



## AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSOCIATION VICTORIA

### AUSTRALIAN SPECIAL WARFARE ORAL HISTORIES

#### Interview Number 5. Able Seaman Horrie Young. MID and Telegraphist Moss Berryman, MID - Operation JAYWICK

Interviewed by Dave Sheehan.

**Presenter:** As a pre-war Naval Reservist, Horrie Young was mobilized just prior to September 1939 as hostilities commenced. After a short induction period, he went to sea aboard the minesweeper and spent a couple of years aboard a number of different vessels. In mid-1942, he was drafted to combined operations where he was in charge of a party of communications personnel training for beach landing operations in the forthcoming [00:00:30] island campaign.

During this period, he came into contact with Lieutenant Davidson and subsequently joined the Operation JAYWICK party who carried out the now-famous Krait raid into Singapore harbor. After returning from JAYWICK, Horrie, fortunately, declined an invitation from Major Lyons to join the RIMAU raiding party. He served in general naval duties for the remainder of the war.

Moss Berryman [00:01:00] joined the Royal Australian Navy in March 1942 and trained at the Flinders Naval Depot. While there, he volunteered for special duty and ended up at the Commando School at Balcombe. From the original group, 15 were selected for further training on the Hawkesbury River. Moss and four others were selected by Captain Lyons's and Lieutenant Davidson for Operation JAYWICK.

After returning from Singapore, he returned to general duty and served ashore at Williamstown and then on the Merkur<sup>1</sup>, a ship that belonged to the Kaiser during World War I. His final posting was aboard HMAS Vendetta and after its decommissioning at the end of the war, Moss returned to civilian life. Moss and Horrie are talking to Dave Sheehan [00:01:50].

**Dave:** Tonight, it's my pleasure to be talking with Moss Berryman and Horrie Young on their experiences in Special Operations during [00:02:00] the Second World War with particular relevance to the JAYWICK Operation, which involved a small party on the M.V. Krait sailing from Australia up to Singapore harbor, sinking a large number of Japanese shipping in Singapore harbor and then returning to Australia. Moss, could you tell us initially how you got involved with the Navy, and then into Special Operations, and the training you did leading up to Operation JAYWICK? [00:02:30]

**Moss Berryman:** Yes, Dave. As you realize in the Second World War, most of us had to join one of the services at 18. I chose the Navy because a little bit of influence perhaps from my grandfather who was in the British Navy many years before. Soon

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<sup>1</sup> MV Merkur, an Australian passenger cargo vessel requisitioned by the RAN for service as a victualling stores issuing ship from 12 December 1941.



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after I turned 18, I was called up and did my initial training at Flinders Naval [00:03:00] Depot, Victoria<sup>2</sup>.

Just before the completion of my training, a notice was placed on the notice board looking for volunteers to go somewhere and do something, and nothing more was asked. Quite a large number have put their name down on this list to be interviewed. Strangely, most of us hadn't done any sea time and [00:03:30] here we are looking for something completely different to what we joined up for.

Anyway, we put our name down, and shortly after, we were interviewed by a Scottish Captain and a Naval Lieutenant who asked us a few simple questions. A few days later, I think, somewhere around the 40 of us, 40 to 45 were called together, told to pack our [00:04:00] bags, we were leaving the naval depot and we're heading up the line a few miles to Frankston.

Now, this was going to be something, a real new experience for us, because they've told us we're going to a Commando School. It was some trepidation that we were going to go to a Commando School because nothing like this had happened before in naval history, I don't think. We boarded a few buses, arrived [00:04:30] in Frankston one dry morning to be met by the Major and several of his Lieutenants, who I might add were frightening big men, 6 foot 4 plus, and they were to be our instructors for the next four or five weeks.

We stayed at Frankston<sup>3</sup> for, I think, about five, maybe six weeks [00:05:00] and these instructors gave it to us in more ways than one. They delighted, I think, in having their first group of sailors in the camp and they sorted us out in no uncertain fashion. They had us tearing around. When we left the Navy Depot, we thought we were reasonably fit, but when these boys got stuck into us, we weren't fit at all. They had us tearing up and down the beach. They had us doing all sorts of unarmed combat. You name it, we were in it. Looking back over the years, I'm sure that our Scottish Captain that I mentioned, Captain Lyons, was watching us closely.

He was sorting us out because at the end of the six weeks, he called us aside, and something like 15, 16, 17 of us were told to pack our bags. [00:06:00] The rest were sent back to the Naval Depot. They weren't quite up to scratch. A day or two later, we found ourselves on the train for Sydney and from Sydney, we were taken by trucks out to Bobbin Head, down the Hawkesbury River a few miles, and we were landed on a beach in Refuge Bay, a beautiful spot in the Hawkesbury, [00:06:30] a wonderful place to spend the rest of the war.

