

7 hours 45 minutes

John Cotter

This is an interview with John Cotter recorded by Rodney Giesler on 5 July 1997 in Charge Somerset. Copyright in this recording is vested in the Becta World History Project.

Q John can you tell me a bit about when you were born and about your family background?

A Yes, certainly, I was born in Blackheath near London on 22 September 1918 and my father was - he had retired from the RAF in 1924, which was quite early - and he joined Cookwit(?) Budget as a camera man which was one of the original, very original, cinema newsreels. Topical budget. I mean it was one of the first ones. He then transferred, to my knowledge, in about 1927-28 to Pathé and was a camera man for Pathé Gazette and then, when sound started, he joined Fox Movie Tele-news. Now, or then, British Movietone is. He went to the States to learn the technique of sound coverage and came back, continued to be their Chief Camera man until about 1936-37. He then became their Production Manager and he was sort of virtually running the operational side of Movietone until the War. He was a first class aerial photographer, having been in the RAF as a Pilot. He specialised in film work from the air and he assigned himself to the flying jobs.

Q Can you tell me his name?

A Jack. When the war came he became a correspondent - war correspondent - and he was in with the BEF in France and he came out just after Dunkirk - I think he came out from Callais and then he continued to be a war correspondent throughout the war. And after the war he retired from - he was getting on a bit then - and retired down into ? ? and he then contracted a tummy illness and died unfortunately - in about 1959. But he was very well known in the profession and, you know, he was one of the top camera men in the old cinema newsreel days. This, I suppose, is really how I became interested in it and when I left school, I was seventeen and a half, and I did a year as a trainee at the Kodak Institution in Wiltstone near Harrow and learned the basics of photography. And then I was taken on as assistant camera man by a temp called James Hodgson - Jimmy Hodgson - who was, again, an ex news camera man for "The March of Time". And I worked as an assistant camera man for "The March of Time" right up until the war we made things inside nazi Germany and we went into Holland and we did "The

Persecution of the Jews" and I stayed with "The March of Time" until the war broke out and then I volunteered for the Army. I left "The March of Time" and volunteered for the Army, in fact, I think I was the first person in the Time Life Organization ever to join the Army. And I went overseas, I went with the infantry to Dunkirk and I came back out of Dunkirk and I was commissioned and, having got my commission, I was then posted to Gibraltar. At that time my father said 'you should try and get into the Army film unit'. So I had no real interest in going into the Army film unit, I must admit, but I received a signal one day that I had to go to Algiers and then Malta and I had been transferred from my unit to the AFPU, this was all done by a chap called Putnam who is David Putnam's father who was a well known Fleet Street photographer in those days and became a Major. He was based in the War Office. So I went to Malta not knowing very much about what I was doing, and they promoted me, they gave me a ? and then I stayed in Malta doing sort of run of the mill stuff. They sent me an Eyemo(?) camera and I had a Maltese sergeant working with me and a driver and one used to pick one's own stories, one did what one liked, and I knew Lord Gaunt(?) who was the Governor of the island in those days because he actually was a friend of my father. My father knew him quite well when he was with the BEF. And he sent me a few stories, you know, I didn't do too badly and then, of course, came Sicily and Italy and I went to Sicily and Italy in charge of No. 2 platoon IAFP working mainly with the Commando Brigade No. 9 Commando and that continued right up through Italy, right the way through to Vienna at the end of the war when I came home and was demobbed, I think, in January 47, as a major. And I came out of the army then and went back - I was offered a job by a chap called Leslie Murray at Universal News. He was the boss of Universal News under a man called Clifford Jeakes who owned it. I went there as a camera man, I learned sound to operate the sound cameras which I had never done before. With the amount of time we had obviously we had sound but I was only the assistant then. And then I became sort of fully fledged sound camera man working with a chap who I worked with for many years - Stan Crockett - who was my Recording Engineer. But with Universal doing the normal run of low stories and everything as they came up and one day I was called in to Clifford Jeakes' office and told not to come back on Monday morning but to go across Wardour Street to Gaumont British News and I, Crockett, my camera and our car were suddenly employed by Gaumont British and Universal folded. Everybody got the sack with the exception of Ronnie Noble who was gunner man, myself and Crockett. We started up at Gaumont British News and I stayed at Gaumont British News doing, again, run of the mill news

stories all over the place in England, Scotland and everywhere. And then a job came up with the BBC, I saw it advertised in the Times, so I thought I would have a go at that. So I got it. I got this job with Camera and BBC Television News based at Limegrove. I was there for about a year and after that I went to - we were transferred to Alexandra Palace, in the very early days of television when things were very basic, we were working on film teles, cine with film on it. If you did it for Gaumont you just stuck a normal ordinary camera up in front of the monitor and filmed off the monitor and it was all very hit and miss and the thing I remember most about doing this is as one job that we all loathed to do because of the difference in the phases of electricity, you found that you were getting hung bars through your picture and if you were looking through your camera which had twin lenses you would see these hung bars come through. The only way you could obliterate them was to unscrew the camera motor, hold it in your hand, and turn it, revolve it slowly on its own axis and then you could direct the hung bars up or down until you got them out of the picture.

Q You were effectively changing the speed?

A You were changing the speed actually and, of course, an hour and a half of doing that, dear me.....full time job doing that

Q You had to get up from time to time to change the mag though didn't you?

A Oh 1,000 foot mags yes. And then I saw another job advertised at the BBC as ? Organiser - it was off the camera being the boss. So I applied for that and, much to my amazement, got that. Then I became in charge of the camera men, controlled the movements of the camera men and recording engineers - not the reporters. And assigned the camera men to their stories dead expensive, looked after their well being and virtually was their mother hen. That went on for quite a time and then I was approached by a man called Philip Doughty. And Philip Doughty, who was my boss at the BBC, told me that ITN were being formed and would I care to join Independent Television News. And I thought a lot about this and I talked to my wife and thought....you know security of the BBC and you had to rate the DG General's wife to get far in the BBC in those days. And so I decided to go. So I gave the BBC my notice and, by this time, ITN were bionic, there was Philip Doughty there and Aiden Crawley and a telephonist and that was all. And then I was going down in the lift from the top of the tower at Alexandra Palace for the morning news meeting when I was confronted by an enormous New Zealander who was the editor of News called Taho Hole. He was a big man and he was a nice man actually. He said

'you are out John?' and I said ' what do you mean out?'. He said 'out, you've got to go' and I said ' go where?' and he said 'I don't care where the dam you go, you just go'. I had a flight into fancy with my expenses which I knew would never be queried having been told to go and got into my old Jaguar and drove along. And the general consensus of the daily news meeting that was going on was that somebody has pinched John's car because you could hear that noise anywhere. Somebody said 'no it's John, he's on his way, he's gone'.

