, the Historic Dockyards?

No, no. We're down the front there and there's a – oh hell, I need shooting – where they have the exhibitions. Where – I've sent some stuff down there where – I had a copy of this logbook, to the – oh dear, oh dearie me – the place where ...

You don't mean the D-Day museum?

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That's it. Yeah. I sent them some stuff. We were given some D-Day money just in case we had to go – walk ashore and get lost. So what we did during the night, we signed it. Each one signed it. I was carrying it about for ages, but I gave it in to the museum. Now unfortunately time has overtaken and I think that it's sort of dissipated in thin air but you can just see little bits of writing on it. So we just sat there and put our names on a piece of money. (laughter) Oh dear. It was something we had to do to keep happy and sane.

00-40-18

The main reason that obviously you came to sort of ... or for us to get to know you, was in relation to the article that we put in the portal. Now I understand a gentleman from New Zealand then read that, who then got in touch with you for you to put your subsequent post about Mr Brown ...

Yes.

... and that you were his replacement. I was wondering if we could talk through that and see if we can get to the bottom of what's happening there and have you managed to talk to Mr Brown's son?

Well, I've spoken to the lady. Well I haven't spoken - I may have done - but I've sent them emails.

Yes.

And I've sorted it out that Frank Brown was the wireman on board the ship.

Oh, OK. You replaced Frank the wireman?

No!

Ah, OK yes.

No, no. I understood that the officer who was the First Lieutenant that I took over from was Brown – right? And Brown left the ship - left the craft - before all this. He went elsewhere.

But the Mr Brown that Phil Brown is talking about on the portal is Frank Brown, who was the wireless operator.

No, the wireman.

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The wireman.

He's the electrician.

Oh OK, right. Yes, the electrician, Sparky.

Sparky, yeah.

OK. So he was on board when you were on board?

Yes.

*Right, OK. So that's answered that question then. We can update the archive now.
(laughter)*

00-42-39

So shall we have a look through some of the bits that you've got and ,basically, the idea is what we'll do - you obviously said you're going to allow us to - I've brought the scanner and the computer, so we'll get that all going ...

Put that in there, see what you got.

... we'll scan this stuff ...

You won't need to. Look at that.

OK, we'll do that.

I'll ask a question while you're doing that, shall I? If you've got your list of the crew, I just wondered if you could put names to them?

Wait, wait. Whoa, whoa. Yeah.

(more shuffling of paper noises)

It would be lovely to have the names of the crew members.

(much more shuffling of paper noises)

Right. The motor mechanic that came on board for D-Day only, but he stayed with us a short time afterwards, he was Petty Officer Hulme – (spelt out). Stoker 1 was Demellweek

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(spelt out). Stoker 1 was Offiler (spelt out). The seaman was Brown R. The wireman was F. Brown. The signalman was Whittingham (spelt out). Ordinary Seaman **Regan (00:45:36)**. The Lieutenant, Alan Hardy Good - very good man – Royal New Zealand Navy Volunteer Reserve.

(more shuffling papers)

Now, they went ashore for three days. Right - Petty Officer Agnew, he was the motor mechanic. Able Seaman Macintosh, Able Seaman Gissing, another signalman Carrol C, and the Leading Seaman was Wright (spelt out), and myself Bentley. And that was the crew. How many have you got?

I didn't count them. Thank you very much. (shuffling paper noises) It's lovely just to have some names, thank you.

Leading Seaman Wright, he was a good man. Well they were all good.

(more shuffling paper noises)

I'm sorry but that's mine. (laughs)

You've got a lot of documents haven't you, how did you – were you able to keep those or have you acquired them over the years?

Acquired them over the years.

OK, so looking at this now, if we- do you want to stop and then re-start ...

End: 00-47-58

Keywords: D-Day, LCT629, LCT574, Mike Red Beach, mine, LCT717, bombing, Portsmouth, Beaulieu, Lepe, 13th Royal Canadian Artillery, Lieutenant Hogg, No.1 Trot, Southampton, flotilla, Hythe Pier, LCT781, Operation Neptune, HMS Hilary, LCGM, wireman, Frank Brown, crew names

File name	T-B	007	_0003M0.WAV	Interview date: 10-08-15
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00-00-00

That was in the Hamble River. Stokes Bay.

So that was 7th September 1944.

There we are look.

Do you want to just talk through what happened that day?

(turning pages and 'off stage' noises)

So what happened on the 7th September 1944?

(reading from Logbook)

Well, the craft slipped the buoys in Hamble River, ordered to Stokes Bay, secured at G4 Hard and the Army started loading – that was at 13:00. At 13:45 Sub-Lieutenant **Scratch Hard (00:00:04)** RNVR joined as First Lieutenant and he came over from 706. The Army had finished loading. Sub-Lieutenant Bentley left ship for LCGM course. The craft slipped and proceeded over to France.