We landed on this little beach in Refuge Bay and all we could see there was a massive heap of army equipment, tents, cooking utensils, all these sorts of thing with instructions to get it up the top of that mighty great cliff, quick, smart, and set up your camp. This is going to be your home for the next few weeks. We had to struggle up

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<sup>2</sup> HMAS Cerberus

<sup>3</sup> Most likely at AIB School at Mt Martha which is close to HMAS Cerberus.



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this great cliff with all this gear, set up our camp, something we'd never done before, put up tents. We had to clear some scrub and clear away a lot of rubbish up there, usual scrubby top and we set up our camp.

At this stage, we had no idea what was entailed, where we were going. All we could do now was run a mile in pretty quick time. We could break somebody's [00:07:30] arm if need be. We had a very solid training back in Victoria at Frankston but what the ultimate was going to be, Lyons kept a very close secret.

It wasn't very long after we've been in the camp, that Lyons started to make life a little difficult. If I remember correctly, the first thing he [00:08:00] did was to say, "Right. We'll cut out the mid-day meal because where you're going, there won't be any mid-day meal." Growing boys 18, 19, 20, few little grumbles. Those that smoke, I think, he said, "Right. Lean back on the smokes." Few more little grumbles.

He used to have other little things up his sleeve each day, each night to try and get you out of bed at all hours to do hikes, runs, you [00:08:30] name it, through the scrub. He made life rather difficult, but it was his way of sorting us out. A few weeks went by, and some canoes arrived, "Oh no, this is going to be good. We're going to have some canoes to pedal around in."

None of us had ever done much canoe work in those days but Lyons said, "Get in those canoes, go for a pedal and just see how you go. [00:09:00]" We paddled around the Hawkesbury, got a little bit sore in the back, a little bit sore in the behind, but we gradually got better and better, and we used to go further and further a fair way up the Hawkesbury River. Then we used to venture out around the Lion Island area, up through the various lakes, pass the Woy Woy, Gosford.

In fact, one trip we finished up on the lakes, overland, back into the lake, we finished up nearly in Newcastle [00:09:30] and we became quite experts in this canoe work. Then we had other instructors arrive. We had an instructor come to teach us how to set up and make up an explosive, something that none of us had ever done before. We had two army Sergeants arrive who taught us how to handle rifles and various small machine guns in a proper manner. They were with us for [00:10:00] I suppose three weeks or so and we became very expert in that field.

Still not knowing where we're going to go. We can still break somebody arm and now, we could shoot straight, but where we were going, we had our ideas. Some, were plugging for Rabaul, some we're plugging for other areas north, but still a well-kept secret.

**Dave:** Then there was the final selection made. [00:10:30]

**Moss:** Well, after several weeks there, Lyons called us together and he named you, you, you and you and you step aside, and the rest were told to repack their bags and returned to one of the Naval Depots in Sydney. His final selection came down to five. We five stayed on in the camp for a few days. [00:11:00] Then all of a sudden, this



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horrible looking craft came into our bay. It was a Japanese-type fishing craft, and we went aboard and had a bit of a look at it. It looked Japanese, it smelled Japanese, and it was named Japanese. Lyons said, "Have a good look at it because that's going to be your home for the next few weeks or months or whatever." [00:11:30]

**Dave:** How many of you were there at this stage apart from the four of you and Lyons's and Davidson?

**Moss:** At this stage, there was we five and then we had Captain Lyons, Lieutenant Davidson and we had a Navy cook. We had a telegraphist and we had Ron Morris, who was British Army, medical man. [00:12:00] At that stage, we had about 10 at that time, but then, in the next few days, Lieutenant Bob Paige arrived, Colbert Kane arrived. Colbert Kane was an expert on guns, he looked after our armament. Paddy McDowell arrived and he was to be our engineer. Paddy was a First World War man. [00:12:30] Then Lieutenant Carse arrived as our navigator and then we finished up with a total crew of 14.

**Dave:** At what stage did you come in, Horrie?

**Horrie Young:** I came in well on the way into 1943 and joined the party from HMAS Assault, which was the Naval Combined Operations Training Center. [00:13:00]. I had originally joined, and I'd been mobilized in 1939 at the outset of World War II. I'd been a naval reservist prior to the war and had a fair amount of experience as a Telegraphist. I had been at the Australian Post Office and the Wireless Branch of the Post Office was my home just immediately prior to the war. I had a fairly reasonable technical background [00:13:30] and an operating background. At the same time as I was mobilized, I suppose you could say I was fairly well experienced in that field.

As soon as I was mobilized, I was sent to small ships in minesweepers and within a month or two of the outbreak of World War 2 I was at sea in the minesweepers and I stayed at sea in General Service virtually up until 1943 when I was transferred across to Combine Operations to take charge of a beach landing party, beach signal party, and my Assault Ship was Kanimbla and we were exercising in Port Stevens at the time that Lieutenant Davidson and a few other boys came in, including the their leading Telegraphist and I happen to know this fellow fairly well.