Q Did you get?

A Yes. Joining ITN and they said it was incompatible and wrong that I should work for the BBC intervening their secrets and knowing their future planning, that I was going to a rival organization.

Q You had actually joined them at the time?

A Well, no I was going to join them but I wasn't going to join them until, I think it was, July 55. But they kicked me out so I went and saw Aidan Crawley and said 'look, I'm free if you want me to work for you' and he said 'great, come in' and I was the third member on the staff. And I just got into my car and I drove all the way around Europe, hiring - I knew a lot of them because of my contacts with the BBC, taking on stringers, reporters, camera men, sound men. I did the same around England and then I went off to Africa and did the same in Africa. And so assembled a nucleus of camera crew around the world that started us off really. We started ITN, then I recruited the camera crews. We had five sound crews and three silent men as we called them in those days - just eight. I recruited them. Some came from the BBC, some came from the original Newsreel that were gradually being run down - names like Ronnie Noble - he joined with me, Stan Crockett - he came across, he was my sound man and he came over as a camera man, Dennis Talack, Johnny Corbett came from Pathé News. And we got a very good nucleus of middle aged camera men, camera men who were in their sort of middle/late thirties, that sort of age, but had had quite a lot of experience on the road. They were good camera men. Cyril Page was one of them, who you have no doubt heard of. Cyril became Chief Camera Man and I was, what they call, News Organiser and Head of Film. We ran on and on and on and we did very well. We started to improve and get better. Technical quality was as good as the BBC and then we suddenly switched from 35 mm to 16 and we bought four or five Orakon(?) cameras from the States and with the extra mobility that these cameras gave we had got to this procedure of the snap interview ? the voice box and we became much more daring - we would go up to a

politician on the steps of Downing Street and said 'Hoi, what's going on?' Really, we evolved a new system. And, of course, the extra mobility of the 16 mm camera - its lightness - even then that was large for a 16 mm camera. It was probably a foot square.

Q

A Oh yes, and you had your sound man and he was attached to you by a piece of wire or a cable and he sort of trundled around after you. But at least his amplifier was round his neck and hanging on him and not sitting in the back of a truck with 300 feet of cable between you. We had the mobility and we evolved this new technique which the BBC were very, very quick to follow. They then switched from 35 to 16 and they tried to match us and in many ways they did and other ways they didn't. I mean, you can't say that one was better than the other really, it would depend entirely on the story. I think we in ITN were a bit bolder, I think we were a bit more tabloid, shall we say, but just as responsible ie with people like Robin Day, Alistair Burnett, Reggie Bosanquet, Chris Chataway, Hugh Thomas, Andrew Gardiner and people like that as newscasters. We had the edge on them in that way because, I mean, our newscasters were, in effect, writing their own stuff. Whereas with the BBC they read, the newscasters, people like Ken Campbell(?) were ex actors. We had journalists as newscasters who actually wrote their own stuff. It was submitted to the Chief of Sound and the Programme Producer before they went on air and cuts were made if necessary depending on the time allowed and the content. But the content was rarely interfered with because these chaps knew their stuff. And they read their own stuff and by so doing rendered it more efficiently than somebody who is reading something absolutely straight from a script.

Q When they do their piece to camera, that's really do most of them remember their lines?

A Yes. They remember them.

Q You don't have tele-prompts?

A No, we didn't have tele-prompts. Tele-prompts didn't come in until quite late and it was always slung below the lens of the camera and ours was the most corny, it used to catch fire and the thing would go up in flames when you were in the middle of a programme. And it was hand-operated and if we were under-running, all the girl did, she had cans(?) on, she would turn the handle quicker so that the script moved through the screen quicker and you would have to read

quicker. Or if you were over-running, she would slow it down and it was as corny as that. It really was. You didn't run at a constant speed, she was just told what to do.

Q done today reporters that you see every day on the news - they are doing it from memory, they are not being prompted at all?

A They have got tele-prompters, oh yes, all the time, yes. And also they have the script on the table with them. Should the tele-prompt go down they mechanically they have the scripts there with them as well so that they can revert to it should they want to. But, you see, I have been away from it a long time now. I have been away from it since 1983 and techniques involved evolve so quickly now and change so much that I wouldn't know how to do my job now if I went back there. I would be lost, completely and utterly lost.

Q What we are interested in now, certainly for the purposes of this talk, is how you did it in those days.

A Well, everything was by hand. I mean, the satellites weren't thought of. Everything had to be rushed back because it had to be processed. We had a processing plant in our building, our own processing plant. We started off by using Kays Laboratory but after a while we formed our own laboratory and when we moved into Television House in Wirral Street, in about 1960, our own lab was in the basement and we processed our own film and consequently had control of it. Before, when it was at Kays, we had a series of despatch riders running backwards and forwards between Kays and our building, and the film editors were then cutting it. It was a hairy business. I mean, everything had to be transported by hand. I mean, every camera man, when he shot a story, you take say a test match at Nottingham, the sound recordists who were pretty thin on the ground in terms of personnel would have to get in the car and dash back to Nottingham Station and give the film to the guard, and the guard then carried it to the entrance to the station (the platform) where it would be picked up by another despatch rider and 'gifts by God' you know. I mean it is the same with the airlines. We got dispensation from the airlines to be able to carry all the film in what we call a red bag and this red bag was given to the pilot and the pilot would walk off the aircraft with it and it would be collected. We had dispensation with the Customs whereby they would let it through as bona fide news film but they had the right to impound any of it at any time, just to check that we weren't cheating or that it wasn't full of diamonds or something. And so everything was done at the top possible speed to get that film from the source of the story back to the laboratories in our own building. Now, of course, it is

totally different with the advent of the satellite, the advent of the electronic cameras. Electronic cameras were frowned upon at the first. I mean, we had a hell of a job, we had the cameras but we weren't allowed to use them because of Union implications - they just did not want us to train. They were protecting the film camera men and the film crews - protecting their jobs. In the end they had to see reason because everybody else was doing it. I mean, the tape was coming in to the company from CBS, NBC and from the foreign film organisations and television organisations and they had to, in the end, recognise the fact that film was gradually being replaced by live or recorded images on tape. It took a long time but eventually we did get dispensation from the unions and they played ball and our own film camera men then trained to be with live cameras. I mean, the technique - it's only just a different technique - the principle of getting the story was exactly the same but the method of transmission and the mechanical aptitude of the camera man had to be changed to suit the live television camera as opposed to the film camera and film gradually dropped out. Film was used for quite a long time. Film was used right the way up about - they were still using film from odd places and odd countries in Africa where the stringer only had a film camera. I mean, here in Chard, for instance, we have a stringer in Chard who I employed in 1955. He is still here. He is still stringing. He still lives in Chard. He still supplies video but again, because of union restriction, he is only allowed to supply it to HTV who then in turn supply it to us. He is not allowed to send film direct to us or video straight to the.....