End: 00-02-01

Keywords: Hamble River, G4 Hard, Stokes Bay

File name	T-B	007	_0005M0.WAV	Interview date: 10-08-15
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00-00-00

(looking through photos)

So this is Exbury image 23 on board 574 and we're looking at the Canadian troops just prior to their disembarking on Juno beach.

That's right.

(noise of turning pages)

Do you want to talk about this image, which is Exbury image 29A?

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That's the port side of 629. There's the armies that have just got off, and this is 574. There's the Army just got off.

OK, Exbury image 30B.

That's 629 before disembarking. Wait a minute. You see, if you follow the line along, the water is quite deep and that's why they couldn't get them off.

And did you say that you're actually in that photograph?

Yeah, that's me.

You're on the left?

That's it.

That one there. Brilliant.

(pause as turn pages)

And you were talking earlier on about this chap here?

No.

He's not the army man that stayed on deck?

No.

Oh, OK. So this is now Exbury image 31B.

Right, if you look there, that's a motor launch. I can't see what that is. That looks like – no, what has happened here is that if you look at the wake along here, you'll see that the craft is actually going astern. And up here are two black balls. That means that it is not steering because this is where we're going astern to get the door back up.

OK. So this is two black balls.

Yeah.

So they're raised over the mast to show that you're not under steerage.

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That is the signal that the craft is unable to steer – going astern.

As the bow door had dropped, hadn't it?

Yeah, bow door. (long pause) If you follow that, that's going astern into the water and it's not being taken with the water.

So in that situation was it a case that you literally just had to, as it were, winch it up or was it a case you had to attach things to it and ...

We had to get – well, first of all – dear, dear, dear – (more shuffling of papers)

That image, yes?

Yes, that's 574. Now down in there is a winch, so what we had to do (more shuffling of papers) What we had to do, work from the stern. We were very fortunate that we had a spare flexible steel wire rope, FSWR – a spare – and so that was put round the thing that went round ...

Winch?

... yes, which of course was electric. Had to get three turns on it and then from there we had to get some guiders and take the wire all the way along here and then down into the – to get the wire up from that winch. Had to get a clincher on it and then we had to take the strain on here to get the door up.

A mission and a half!

Completed. Did that make sense?

00-07-18

Yes, yes. Now these are the photographs that Mr Brown – Phil Brown – sent us. Now we think they're taken from on board 629, but we don't know and Mr Brown's son doesn't know when they were taken. So this is LCT629 – Frank Brown 01. Any thoughts about that image at all? Anything you recognise?

No.

OK. Frank Brown 02.

Ah, right, well this is where we got the mullocks up.

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Mullocks, how are you spelling 'mullocks'?

(spells out) Mulluck.

Mullocks, and these are what, extensions to the bow door ramps?

Extensions, yes.

Extensions to the bow door ramps.

(another pause sorting photos)

So this photo was taken from 574 but after this photograph?

Yes.

So this is where you'd gone to sort the mullocks out, that had failed, the ramp had dropped. You then fought to get it back up again ...

Yeah, but we kept astern.

... kept astern, and then fitted the mullocks or activated the mullocks in there.

Yeah.

So this photo's after that.

It's either – yes it was, yes.

OK. So now looking at Frank Brown 03. I think it's just LCT574 just moved around to your bow, isn't it really? So we then have what we believe to be a photograph of Frank Brown. This is Frank Brown 04.

Don't know.

OK. Now we're told that actually Frank might be up here. This might be Frank here but we're unsure. So this is Frank Brown 05. We have five individuals; three in the back row, two in the front row. Do any of these faces ring any bells - can you put any names to anybody?

Offler, Gissing.

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Gitting?

Gissing (spelt out) (long pause) That's not me is it?

I don't know. (laughter) We can always come back to them.

No!

OK. Right. Then next image is Frank Brown 6A.

Oh no, that's not me.

We think this is Frank Brown here.

Well it could be.

(laughter) Could be anybody with his head missing! But yeah, does anybody there ring a bell? So that one's Gissing and this one was ...

Offler!

Offler? (spelt out)

And this is up on the bridge.

(more shuffling of paper noises)

OK. Frank Brown 07. Does anyone here ring a bell?

That is Lieutenant Alan Hardy Good – and he was good by name and good by – good all the way round. And that looks like me, doesn't it? (chuckles) T for Ted!

And just in the background ...

That's K31, 706.

So 706, that's a different – that's the number of a different landing craft?

Yeah, yeah.

OK.

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It's K31. We were the 31st - 'Thirsty first' – right? LCT flotilla. We were K. Now, I don't know where K came from.