He asked me where I was going and I said, "Well, I'm combined Ops, that's my assault ship. Where are you going?" He said, "I'm not too sure. We're just going for the run around New Guinea." Anyhow, I knew that he wasn't terribly happy with his draft, and I wasn't either. I was pretty fed up with climbing up and down rope ladders [00:15:00] on the side of Kanimbla 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning and getting into landing badges and that and getting thoroughly drenched for being dropped short on the beaches and spending half a day shivering and salt water. When he mentioned would I care to swap drafts, within a weak moment I said, "Yes. I'll swap drafts." So, we went over and saw Lieutenant Davidson and discussed with him. Davo, as he was affectionately known, cast his practiced eye over me, I guess and said, "I'll let you know in a day or two." He was dead right and a day or two later, he came back, and he called me back and



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shook my hand. He said, "Well," he says, "Leading Telegraphist Jones," he said, "you've joined SRD." I hadn't the faintest idea what SRD was. Never heard of it. I was in north, and we joined Krait up in Townsville, I think it was at the time, they were installing some radio equipment in the vessel. [00:16:00]

**Dave:** Few problems with the vessel getting up from the Hawkesbury up to Townsville?

**Moss:** Yes, the engine broke down outside Coffs Harbor. That was the first stoppage, but you must realize that this craft was built somewhere around the turn of the century and the old Deutz engine was 40 odd years old at that stage. Then outside Townsville, she blew a piston or something one dark night [00:16:30] and we were towed into Townsville and then the hunt was on to see if we could replace that engine with something a bit more modern. I think they hunted all over Australia for a diesel engine that would fit and they finally came across an engine down in Tassie that was being used in a sawmill. Was that true?

**Horrie:** It was headed for a sawmill.

**Moss:** Heading for a sawmill. [00:17:00]

**Horrie:** Discarding the diesel, was traded up on A Gardener diesel.

**Moss:** Anyway, they thought it would fit so they later boarded a DC3 and by this time they'd transferred Krait up to Cairns. The DC3 boarded up the Cairns. We were out to the Staging Camp, the 'House on the Hill'<sup>4</sup> for a while, while the engine was fitted and trialled and [00:17:30] it worked. It must have fitted all right because Paddy McDowell was happy with it, and if it didn't suit Paddy well, it wouldn't suit anybody.

**Dave:** We're you still continuing with the canoe training at this stage while you're waiting for the engine?

**Moss:** We did a little bit of canoe work. Not a great deal, not a great deal and there were other canoeists up around there that came down to Townsville. Why not upset a few people, [00:18:00] but none of our boys were in that episode<sup>5</sup>.

**Dave:** How did the initial pairing up of the canoeists go? Was it trial and error or were you just--?

**Moss:** No. In the latter days back in the Hawkesbury, each officer must have had his eye on one of us ratings. Davidson was a big strong fellow. Well, it would have been useless for him to have somebody weaker in the canoe with him, [00:18:30] so he

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<sup>4</sup> Z Experimental Station (ZES) an SOA/AIB training facility.

<sup>5</sup> This was the Operation SCORPION conducted by CAPT Sam Carey and was the rehearsal and proof of concept raid.



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chose one of the strongest of the group. Lyons had Andy Houston in mind apparently, because he chose him very smartly. The same with Lieutenant Paige and Jones.

At one stage, I was lined up to do canoe work with the South African that we had there, Captain Gore Chester, but Gore Chester left us as far as I remember, in a bit of a hurry. I don't know whether South Africans [00:19:00] and Scots don't mix, but he left me high and dry anyway and so we had three pairs of canoeists.

**Dave:** From Cairns?

**Moss:** From Cairns, we set sail and up the top, I think we stayed a day or two at Thursday Island. In fact, we did stay a day or two on Thursday Island. Then we journeyed across the top of Australia and down the Western Australian coast to Exmouth Gulf [00:19:30] and moored at Exmouth.

**Dave:** What sort of time period did this take from the initial notice you saw at Flinders until you got to Exmouth Gulf?

**Moss:** Many, many months. There are all sorts of holdups along the line. I believe when Krait arrived from India, in Sydney, it had to do a few sea trials there, which it didn't pass, and the engine was playing up there and [00:20:00] then our journey up the coast took a while. As I said, we've pulled into Coffs Harbour and then Townsville, then up in Cairns and, oh, it was many, many months.

**Dave:** You've been involved with this particular operation over a long period of time, and you still didn't know where you were going or when?

**Moss:** Yes. Lyons informed us as soon as we got well on the way that we're on our way to Singapore eventually. Which wasn't a very happy thought because reading the newspapers, the Japanese had [00:20:30] made their presence felt right down through the Malay Straits, Sumatra, Java right down through the Islands Timor. I reckon they'd taken everybody's three quarters of New Guinea by the time we got up there in August, September.

**Horrie:** Interesting also that she made the trip on fairly weakened tail shaft assembly too. The Keyway and the tail shaft had given some trouble just on the eve of our departure and it was only roughly patched up and she made those [00:21:00] many thousands of kilometres on that damaged tail shaft.