Q ITN.

A ITN. Yes. And, you know, this is the way we went on. Towards the end, of course, the satellite started to come in and, of course, that made a tremendous amount of difference to the life style of the camera man who was really, because of his union agreements, on a really good thing. I mean, the camera man was earning twice as much as I was, for instance, and I was their boss. Because of the expenses. They caught a bit of a cold and I think a lot of it was due to their own lack of foresight that they could see this coming in and they knew that we could get pictures back from Kenya as quick, or sooner, than it would take them to get to the airport. On a long running story obviously one sent them abroad - they went - like Mao Mao was a continuing story. I went to Kenya myself and organized with the Kenyan Broadcasting Company - Kenya Television - to accommodate a camera crew on a more or less permanent basis working with us. But in the end they were withdrawn and local camera men were doing it for us. They were just sending us all their stuff because it was so easy to do, especially when the satellite arrived. And this took

place all over the world. Consequently the camera man's job became much more restricted to the domestic scene - England - Great Britain - and he no longer flew around the world at the drop of a hat because, as I say, local television had grown so much that it wasn't necessary to send our own people. We would send a reporter on a big story to work with the local television crew and this we did a lot. So a reporter was still travelling but the camera crew were local people. Except on a big running story, I mean, where you had perhaps Cyprus we had crews based in Cyprus. We had crews based, certainly in Northern Ireland all the time. I mean, we always had a crew in Northern Ireland. We would rotate the crews in Northern Ireland. It was cheaper to bring them back and send another crew out than pay them overtime in Ireland and so consequently we had cars with camera equipment and we just rotated the staff rather than the equipment and the camera men and camera equipment. This was the way we worked. When I left, satellites were coming into their own and, as I say, I went back to - I went round Channel 4 with Peter Sissons and my mind boggled - I had been away about a year and a half - and I just didn't know where I was. I mean, the news room looked like the Stock Exchange. They changed so much from the old days of film which were, not leisurely, but certainly more leisurely than the cut and thrust of news today. We only had two competitors in the first days of television and that was the BBC and you competed against yourself as well. But now you are competing against Sky, you are competing against ? and the who are very good and, you know, it is not easy.

Q Can I take you back now to before the war when you were an assistant with "March of Times"? Can you give me an idea - having moved into the sort of electronic satellite age - go back to the sort of stone age? You operated a 35 mm sound camera.

A Yes, it was a 35 mm sound and film Wall camera and this weighed about 3 tons and it was my job to carry it and the bloody thing fell off the tripod once as it wasn't screwed on to the tripod and it crashed on to the floor in a cloister in Oxford. I shall never forget that. I thought I was out of a job but Jimmy.....take me really. But in those days, I mean, it was hard work. We travelled around. My first days at Gaumont British, we travelled around just the two of us - Crockett my sound engineer and myself. The camera weighed something 2 cwt, the camera, the camera batteries, the sound equipment, the cables, the lights, the rostrum you carried on the top - you carried everything, you carried a four foot rostrum on the roof, you carried about six kw of lighting, you carried your camera, a silent camera, a sound camera, your sound equipment and God knows how many yards of cable and you were literally a one man band.

Q You had your own genny as well?

A No we never had a generator. We used to blow people's fuses all over the country.....

Q

A No. We would go off the mains, they were all mains lighting. But we would go to a place and just sort of plug in and hope to hell the fuses held and if they didn't you blacked out many places. And it was all very.... but you did all this yourself. You were an electrician, you were a rostrum erector, you were a driver, you did everything yourself and then you had the responsibility of getting that film back as quickly as yourself.....you never came back, you always rang and said 'now look what do I do now?' and they said 'oh where are you - oh you are in Southampton - your are on the south coast -there is a job in Falmouth'. And this actually happened to me. Dennis Compton got married many years ago - the cricketer - and we filmed his bride going off to South Africa. I phoned the office afterwards and they said 'there's a ship called 'The Flying Enterprise' in trouble, would you go to Falmouth?' Four weeks later I got home! I ended up by doing shooting for the Gaumont organization - a documentary called 'The Carlson's Story'. This was the story of 'The Flying Enterprise', the ship - you are probably too young to remember it.

Q Oh I remember it.

A Do you remember 'The Flying Enterprise?'

Q 1950.

A And we were there doing this and you never quite knew where you were in cinema newsreel, you always kept a bag packed in your locker in the office and you just went at the drop of a hat and no excuses, the unions didn't protect you, you worked all the hours God gave and you just worked for a salary and that was all there was to it. When we started at ITN, of course, things changed, the unions got hold of that and we got to a state in 1960 where we had a strike and it went on for three weeks and Sir Jeffrey Cox was writing the scripts and I was manning four cameras in the studio and we were all standing in the middle with north, south, east and west pointing cameras. Bill Hodgson - Jimmy Hodgson's son, who was our General Manager at ITN, and we were all doing the job because they were on strike. And the struck because they weren't getting what they thought they should get in the way of remuneration for working long hours. In the end it paid the management to put them on shift and we put them on shift and we came to an arrangement whereby we owned them. The whole time they were on shift they belonged to us, we owned them and they did what we told them. Hours didn't come into it. But once they were

off shift we didn't touch them. And they worked virtually a week on and a week off, not exactly to a pattern like that but it was the equivalent for every day on you had a day off and this worked and it worked quite well, because by then we had fifteen camera men and there was no problem. But going back to before the war, "Brighter Time", it was getting a bit of a reputation, it was quite well known and we were always very, very welcome, we got all the facilities we needed, they were very, very good to us and, again, this was hard work because there was just Jimmy Hodgson who was the camera man and director, myself operating the camera and the sound man, you may or may not have heard of him, called Pat Fox or Dennis Scanlon was there. Dennis Scanlon came from Feature Studio. And we worked pretty hard, we were kept hard at it, the Americans were hard task masters and Walter Graybner was the boss in England and he kept us really at it and the chap called Anstey - Philip Anstey, he was one of the programme directors and he came out on various stories as a director. After the war I left them and went, as I say, to Universal News and then Gaumont British and eventually BBC, ITN.