So when you say you were K - as in that was the flotilla?

Yeah, K31. Because if you look on that jolly thing from - you know - where everybody was ...

Berthing chart?

Yeah, down in the – Portsmouth – they are all down there.

K31, so that would be your designation as it were? K31, and that is the 31st flotilla.

Yeah.

OK. So in this image we've got 706, so is that...

LCT706.

... so on your vessel you'd have K31 and then ...

629.

... right, OK. So we think we've got Alan Good and we think we've got yourself.

That's right.

OK. Frank Brown 08. Where is this gun on board, do you recall? Is it behind here on the stern?

Yes, the stern.

Stern gun.

Oh we had two there.

One of the stern guns, and I can't recognise anybody. I don't know whether you can recognise any of those individuals there?

No.

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OK, Frank Brown 09.

Yeah, well that's on the (unintelligible) (14:41)

Can you recognise any of those individuals? It's not a brilliant image to try and do that on.

No.

OK. Last of all, Frank Brown 10.

Oooh! Oh, well I'm blown!

So I assume this is Good?

That's Good, that's Bentley.

Now we believe this is Frank Brown here.

That could be. That's Wright (name spelt out), that is Agnew (spelt out), that's Offler. I think that is Gissing.

So we're unsure about this chap here. This chap – or these 3 – 1, 2, 3.

I can't be sure.

We're only asking if you're sure, that'll be fine. If you're not sure, then don't worry about it.

But I'll tell you what, I'd like a copy of that.

Well we'll get a copy printed off properly and sent to you.

Where and when is that likely to have been taken?

Because it's not beside your vessel because that's in the same place isn't it, 706.

K31 706, so I've no idea.

Could this be on board your vessel with that one beside? My guess is in the docks in Southampton. This kind of group photograph. But that is purely a guess.

Well, I don't know. But it must have been, well, right at the end of things. It's no good. That

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looks like the other Brown but don't tell me. Well I'm blowed!

I'll get a copy printed for you properly.

00-18-07

(Rest of file not transcribed)

End: 00-23-02

Keywords: 574, Canadian troops, photos, LCT629, Frank Brown, mullocks, Lieutenant Alan Hardy Good, LCT guns,

File name	T-B	007	_0006M0.WAV	Interview date: 10-08-15
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00-00-00

Yeah, this is 574.

The logbook from 574.

Yeah, that should be on there as well. The rocket - they sent the (chuckles) – they sent the rockets and the rockets were hitting us and not going to the beach. (laughs)

Because they were too far out or ...

(rustling of pages in the background)

Yes, yes they pulled, (laughing) they pulled the plug too quick. The LCT was firing short. (coughing fit) It's got "missiles dropping all around". And a Mustang was shot down, though I didn't see that.

The first lot went into the beach (pause turning pages) and then it would carry on back, bringing all the bodies over from 717. They brought the bodies over and then the next day at sea they had a short ceremony and they were buried at sea.

How did they bring them across from the one LCT to the other?

Wrapped in their hammock.

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And they physically passed them across from the one vessel to the other did they?

717 got the three in there. They got their hammocks, tied them up, brought them down to 574. Then the other crew, they brought the hammocks, so that when that chap was killed he was wrapped in that and then later with the other one - later at sea.

End: 00-02-54

Keywords: LCT574, rockets, missiles, Mustang, shot down, 717, killed, buried at sea

File name	T-B	007	_0007M0.WAV	Interview date: 10-08-15
<p>00-00-00</p> <p><i>Is that there as well?</i></p> <p>Yeah, yeah.</p> <p><i>So is that part of VJ Day as well?</i></p> <p>That's VJ Day.</p> <p><i>So when were these taken?</i></p> <p>Well that's 144.</p> <p><i>So what day roughly were these taken, do you recall?</i></p> <p>Well they would be taken a short time before this – before this.</p> <p><i>Before VJ Day. OK - at Poole. And they're in Poole Harbour. Oh, lovely. Well are you happy for us to scan those as well with your little collection?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p><i>With your kind permission.</i></p> <p>And that's 144.</p> <p><i>So 144 is the image...</i></p>				

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If you look on 144 you'll see that we've got the gear up there for the hot weather in the Far East.

So this image is the image looking from the bow to the stern with the guns uncovered facing us.

Yeah.

And what vessel was that again, what number?

144.

144, and then this image which is looking at the port side?

Yeah, 129.

LCGM which stands for?

Landing Craft Gun Medium.

And then two other images are of 128 ...

No, 129!

129 at Poole.

You're talking to the skipper. (chuckles)

At Poole on VJ Day?

Yes.

Lovely.

I put it to take the photograph.

Right.

End: 00-01-45

Keywords: VJ Day, LCT144, photos, LCGM129, Poole

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