**Dave:** Could you just detail, basically, the route you followed and what eventuated when you got up to Singapore.

**Moss:** Well, Australia is down here, of course. We left Exmouth Gulf, which at that time was an American submarine base. We crossed the Indian Ocean [00:21:30] to the Lombok Valley Strait there, the Lombok Strait and we made our way through the strait on the wrong night and headed up to the south coast of Borneo. I think we might have stopped there for a day or two to catch up on a little bit of sleep and let the nerves



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die down a little bit. We had a little bit of trouble getting through the Lombok. [00:22:00]  
You'd like to tell that story?

**Horrie:** We actually hoisted the Japanese flag about four or five days out of Exmouth Gulf and we had one flying astern and also one pegged out on the wheelhouse for aircraft purposes. The first night through Lombok, we were a little bit short of the rendezvous I think from memory, most of us were about 40 miles south, so we had to go out to sea and lay off [00:22:30] the entrance to Lombok Strait all the next day in full view of everything on display.

**Dave:** Was this because of tides?

**Horrie:** Well, a slight navigational error. The original idea was to lay off and near Nusa Penida, that small island at the entrance to the Strait, which was alleged to have been uninhabited, but it was certainly inhabited because there were trucks waiting around on it. Search lights were flashing, and it was quite out of the question to go anywhere near there. [00:23:00] Of course, a tremendous amount of detail had obviously been put into watching tides and weather and so forth and so on.

Somebody had failed at the calculations because the tide was running out when we entered the Strait instead of being with us and that's a fairly-- It's a narrow stretch of land and you got the Java Sea coming out into the Indian Ocean and [00:23:30] tremendously troubled waters there, very confused seas and the tide rips and that.

Of course, Krait was at six and a half knots and an outgoing tide of about eight knots or more. It was all the ingredients for a very slow trip through and it wasn't until about midnight that the tide changed, that we could make some progress. Instead of being well clear of the Strait by daylight, we were just sort of limping past Lombok Island and it's almost [00:24:00] like Sydney Harbour on Saturday afternoon with all the small fishing craft around there, but they didn't pay any attention to us. We just sort of steamed around the Kangian [00:24:11] Islands and headed for the coast of Borneo, in fact trying to avoid all the major sea lines as much as possible or cross them as quickly as possible.

**Dave:** Good, we had some pretty sarongs on board.

**Moss:** Yes, we were all staying in a nice shade of black with a nice duco thinners thin as base, which was a bit uncomfortable.

**Dave:** Then you went from there up to the vicinity of Singapore.

**Moss:** Yes, from Borneo here, we cut across towards Sumatra. We tried to avoid shipping lines because you must realize that the Japanese in Singapore, being such a big base and having troops right across here, all the troops had to be fed. [00:25:00] All sorts of supplies had to be kept up, so there was a massive fleet moving in all directions all the time. We had to dodge these shipping lines as much as possible, so we shot across to the Sumatra coast and made our way up that coast.



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**Horrie:** There were sightings of observation, aircraft and this type of thing fairly frequently. Some of them came down fairly close to the vessel, [00:25:30] but they paid the vessel no attention. I think the general opinion was that the disguise was reasonably accepted. Also, the vessel passed particularly up in the Riau Archipelago. They're extremely close to a lot of Japanese observation posts, which were clearly visible to us, so we must have been clearly visible to them.

Generally, then people must have been fairly happy with the [00:26:00] appearance of the vessel. I think was on the basis of that that they decided not to hide the vessel, but to let it steam around as being the safest way, less likely to be seen by perhaps inquisitive natives.

**Dave:** Once you got into position to drop the canoe itself?

**Moss:** Well, we had to hunt around a little bit to find a spot to drop them, really. The bigger islands [00:26:30] up there have fresh water and that's where the villages are set up. To find an island where there wasn't a village wasn't very easy because there's untold hundreds and hundreds of islands there and we just had to hunt around and find one that was suitable to land them, so they can perhaps stay a day or two and get their bearings. We sail up and down with a Timmy [unintelligible 00:26:55] Strait, wasn't it?

**Horrie:** Yes. I think the Dutch Navy supplied a lot of intelligence information on [00:27:00] possible anchorages. The original concept seemed to have been to have hidden Krait up one of the small rivers or pull a bit of greenery over it, but the various places that were nominate, apparently, were either populated or unsuitable. That part of the plan fell down rather badly, but because the vessel was steaming around and appeared to be well accepted in the area, [00:27:30] the idea of it sailing on an apparent course of its normal behaviour seemed to be the wisest move and less likely to attract attention.

It seemed to be the best way of doing it, plus, the fact that sailing off the coast of Borneo was always sailing in very shallow water, so nothing too large could come in to have a look at us. Anything that did come in to have a look at us would have to be of a similar size to our own [00:28:00] and could probably have--

**Dave:** Taken it off.

**Horrie:** Well, we would have had a bit of show of the small craft and say taking on a cruiser.

[laughter]

**Moss:** At odd times up there too, we load our dinghy and Fred, and I took tuna food and a few biscuits [00:28:20] to the shore and buried them. They're probably still there. A few guilders and four-gallon tin of food, we buried just in case [00:28:30] one of the



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canoeists missed the rendezvous and hadn't make his way home and he would know where there was food available and some money to do a bit of battering if needed.