Q Can I pick you up on some stories, now? You mentioned early on on your "March of Time" thing that you did a feature on Nazi Germany. What are your memories of Nazi Germany when you went there - did you actually meet Hitler or anything like that?

A Good Lord, no. No, no, no. We went on to the border and we were trying to portray the story of the bestiality of the Germans towards the Jews and we were popping backwards and forwards over the German/Dutch frontier from...

Q When?

A This was 38. Yes it was about a year before the war. And in the end we got caught and we had to leave our car in Germany and I can remember always flying back to Croydon Aerodrome with the equipment because the Germans got on to us, they knew what we were doing, and we were chucked out. And we left our car in Holland and came home. But we were filming in the hospitals in Rotterdam and Ventlo. I remember Ventlo very distinctly, although it was a hell of a long time ago. You know, it was...

Q But when were you actually filming in Germany? Were you interviewing Jewish people?

A We were interviewing Jewish people and trying to interview German officials. But, I mean, they clammed up and obviously knew that something was going to happen. They knew the war was imminent and we weren't terribly welcome and there was a bit of an uphill fight. So

really, the facilities we got in Germany amounted to absolutely nothing. But in Holland, of course, they were only too pleased to see us and they co-operated one hundred percent. Yes, it was....

Q Did you actually get the film of Nazi war machine where.....

A No, no. You film the German soldiers in the street in the uniforms and the Ugon(?) parades - but it was a long time ago, I mean, I am going back sixty years, it's a heck of a long time ago and you can only remember various incidents. I mean, I can remember the first story we did after the war which was a terribly cold winter. And we did a shortage of coal story, you know, "Winter Grips Great Britain". That's the last story I did for them. Oh we did one in Oxford University showing the Americans what Oxford University was like. And then I left and went into the news business.

Q The time in the army - you were with the army film unit in Malta - was that at the time of the siege?

A Just at the siege, yes, end of the siege.

Q What are your memories of that?

A Bloody uncomfortable! I came in at the end of it and didn't see a lot of it to be absolutely honest but I was mostly employed - we had a thing called the JIC, a sort of Joint Intelligence Centre with a sort of mini commando unit - and we used to go off to these islands, like Lampadusa(?), Antwarear(?), the Contenna Islands and we used to go up to Sicily and photograph beaches and film what went on there and we were going off to the air fields on Pampuria with this mixed up commando unit...

Q That was before the Germans left?

A This was before the Germans left. Yes - which was quite exciting.

Q Was this during filming for intelligence purposes?

A No. For anyone. I mean, once I submitted the film I don't know where it went. It is probably in the archives in the Imperial War Museum now, or somewhere like that. But I did not see a foot of what I had shot. The only thing I can remember seeing was Churchill visiting Malta and Churchill visited Malta at the end of the siege. But that is the only thing tangible that I have actually seen of my own films, nothing more than that.

Q What about the bombing and so on?

A I came in on the tail end of that. I arrived at the tail end of that. Yes.

Q Did you film the arrival of The Ohio?

A Yes. The tanker, yes, coming in ?????? cheering and..... It was a funny period - Malta. I mean, it was a very cushy place to be stationed really. But it was much harder when we got into Italy and one was really, you know, you were with the infantry all the time. We had platoons. I think I had six pairs of sergeants. We were in units of a jeep, a trailer, two sergeant photographers - one still, one cine - and a driver. And then we used to allocate them to wherever things were happening. In other words, if an infantry battalion was going in to action on a certain front we would assign two sergeants, or two teams to it and then bring them back and then assign again. So really the sergeants in the army film units saw far more war than the average soldier did because he was always where the action was. He was moved from action to action and they were jolly good too, these people. They were great.

Q But you didn't actually have a camera yourself at that time?

A Not when I was in Italy, no.

Q No.

A No, I didn't have one, no. I was the CO of the unit.

Q So you weren't really in the front line with the sergeants or anything?

A Oh yes, we were right up with them, oh yes. Full battalion obligated quarters.

Q They operated more as director camera men?

A ??????? They just filmed what they saw. They had no directions, no instructions, they just went with the ? or the CO of the platoon or company they were going with and you left them to it. You never saw their film. You had no reports on their film. It was all very haphazard and very hit and miss.

Q What cameras were they carrying?

A They had Eyemos, the little Eyemo camera, the cine camera. No 35 mm, 100 foot loading, a camera about the size of a shoe box and they looked like a shoe box. They were very awkward little cameras. They had fixed focus lenses, just two lenses - a two inch and a four inch. They were probably about the worst camera that was every made. Eventually they started giving them Eyemos which was a much more....

Q What was the previous one you were talking about?

A Oh dear. The shoe box ones were the - it will come back in a moment. I said it once. I mentioned it once. And then we got the Eyemo camera which was a much more handy camera. This, again, was 100 foot loading, 35 mm camera. Of course, the trouble was 100 foot of film

doesn't last very long and when you are in action to have to stop and reload is a damn nuisance. And, of course, again, the flexibility - at least the Eyemo had a turret, whereas the - it was like a Debie - it wasn't a Debie - I remember the Debie I remember the Newman Sinclair which we used to have on the newsreel in the cinema, the silent camera was Newman Sinclair - good camera actually, very good camera.

Q How much stock did the camera man carry? I mean, how many 100 foot rolls?

A They would probably have 2,000 feet of film in the jeep with them, around 2,000 feet.

Q So that's about 20 minutes?

A Yes, screen time. It was a little bit more actually.

Q And they passed it back presumably when they had a moment?

A They would hand it back to their CO or somebody and the despatch rider and it would be transferred back to Brigade Headquarters, back down to the - and I am talking about Italy now - and that would go back down to Rome to the Public Relation place in Rome where people like Alan Whicker would handle it.

Q Was it processed in Rome?

A No, processed in England. At Denholm. I mean, it being military stuff there was no censorship on it at all because it was military material shot under military.....

Qreturning them in Pathe?