**Dave:** You just want to go through what the canoeist did once they left the Krait and got into Singapore harbor?

**Moss:** Yes. We dropped them first about 30 miles in [unintelligible 00:28:56] Island about 30 miles out of Singapore [00:29:00] and we arranged a date to pick them up somewhere about 12 or 14 days later. We weren't keen on coming back to Penjing so we picked on an island 50 miles in Pompom, 50 miles down. While they were away for that fortnight, we would have sailed out into the South China Sea and go around in circles and get over into the shallow water trying to keep you out of harm's way. [00:29:30] We said goodbye to them, see you in a fortnight.

We went back out in South China Sea, went round and round in circles and saw a few more aircraft I guess and a few ships going right, left and centre and nearly got chopped in half one night by a tanker or a freighter.

**Horrie:** There was a bit of a worry was the frequent sightings of a lot of these junks and, I think, we were generally aware that [00:30:00] the Japanese had armed some of these junks as the police vessels or patrol vessels, and they're always a little bit of a worry if any of those have been decided, as we did see, I feel all of them, our navigator, but make sure that we change course quietly to take us well clear off.

**Moss:** Yes, we had up here this little crossbar, [00:30:30] a lot of the time somebody would be sitting up there.

**Horrie:** That's until such times as they kept the [crosstalk]-

**Dave:** [crosstalk]

**Horrie:** - which didn't please me very much because I lost my area. My area was on that mast. Whilst it reduced the silhouette of the vessel, in other words, we could see ships a lot sooner than they could see us, but greatly reduced the effectiveness of my radio equipment and I had to finish up running what we call in the Navy, a jury rig, [00:31:00] around the deck or just under the rail layer of the vessel, and that was the only area that I had really, which wasn't terribly good, wasn't a very effective area.

**Dave:** What was the radio playing? Were you on radio silence, the whole operation and just--

**Horrie:** Yes, yes, I kept what we call single operator period watches and [00:31:30] we had some frequencies that had to be guarded in case there was traffic for us. Obviously, we maintained complete wireless silence as far as the transmitter was concerned, but we had a capability of commuting with Australia throughout the whole voyage. We were, if needs be, with the family of frequencies that we were allocated [00:32:00] and the radio equipment that we had on board would have been adequate



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to get signals back to Australia. That's more signals, not radio telephony signals. It was, sufficient to enable us to communicate back to Australia.

**Dave:** Did you actually receive anything from Australia during the course of the operation?

**Horrie:** No, no specific messages for us at all. We had a very simplified, code called Bulls Code, [00:32:30] and it was a simple letter translation. You transpose A for some other letter I think to give it a mild sense of security. It's very low security but, just one slightly up on plain language.

**Dave:** Yes. As everyone knows the canoeist got in and achieved their objectives and got back out again.

**Moss:** [00:33:00] They were very proud to sink seven ships that night. Well, after the waiting period out in the South China Sea, we made our way back to Hong Kong and only one canoe came out to greet us around midnight. It was Lieutenant Davidson and Wally Falls, the two strongest of the six and, they hadn't seen the other four since [00:33:30] a part of the company in Singapore Harbor. They didn't know where they were.

We hauled them aboard and the office has got their heads together, whether to leave them and sail home or go back in a couple of days, a couple of nights later. Anyway, we did go back a couple of nights later and the other four came out in the island and climbed aboard. They had struck some very bad weather coming from Singapore down [00:34:00] and it delayed the rendezvous.

I think in the end, they finished up on the wrong end of the Island anyway, they got a bit lost. Then anyway, they were all aboard, they were all safe and we felt that the journey up was reasonable, reasonably free of any incidents that we'd come back the same way.

**Dave:** Then it was free of incidents until what, Lombok?

**Moss:** Back into our [00:34:30] favourite straight again, this Lombok. We worked out around tide times, I think, then we [crosstalk]

**Horrie:** Yes, [crosstalk]

**Moss:** We could shoot through it about eight or nine or 10 knots instead of half a knot. We were journeying through about half-past 11 getting onto midnight. I was sound asleep. I was awakened by [00:35:00] one of the other chaps and said, "You'd better get a brain gun. We've got a visitor coming up fast on our fourth quarter." I stick it out and had a look and here's this bow wave bearing down on us.

We all grabbed some sort of a weapon, I guess, and we crouched down behind whatever we can crouch down behind, the one where we must have crouched down behind, it was pretty open sort of a thing. It turned out to be a [00:35:30] Japanese



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destroyer and it came down on our quarter port side, and he slowed right down with us and just sat there, looking at us.