A working as war correspondents, all their material was censored, definitely. Just as we were in the Falklands with ITN. Every foot of it was censored and we were in Suez, the same, every foot had to go through the military sensor. It's hard to remember everything you did because you did so much. As a newsreel camera man you were everywhere. I was known as bit of a Jack of all Trades, you specialised in really nothing, you were expected to do a fashion show and a football the next or a riot or a political interview. And I can remember doing, in the first days, we conducted our own interviews, if we interviewed a politician, I would fire the questions at the politician from behind the camera because I would say to the politician before I started 'I am going to give you some questions and these are the questions I am going to ask you. When you see this on the screen it won't be my voice you will hear, you will hear another voice asking these questions. So what I want you to do is, when I have asked you the question I want you to give me four seconds, count a slow four before you retire. That will enable me to get my voice off the

track and the commentator's voice dubbed on.' And this we did regularly. And I would have to just ask the question and know what to do.

Tape Turned Over

Q Just going back on the Italian campaign, I mean, presumably you were involved in all the major things like Solerno, Antio and Monte Casino were you?

A No. I was in none of those. Oddly enough I was in none of those. We started when the armies had just got north of Rome and my vivid memories are of going up the Adriatic side with mainly the commando brigade who were being used, in those days, as infantry and ending up - one of the last battles of the war was on the Battle of Lake Kamakio in the north of Italy just before the approaches to Venice, between Trieste and Venice. And they were very, very vivid memories for me and there were some pretty exciting moments.

Q Do you remember in detail any of them?

A Yes I can remember going in the fantails - the fantail was a sort of amphibious vehicle which we had - an American amphibious vehicle which the Americans had - which was like a sort of an enormous shoe box with tracks like a tank that went right round it and the actual tracks propelled the vehicle through the water, because they were cupped at the bottom. And you got in these things and you could see the sky but that was about all. They were about as high as this room - 8-9 feet high - you got into them at the back, you crouched or sat in them, and they were going in the water and they would sink and sink and sink until there was about a foot of freeboard. So really they were almost invisible once they were in the water, they were so low down. But when they climbed out of the water they loomed large and became enormous and the troops ran out of the back and either side and did what they had to do. But I can remember we were told on some islands that off Lake Kamakio there was a German garrison, you know sugar beet factory and we went in these fantails and we got there and were met by dozens of screaming kids and women who were terrified because the Germans were shooting back at us. And we rescued these women, we took all the women and kids back in the fantails with us and we were very highly commended for that operation - saving the lives of these kids and the women. I suppose you could remember a lot about the war but it is pretty nasty in many places and I suppose really, you know...

Qthat never ended up on the screen?

A This is again... as I told you, there is so much I shot that I have never seen any of it. Except for the incident with Churchill. That's the only piece of footage I have ever seen that I shot myself. And I saw that in a programme on television of Churchill during the war and I think 'I did that!'. But that's about the only thing that I have ever seen, never seen anything else.

Q Extraordinary!

A Yes, isn't it. I mean, the hundreds and hundreds of feet that was submitted to the....

Q I wonder how much of it was dropped(?) (junked?)

A Oh I would say ninety-five percent, because the camera men, although some of them had never seen a camera before in their lives, others were established camera men. But the established camera men usually worked as war correspondents, like my father and Martin Gray and people like that - they all worked as war correspondents and were consequently living as officers in the mess. I can remember in France I was a Corporal, despatch rider, the Border Regiment and I went to Arras, I went through Arras, and I knew my father was stationed in the Hotel Strasbourg there. So I went to see my father and they wouldn't let me in because I was a Corporal and I was covered in mud. But Richard Dimbleby, luckily, walked through the foyer and said 'hello, hello, what do you want young man?' I said 'I am Jack Cotter's son'. 'Oh', he said 'Jack Carter, I don't know where he is, I don't know if he is out. Would you like a bath?' I said 'Oh not half!'. I hadn't seen a bathroom for over three weeks. So I went and had a bath which was very good of him.

Q Was this 1940 was it?

A That was 1940. And then my father came back and I filmed my father and Martin Gray who was one of my camera men at ITN was his sound man in those days. And he is still alive, he's still around, Martin. He is 84 now. I saw my father again in Malta. He came in on HMS Malaya and he came and he stayed in the mess room for a time. I saw him quite a few times during the war, he was working away as a war correspondent, mainly with the Navy. But they lived a reasonable life of luxury compared to the ASPU personnel who just lived as soldiers. They foraged where they went, they got their own billets, they were very, very much a sort of nomadic tribe, the camera men at ASPU. You sent them out and you never really knew when you were going to see them again and it depended on their honesty really. I went into one place one day, I just happened to catch out of the corner of my eye the back end of a jeep and trailer in a farm. This was in Italy. And I went into this farm and went upstairs and lying on this bloody

great double bed with knobs on and brass knobs, were my two brilliant sergeants. On a table in the bedroom was a pile of money, a mile high, Italian lira. So I woke them 'Hoi, what's all this money'. 'Flogging horses'. They had been selling horses. They were so full of shrapnel these horses you could have pulled them along with a magnet! What a racket! And this was a Sergeant Levi, he was known as the battling rabbi. He got no men.(?) He was a very brave man. He was a number two commando, joined us from number two commando. And his partner was a man called Frost - Sergeant Frost who was a Bradford ladies hairdresser. He had come from the power regiment. A pretty tough couple. They were working their own little rackets. And at the end of the war when I was coming back on what they called Leake(?) from Vilak in Austria Sergeant Levi came into see me to wish me goodbye and god speed and he went, taking my officer's great coat with him. So he got the last laugh. But it's an amazing thing. On the whole it was very enjoyable, it was very frightening some moments, but on the whole you had complete freedom, you had no boss, you had no CO chasing you as you did when you were in a regiment or nobody worrying you. You worked, you were very, very much on your own and even at the end of the war when we were stationed in a place called Mariavert(?) on the Vertisae in southern Austria, Corinthia, a beautiful place, we had our own hotel which we took over and we lived as a small unit, we did no work because there nothing to do, there was absolutely nothing to photograph, nothing to do and we just sort of virtually had about a four month holiday. We just laid in the sun and had a boat on the lake and, of course, then it was disbanded and we were.....parent regiments - I was hired as a garrison sports officer in Vienna which was a very pleasant number to have. And eventually came out of the army then went almost straight into Universal.

Q Now when you came out, and you went back to civilian reporting, presumably I mean, you were still 'nomadic' is the prescription of your job then, I mean, you don't have to forage or anything like that.

A Oh no,

Q But you live off the ground to a certain extent don't you, you have to show a bit initiative.

A Oh yes, you are very much on your own. I mean, you don't go out with a damn great camera crew of nine or ten people and a director and somebody else paying your bills for you, or somebody hoarding the money. Oh no, you are completely and utterly on your own all the time, I mean, you and your sound men you are like two brothers or brother and sister. You share the

same room in many cases because you have to if you go a remote place to film, you don't get the sort of accommodation you would like, you sleep in anything - boarding houses, luxury hotels, anything - and become very, very close to your sound man. He becomes your great mate and it is absolutely essential that when I started at ITN I had to equate the personalities of the camera men and the sound men and pair them up so that they wouldn't get on. I mean you had situations whereby you have a camera man and a sound man refusing to go out with a certain reporter. Really, you hadn't got enough reporters to enough camera men or sound men to be able to juggle so that they always avoided each other. You had to say 'I'm sorry, mate, but you have just got to get on with it, you have got to get on whether you like it or not and if it starts to show on the screen one of you is out. It was as simple as that. We cannot afford to jeopardise a product because of a clash of personalities between a reporter, a camera man and a recordist. You have got to get on, that's all there is to it'. And his editor would tell the reporter exactly the same that one had to virtually had to juggle your crews to fit the situation.

Q At this time, though, after the war, I mean, you were on sound still or you were a camera man by then?

A Well, I was camera man, a sound camera man yes.

Q But sound.

A Oh yes, a sound camera man with Universal and then with Gaumont British and then with the BBC and then....

Q But when you say 'sound camera man' you operated the pictures of the camera and the sound combined?

A Oh no, no. You were operating the sound camera. A sound camera man had a recordist but he was called a sound camera man as opposed to a silent man. The silent man also had a lower rate of pay than a sound camera man in those days.

Q But an Orikan(?) camera, for instance, was operated by a sound camera man?

A Yes.

Q You would actually look through the eye piece?

A Yes, oh yes, yes.

Q I just wanted to clarify that because the sound camera man, certainly in the old feature days, when they were using sound on the film, he sat with the sound camera in the box.

A Oh no. The sound camera man had the physical camera. He carried it, he put it on the tripod, he operated it. It was his choice of shot, lens, frame-up, everything. He was a sort of camera man/director. But, the fact that he operated a sound camera was why they called him a sound camera man but the sound man was a separate entity who operated the amplifier. And he worked absolutely with the camera man. I mean, as I say, you are like brothers and you work together. But the sound camera man was, if you put it in terms of rank, a sound camera man was the top rank. Then, of course, on the newsreels in those days one had no directors. You even asked your own questions. But they were framed by the news editor. The questions were given to you. You used not to have to.....he left those to yourself to do. I am just trying to think now what I can tell you that would interest you. It's difficult to come suddenly out with...

Q Can you tell me about some of the big stories you were on after the war? I mean, did you cover the Berlin airlift, for instance.

A Yes, indeed, I covered the Berlin airlift. I did the weddings..... In fact, when I was at Gaumont British, I was the royal rota camera man doing all the royal coverage and I did the christening of Prince Charles, for instance. And I can tell you an amusing incident about that. We did the - Crockett again was my sound engineer - and we were doing it on rota, what they called royal rota. Have you heard of royal rota? Well, royal rota was something set up between the newsreel companies and the BBC whereby when the Queen or the royal family did anything they were not interfered with by a host of camera men, so one company would cover for everybody. The film would be made available for everybody and the companies took it in turn to do the royal rota. And when BBC - I went to BBC television - they had a newsreel royal rota comprising of all the five newsreel companies - Paramount, Gaumont, Universal, Pathé - four - and BBC and ITN had a rota, they had their own rota, because we were dealing in 60mm and they were dealing in 35 mm. The cinema newsreels were still dealing in 35. When Prince Charles was christened I had the job of doing the filming. It was quite a responsibility doing this for everybody because if you made a cock-up of it nobody sees anything. So it is reasonably nerve racking to be standing in the White Room at the Palace where all these kings and queens come in and princes and god knows what, and you are standing there on a four foot rostrum and this damn great sound camera - it was a Mitchell camera in those days which was a much better, it was probably one of the best ever, the American Mitchell camera - and to have the Queen Mother come up and say 'can I have a look through that thing?' and you have to drop the battery

box on to the floor, which I had to do, and give her a yank with two hands and she arrived on the rostrum alongside me. And then I swung the lenses so that she could see the focal length for lenses, swung each lens in turn, there were four on the turret, so that she could see the close-ups from the wide angled stuff. And then the hurly burly of getting the royal family from all the different countries in Europe and all over the world all together and in the end the old king going and saying 'right, let's get this organized - Queens in the front, Kings in the back'. That's what he said. We have got that on film actually. And then, of course, they all sat round with this baby and we got the pictures and they were all right. There was no problem. Everybody was very pleased with them. And then again, when they first moved Prince Charles out of the palace and took him to Sandringham, he was only about fourhe was quite young - it was before the christening, and we bribed, we knew that they were going to drive along Six Mile Bottom near Duxford, and we bribed the level crossing keeper to shut the gates when the royal car was seen going through I think it was Newmarket. Somebody phoned us and told us he was on his way and we had the gate closed and I had the camera car, which was a Humber Pullman, and the back flap of the boot laid down and we had a camera position mounted on the back flap so that I could sit on the boot with my bottom and look through the camera filming backwards. And we came down out of the station approach and got to within about five feet of the royal car which was stuck by the level crossing gates and we zoomed in and the Queen lifted up the Prince, held him to the window like this, for a close-up, and just held it as long as we wanted. Then when we gave the signal to the chap he opened the gate. And they went away. For that I think I got a bonus of I think it was £5.00 for doing that. But you know, Prince Philip was driving, 'you bastards' he was saying, he was shaking his fist at us, he knew we had set him up. It was quite amusing to do that. But royal rota, when I became sort of a boss I used to be on the committee of the royal rota and we used to meet with the Queen at Buckingham Palace and decide which stories would be rotarised and which would not. In the end, we had a little bit of bother because, when we went to colour we had the problem of processing. Processing in colour obviously took longer and what we did was, we organized it so that we would do - we - and I am talking about ITN now - we at ITN would do three months, we would supply the technicians and the BBC could use their reporters with our technicians and our own reporters. And then conversely when the BBC's turn was to do three months we would send our reporter to work for the BBC camera crew. And this worked. It worked well. Until, of course, colour came up and then it was a bit of a fight who should process

it and who should get in first, because our transmission times were different and consequently we had to sort things out that way. In the end we went to a meeting with the Queen and she agreed that we should be given facilities to represent ourselves. So as far as television was concerned royal rota no longer existed. But it still existed in the cinema newsreel because there were four at the time. But that was an interesting time working with the royal rota because you had tremendous contact with the royal family and you got to know - I mean - in the end you got to be allowed to wander around the palace because they got to know you. And to get to the Press Office from the side entrance of the palace means walking quite a long way through the palace to the Press Room and where you saw people like Commander Colville who was always a stickler for discipline and protocol but he was followed by Ronald Alice who was an ex BBC reporter. I mean, he was just the opposite. I mean, he was so free and easy that he would have given you the palace! But that was an interesting time - working with the royal family.