**Horrie:** They'd ride there. You get a thrown anything line onto the ship [inaudible 00:35:46]

**Dave:** How long was he there for?

**Horrie:** I think equal to be precise under those circumstances, but I would say it would be at least a quarter of an hour because a ship takes a finite time to get up onto the [00:36:00] inspection site and examine it and then drop back and [crosstalk]

**Moss:** Yes, he dropped back and had another look at us from behind, and then he came up again. Well, we thought he was going to put a light on us this time-

**Horrie:** Or a [crosstalk]

**Moss:** -or a [unintelligible 00:36:13]

**Horrie:** What ship were bound? [laughs]

**Moss:** I think he knew, and we've probably realized that all these straits between the islands were closed to shipping. Nobody going in, nobody going out and here we are. We're going out.

**Horrie:** We had no mast up, so obviously [00:36:30] from the visuals, it would be carrying no radio equipment and the navigator had changed course, a couple of points to starboard or to take us in towards the coast of the Bali. We're only standing, or would it be a two, three miles off the coast of that, you could see the fires on the beach and those campgrounds on the beach quite visible very clearly. I think the idea was to try and create the impression that it being a fishing vessel, that it was going in towards those [00:37:00] campgrounds ready for the next days, harvesting the catch and so forth and so on.

Perhaps that's what threw the option to watch on the destroyer off perhaps. We've argued and argued about this, why this officer didn't examine the vessel more closely. There is a procedure laid down for intercepting vessels and they examining them. This guy, well, our Navy does, and I'm sure the Japanese employ similar methods and [00:37:30] really standardized procedures.

**Dave:** I've heard another opinion that as it was so close to midnight, that he was probably going to change watch and--

**Horrie:** Well, that's right there.

**Moss:** I'm sure, I'm positive that we talked about it for days after, and if you'd been at the Navy and at midnight, you're going off, you want to go to bed. Those coming on



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are cold or whatever, perhaps have had a hard day before, drop a [00:38:00] sack along the line, and--

**Horrie:** Probably, [unintelligible 00:38:02]

**Moss:** [unintelligible 00:38:04] who wants to do the paperwork? Forget it. Just turn around and go home.

**Dave:** As a result of which you got through Lombok and then back to Exmouth.

**Moss:** Back to Exmouth, the American Advil that was there, received us with open arms, because I think we took a few maps with us and he asked us to fill in details on these [00:38:30] maps of any searchlights we saw, or any--

**Horrie:** Tips on [unintelligible 00:38:33]

**Moss:** - any posts or any guns on tops of hills or any Pacific shipping lanes, which would help his submarine boys at a later date. I said, well, I'd like you to be my guest for about another week and set us up in a big hut with sheets and blankets and filling cases, pillows and pillowcases and--

**Horrie:** Decent meals and water to wash ourselves [00:39:00] a major advantage, I think

**Moss:** About a six foot six big dark fellow from down South came to look after us, to make our bed and to see that we were well catered for, and we enjoyed the hospitality for several days.

**Dave:** How long was it from the time of leaving Exmouth until you got back again?

**Moss:** About 50 days?

**Horrie:** We sailed the day after my oldest son was born. He was born on the 26th. So, we got away about the 27th of August. Our ETA was, [00:39:30] the 18th. We were two days late on the ETA. I know that very well. I remember even the message that I sent. I actually, I sent a message just after the Japanese destroyer intercepted us in Lombok Strait, and in that evening, Lyons wanted us just to make us message to Australia to inform Admiral Christie that Lombok was now patrol because there that was one of the commissions that Christie [00:40:00] had put on Lyons to have a look at Lombok Strait because they had lost a couple of subs up there in unusual circumstances, and was there anything untoward in the strike that could account for these losses.

Lyons was pretty keen to inform Christie that the strait wasn't-- the strait wasn't patrolled when we went in apparently, but it certainly was when we came out. He did ask us to make a signal, but I was able to persuade him to wait a few more hours because [00:40:30] we were aware that on Lombok Island, there was a fairly large



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aerodrome of the Japanese head there, which tells me of course, that there is RDF equipment on there.

The frequency that I was using a six-meg frequency is still has appreciable ground wave, even across from where we were to Lombok and any guy that happened to be listening around wouldn't take two apps to tumble what was on there. We got approval to postpone [00:41:00] for 24 hours. We were only just got about 80 miles out of the strait and on called [unintelligible 00:41:09] Fremantle and passed the signal just like that, it went through. We were only on the air for seconds really to get the signal away. It was received okay.

**Dave:** Had Lyons made any plans if something did go wrong in Singapore, how you were going to get back to or how the canoeists were going to get back to Australia without the Krait? [00:41:30] Or if something happened to the Krait how the reminder of you were to get back?

**Horrie:** I think he had thoughts that the canoeist could probably-- He had [unintelligible 00:41:38] sails on them, didn't he? If Krait couldn't get back through Lombok, there was sufficient fuel as I recall for 13,000 miles steaming, which meant we could have gone to Pearl Harbor or across to South Africa or something like that.