Q Which members did you find it easiest to work with?

A I found that Princess Anne was pretty good, I liked her. Margaret was a bitch, she was always game at playing. Philip - he wasn't bad. I can remember an incident when we were doing the Olympic Games, we were in Jamaica - Kingston. And I took a combined team out of newsreel people - Visnews - do you remember? Well, I took Visnews camera men and ITN camera men with me to cover, on a rota basis, the Commonwealth Games. And I can remember we heard that Philip was coming out and that he was going to play polo one evening. So I sent a camera crew down from the stadium down to the polo pitch and I went down there. And Jeff White of the Sketch, who was a very famous Fleet Street photographer, he was there. And Philip walked up to him and said 'look Jeff, you can get me playing polo any Sunday afternoon you like at Smith's Lawn. Why did you have to come here and photograph me playing polo here?' And Jeff said 'in case you break you f'ing neck!' And, of course, that went down and Philip liked that. He thought that was great fun. The relationships between most of the television companies and the Queen were very good and when I got my gong the Queen said to me 'How's Mr Nicholas?' I said 'he's fine thank you ma'am'. 'Give my regards to him please'. She remembered the editor's name - David Nicholas - at ITN, and she asked me how he was. Amazing isn't it? The number of people she meets!

Q What about politicians?

A Oh. I can remember way back many, many, many years ago when Clem Atley was Prime Minister. I can remember him coming up, they had a conference, an annual conference at Eastbourne, and I can remember him coming up these steps up on to the road and I don't know whether you remember but his wife always drove him. His wife was his chaffeuse and he fought his way up these steps against many people going down and he put his hat on and it fell right down over here. It was the wrong one, he had picked up the wrong one. He had picked up one a few sizes too large and it fell down over his eyes and ears and he saw me and he was a very erasable old bugger and he said 'young man, get my hat' So he gave me this other one and thought 'oh dear' so I staggered down the stairs, back into the hall, I eventually found what I thought was his, I staggered back and gave it to him and it was his. So he was happy. Oh we had politicians. We used to give them a party every year at the party conferences. We would take a suite and usually it was in the hotel, the Imperial in Blackpool. We would take the Wallbrick Suite and it was my job to organise this and we had them all there. We had George Brown drunk, you got to know them pretty well. We really were on christian name terms with them. Ted Heath I knew him very, very well indeed. I think I quite liked Ted Heath, I thought he was a nice man. Gaitskill was very, very nice. Wilson I got on quite well with.

Q What were they like to interview?

A Oh easy, most of them were very easy. A lot of them insisted that you gave them your list of questions beforehand, I mean, a man like Huster would, Robin Day wouldn't and they boxed pretty clever with people like that because they knew Robin was a bit clever but Alistair was a diplomat and he would get the answers he wanted. You know, by sheer cleverness and by pandering to them slightly. But no, most of them were very good because, you see, they were experiencing a new thing when ITN came out because we used to doorstep them and they used to never know (a) when we were going to do it and (b) what we were going to ask them. And consequently they were very, very - they became used to being doorstepped and they were on their guard immediately for the quick one or the sly one. They go to know you and you got to be quite friendly with them in the end. I never had any real - the only one I had trouble with was Jeremy Thorpe. I must admit I found him slightly serbic, I think would be the word. He was a bit of a dilettante, he did his own things, and the night the Common Market was announced - after the referendum - we had a portakabin set up on the grass opposite the entrance to the Commons - that piece of grass just on the other side of the road. And we were interviewing politicians as

they were coming out and going in and, you know, like a sausage machine, they were coming in and we were doing and out they would go. Jeremy Thorpe turned up. 'I want to go in now'. I said 'You can't go in there because there is somebody else in there in front of you'. 'I'm next, I should go in now'. I said 'I'm sorry but so and so is waiting, if you had come at the time you said you were coming we could have done you as and when then but I'm sorry, no'. And I had one hell of a row and I said 'well, as far as I am concerned, you can bugger off, leave, I don't think we are going too short if you are not in it'. And after that he calmed down a bit and he got in the queue and waited. But no, he was a difficult man. I think he was really the only difficult politician I have ever - yes we came into contact with a lot of them - especially at party conferences, especially when you see them on a social plane too, drink with them in the bar at the hotel at night.

Q What about international politicians?

A Well, the only one I knew....

Q Summit meetings?

A Well, not really, no, not a lot. That Tito, I got on well with Tito because he had learned that I had been in Yugoslavia during the war and it was the partisans and he was very, very, attentive when he knew that I had been one of the people that had actually got into Yugoslavia.

Q Filming at that time were you?

A Yes. We were filming the partisans, working with you know, not the, of course we did the...that was an interesting story about the way they surrendered at the Chetnecks(?) when they all came in and - bearded men and wild men with German stick grenades sticking out of every available hole, you know, and they were throwing their arms in crying and weeping. This is a piece of film that should have been seen, many, many, many times over but I have never seen it. They were throwing these long rifles on these ? usually with a bullet in the breach and with the safety catch off so somebody was going to get hurt and so on. That was a very interesting experience seeing the surrender of the Chetnecks(?).

Q Weren't they executed in the end?

A Yes, they were, and, of course, we had another terrible incident which, I was timed on, and for which I was actually interviewed about here and even when I lived down here. A number of white Russians were captured and they were put into a camp by the British and held and then with MacMillan, who was Prime Minister then, repatriated to Russia where they knew they were

going to get the chop. They were in these camps at Neerack(?) and Feldham(?) in Southern Austria and the London/Irish were the regiment and they had to get these people and put them in trucks to send them up to the Russian zone. The Russian zone in Austria in those days was a place called Newtonburg on the way to Vienna and from ? to Vienna, Newtonburg was about half way to the Russian zone. And these people were taken off the trucks and went away, of course, to their inevitable death and they were hanging themselves on the barbed wire to avoid being put in the truck, they were just lying in the road and my chaps were filming this. Alan Wilson was the camera man - Sergeant Wilson - and Freuden Currie was a still photographer. And they were filming these Irish people coming in and the brigadier arrived and he said 'who is in charge of these cameras?' I said 'I am'. I was a Captain. And he said 'come here, you will take them to Northern Ireland to film.' I had to, I was in the army. So I had to withdraw them and then he said to me would I meet him in the evening at his residence, which was on the edge of the lake, and he took me out in a boat, he rowed it himself - the brigadier, me and the boat. He said 'this is a very, very tricky situation and we don't want this publicised and your film will be impounded, will not go back'. I said 'You are the brigadier and I am a captain, there's nothing much to say about that!'. That was an interesting situation. There were these people being dragged against their will and, of course, you have got to be knowing that I had been there when it happened and I had a fellow came down here. He was writing a book on this, on this particular thing, called "Murderer MacMillan" and he came and interviewed me and he said 'well you will be hearing from me' and I heard that he had been found dead about four days later. Very odd circumstances. So you can put your own interpretation on that. I don't know. I have thought about it. That was an odd strange time where we were involved with Yugoslavs and the Chetnecks and the white Russians. But certainly to the best of my knowledge none of that film has ever been seen. because British Soldiers, they were.....they wanted to insensibility and chuck them in the back of three tonners. Alan Wilson, the camera man, he was interviewed about it. You get these sort of odd things that happen and they suddenly come back to you and one thing reminds you of another. It was an awful long time ago. I am 78 now. It's a long time ago.

Q Were you close up to the action in that sense in any other incidents during the war?

A I was on the beach Dunkirk for four days as a soldier not as an infantryman. I was very, very young.

Q What are your memories of that now, did you think you were going to get off?

A Well, yes, I believe - I always thought I would get away yes. We walked the last 35 miles to Dunkirk because our officers told us to abandon - I was in the Brendan(?) carrier platoon - to abandon our vehicles so we pushed them into ditches and smashed the distributors with our rifle butts and then walked 35 miles. Why we didn't abandon them a bit further up the road!! And the officer sailed past in their staff cars and left us. I was on the beach for about three and a half days and in the water for about four hours. We were eventually picked up and came back. No, oddly enough, I think I was too young and stupid to be frightened and I don't think you really get frightened under those circumstances. You get frightened when you get a bit more sense and you think a little more. But I certainly got frightened a few times in Italy because they were flying about and you never knew quite where they were coming from. No, I came through without a scratch and then smashed my legs playing rugby.

Q And when did that happen?

A Oh not long after the war. I was Captain of the BBC rugby team.

Q But that lack of mobility didn't have any effect on your job did it as a camera man?

A Well, no I wasn't a camera man - I was the boss. But what it did do, when I went - it didn't really have any effect on me until about 1980 when I was starting to get very slow in my movements and my legs were very painful, very bad. I mean, this is why I left ITN. I left ITN because I, as Sir David Nicholas said, I could have stayed on there until I was 90, just sitting there doing nothing, enjoying the salary but that wasn't me, I didn't want to do that. I wanted to be active, I wanted to do my ?? in the wood ...on the European Committee, I was doing a lot of travelling, going places. In fact, one of the things that might interest you is I went to South Africa to give advice on how to start up a television news service. I had all the equipment but politically they weren't ready to go ahead with it but I went out as a guest of the South African Government - Dr Kruger was the British Ambassador in this country and he asked me if I played golf. And I went and played golf in Wentworth and he asked me if I would go to South Africa and advise them on equipment and virtually tell him how we set up ITN. And Sir Jeffrey Cox, who was the editor of ITN in those days agreed and I went to South Africa for four weeks as a guest of the South African Government, travelling all around.

Q Was he at the centre of the Kruger?

A I don't know. I honestly don't know. It is a very common name, it is like Smith. They looked after me very, very, well and you could see that they were politically very, very frightened -

I mean, getting involved in world television because so much of it was racial, so many black people appeared on television doing good jobs, doing responsible jobs and they weren't by any means going to allow the black South African to see those.

Q ?

A This is it, you see. They had the equipment, I mean, we recommended that they buy Arryflex cameras and American cameras which they did and they were stored. Where could they go, they couldn't use them. They didn't use them because the Government would not let them start and, in fact, they had the radio links, they used to show they, drive from Johannesburg to Capetown Peter Marisberg(??) you would see a radio link mast and they just would not allow them to start and it was a good year after I came back that they actually started. I mean, I thought it was imminent but in point of fact it wasn't. They took a long time to get it going.

Q What other incidents - you covered Suez presumably didn't you?

A No, I didn't go to Suez. We covered Suez - I didn't. No Cyril Page went.

Q Were you in Korea?

A No. Once I became boss my travelling was curtailed quite a lot, once I ceased to be a camera man, I was deskbound mainly.

Q Can you remember any other sort of war time incidents? Do you remember getting into Germany - your memories of entering Germany.

A Well, now, we didn't you see. We came in from the other end - we were in Austria. We came up through Italy.

Q You didn't go any further than that?

A No. We got right up to the Russian at Newtonburg, as I told you, where they took the white Russians and there we were stopped because there was this ban. But then I got into Vienna and I was in Vienna -? Hotel - which is the headquarters hotel in Vienna, but doing a completely different job of ? sports officer and then I came back and was demobbed and then went straight to "March of Time" for about three weeks and then Universal News. Then became a camera man.

A Way back, during the war in Italy on the banks of the River Senier(?) when there was a stalemate between the German and the British armies because we ? ? ? I learned, I was stationed - we were billeted in a farm house on the Senier riverbank and I learned, from my CO, that a certain part of his ? division were going to make an initial attack in order to break the

stalemate and I wanted to assign some sergeant and camera men and photographers with this particular attack in order to maximise the effects, give the camera men experience of war and battle and also to illustrate the fact that the stalemate had taken place. So I proceeded to go down to the New Zealand headquarters situated in Marlot Grove some twenty miles back from where we were and I went into the intelligence truck to meet their Intelligence Officer who was a young - well not young - but reasonably young, chunky kiwi who immediately the I tent when I told him my mission and I found out that I was being surrounded by military police personnel in order to stop my escape from the I truck presumably until he checked my bona fides. He came back and everything went well, he agreed to my request. The camera men were duly assigned, the pictures were duly taken, the attack took place and the next time I saw this particular Major was as my boss at ITN - Sir Jeffrey Cox. He left the army and he was ? CO but it was a coincidence. I mean. And he wrote a book, a very good book called "The Road to Trieste" and on the fly leaf of a copy he gave me he wrote "with best wishes from the Senior and Kingsway ITN first headquarters.