**Horrie:** Of course. When we started, we had 44-gallon drums. We had quite a lot of 44-gallon drums. [00:42:00]

**Dave:** In addition to your normal-

**Moss:** In addition to our normal.

**Dave:** - supplementary [crosstalk]

**Moss:** An increase [unintelligible 00:42:03] anything up to 13-14,000 and from Singapore we could have gone up the Malacca Strait and then down to Durban or across here to Pearl Harbor. I know I had to sleep on those horrible drums for a while. We had them lying down and you just got your head down in the hollow between a couple of 44s.

**Dave:** If you lost the Krait through contact, was he [00:42:30] just going to work your way back through the islands and-?

**Horrie:** Well, he had a fair amount of Dutch money there. I think the idea would have been to pinch some local native sailing craft. Although, I think if he had lost the Krait, things would have been very, very awkward, really very awkward.

**Moss:** It has happened on the later operation.

**Horrie:** Yes, because the security of the whole thing would be up to the [00:43:00] honesty of the natives. It was generally considered I think that they were friendly



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towards us. It would have been a pretty hazardous exercise to try and blame anywhere there, I would have thought.

**Dave:** Had any of you received any language training?

**Horrie:** No, as far as I know.

**Moss:** We had Malay books on board, I flew with a little one home here, but we learned a few words, greetings, wave and--

**Horrie:** [unintelligible 00:43:26] or something.

**Moss:** No. [00:43:30]

**Dave:** On the radio side, you were the only qualified radio operator?

**Horrie:** Yes, and I had great difficulty in maintaining the radio going mainly because of the poor installation. Obviously, the people that had installed the radio had no idea that the conditions under which it was going to be used. The vessel was constantly subject to [00:44:00] seas coming over the side of it and of course they'd go straight down my hatch with radio gear, so there was water slashing around down there pretty well all the time.

The type of radio equipment that I had had an exposed fuse panel made of Paxil and an insulation of the day and which subject to seawater [00:44:30] becomes highly conductive and not loses its insulation, because every time I put even the receiver [unintelligible 00:44:37] on, these fuses had started glowing and smoking and was perpetually peeling all the charred remains of this Paxil wire around the fuses and there's about a half a dozen fuses go to make up the protection for the supply and they were all hanging there like lamps on a Christmas tree just from the wires.

Big problem to keep them [00:45:00] apart so they didn't short with the movement of the ship. Mounting [unintelligible 00:45:08] made us a foot off the leg is just not on in a situation like that, they've got to be mounted well clear. I would suggest that a lot of attention ought to be paid to the installation of the radio equipment and where it's sited, and also the skills of the operating personnel. [00:45:30] I appreciate that in this day and age, there's a tendency more towards machine telegraphy techniques, but I still feel that he and Moss are very desirable at least the last-ditch communication made. It shouldn't never ever had been overlooked.

**Dave:** Also, as we spoke previously with your experience in satellite technology and the table sophisticated [00:46:00] radio equipment today, what is your opinion of going towards sophistication rather than keeping it simple if you're going to be operating?

**Horrie:** Sure. This is the name of the game these days, is for high degrees of high technology radio equipment, high sophistication radio, or dripping with microprocessors and memories and all that sort of business, but [00:46:30] if you must have those as a first line, then I believe that there should also be backup radio



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equipment of the most simplest type. Something like the older type A mark three of World War Two, which was only a very tiny three-watt transmitter that had a capability of quite respectable communication range with a hand to telegraphy key.

You certainly need something extremely simple like that. Even the merchant ships of today [00:47:00] have live made equipment. They were with the small hand key transmitters along with their headset stuff and wholly high-performance equipment. High performance equipment is fine where you've got skilled technicians to keep it on the air, but the more sophisticated the equipment is, very often the more susceptible it is to going out of whack. It's more components, are the more chances of failure. The more sophisticated [00:47:30] it is, usually the higher skills are necessary to keep it in one condition.

**Dave:** With the actual makeup of the team for the operation, you had a quite a mixture of army, navy, different nationalities. How did everyone get on?

**Moss:** We were League of Nations there, with their leader being a Scot. [00:48:00] Our medical man was Welsh. As the name implies, Patty McDell, our engineer.

**Horrie:** Belfast, Irish.

**Moss:** [unintelligible 00:48:10] come from Belfast. We used to have our little private arguments from time to time.

**Horrie:** Generally speaking, you'd have to say they were extremely compatible, fine bunch of fellows. I always remember most, and I wrote, I kept a little diary, which I shouldn't have done, I realize. [00:48:30] The thoughts of a 22-year-old and I still have that diary, and I'm looking at a passage that I wrote in that diary. The entry is marked that we're 60 miles south of Singapore, and the crew are at Ford, and they are arguing about English and how she is spoke.

That's what the words are in the correct days in the diary. It seems they're in [unintelligible 00:48:59] as [00:49:00] I suppose at just 60 miles. All the boys are arguing about the pronunciation of words. [laughs]

**Moss:** They're 2000 miles beyond the front line.

**Horrie:** That was just typical of the attitude of the guys I'd say.

**Moss:** They probably felt that the further we got into the area, the more homely everybody got. Everybody and the fishermen would wave to us, and we'd wave back. Everybody's friendly.

**Horrie:** Our team was very compatible [00:49:30], I felt.

**Moss:** We had to be because we were living [unintelligible 00:49:33]-

**Horrie:** All one big happy family.



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**Moss:** We used to go a little bit crookedly, the current so-called crook at times.

**Dave:** [unintelligible 00:49:42]

**Moss:** Just qualifications of the cook were non-existent.

**Horrie:** By the way, also, Patty McDowell objected to us doing our laundry over the stern of the vessel to-- clearly used to tie their grubby [00:50:00] old sarongs out on a piece of rope and throw them over the side, and Paddy McDowell reckoned they took two knots off Krait six and a half nights, but he used to growl about that, so we had to put a stop to that.

**Horrie:** In the water. Talking about your wireless, perhaps Horrie could tell you about the edition that he had packed behind the wireless.

**Dave:** The demolitions?

**Horrie:** Yes. [laughs] About that far from my nose. Fortunately, it wasn't necessary to [00:50:30] use it.

**Dave:** What happened once you got back to Exmouth? Everyone was split up and went separate ways?

**Moss:** No, we-- Lyons went down to Perth, and I think Taffy went to Perth.

**Horrie:** Taffy went to Freemantle. He suffered a mild injury when a cartridge discharged from one of the brims and broke a tomato sauce bottle. [00:51:00] Moss got some glass splinters and tomato sauce all over his chest and thought that he'd been wiped out. Poor old Taffy got a severed artery in his ankle from a slider of the glass, and whilst they made emergency repairs on the ankle, it was still troublesome, he was limping all the time.

When the vessel got back to Exmouth, Taffy was flown down to Freemantle or to-- for admittance to hospital, he had to get treatment. Lyons and Paige, at least Paige went off to get married, and Lyons [00:51:30] and Dave went off to Melbourne for debriefing. Davo came back a week or two later and said-- back to Exmouth, and said, "Well, I've got good news and bad news for you. The good news is that you're going on six weeks leave, but you've got to take Krait to Cairns and hand her over to the local maintenance people."

There was another clandestine group up there. I think they were looking after the Timor people, "Then you can go six weeks leave, and the bad news, they've chopped your 50% allowance [00:52:00] off," and that was the thing that I found very hard to accept because I reckon we shook hands on a deal with Davo and he said, "As long as you work with the SRD, we'll pay you 50% over and above your salary."

I was on eight shillings a day then as a leading hand and that brought me up to 12 shillings a day which was princely sum, and to lose that four bob a day was not good,



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and that's the reason that I didn't go on RIMAU. I reckon they cheated me, and I said, "If I don't get [00:52:30] my four bob back I'm going back to general service."

**Dave:** You went to general service after that?

**Horrie:** I eventually did. I think I resigned five times I think before it was finally accepted. [laughs] The navy wouldn't have a bar of it, the navy said no, leading to leave of us young ones to get [unintelligible 00:52:49] he's got to come back to general service. These people tried very hard but being a very small group and a very small voice, the services weren't very interested in listening to what they had to say, so [00:53:00] I went back to general service, and that's why I didn't go on RIMAU.

**Dave:** Yourself Moss?

**Moss:** Lyons had some sad news of his wife and son and, of course, he wanted to form another party immediately, increase the size, and repeat the operation. One by one, we were interviewed, the rest of us, whether we would like to accompany him [00:53:30] on the next raid back to Singapore, and possibly half the party said yes and and possibly half said no. The result is that the increased party went back to Singapore and suffered. The balance of us were split up and went back into general service. From there, I went on to a destroyer for the next two to two and a half years, and other [00:54:00] chaps went their way on other craft.

**Dave:** You didn't cross paths again until after the war or--?

**Moss:** No, we went in all directions, but have met up from time to time over the years, to meet up with Taffy. We met him, both Horrie and I have met him in England, and he has been out here twice. Yes, twice I think, [00:54:30] Taffy and his wife, but there are only four of us left now, three in Australia and Taffy in the north of England.

**Dave:** Have you got any final comments or points you'd like to make on a small group operating that far from Australia, as to selection procedures or--?

**Moss:** Well, I think the first thing comes to mind is what Horrie mentioned about being compatible. See, we were a small group. We were in a confined [00:55:00] area, even though Krait was 70 feet long, there was a lot of stores on there, and we never had a lot of room to move around, so we just had to be very compatible, right up to the Skipper. Even though we respected their rank, there was no such thing as saluting and carrying on in that direction, but [00:55:30] Skipper, and occasionally he would throw in a serve at--

**Horrie:** I think it goes without saying too that training has to be the ultimate standard, and I specifically mention my own area, I'm aware of the tendency now to--

**Dave:** Separate the operator and the technician.



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**Horrie:** That's right, to differentiate between two groups, but I somehow feel that in a situation like that, the **[00:56:00]** man that handles the communications ought to be capable of maintaining the equipment, that's my own opinion.

**Dave:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**[00:56:15]**

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