

The Institution of Engineers, Australia

Sydney Engineering Heritage Committee

Oral History Program

## INTERVIEW TAPE LOG

Interviewee: John Hedley DEARDEN

Tape Numbers: IEA SYD ES01-03

Interviewer: Edie Swift

Number of Tapes: 3

Place of Interview: Port Macquarie, NSW

Date of Interview: 20, 21 and 22 April 2001

Restrictions on Use: Nil

Log prepared using (make and model of machine):

Optimus Vox Voice Activated Cassette Recorder, CTR-107

## Tape: IEA SYD: ES 01, Side A

Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
0-180	Talks about parents and siblings, parents' families and careers; father in WW1; life in Depression. Educational details, family influences, first employment. Later employed as Draftsman.	North Sydney Orange Violet Ellen Middleton John Walter Dearden Eileen Frances Dearden Robert Henry Dearden Architecture Tramways Department Department of Main Roads Greenwood School Lady Hay's School North Sydney High School Broadwater, Tweed River Hay Bent Street Walker Street Grand United Order of Oddfellows Willoughby
181-378	Discusses reasons for taking a job instead of going to University; inclined to mathematics. Talks about evening college and engineering studies, daily work and study routine; social life; study habits and courses undertaken. Work as a draughtsman. Overseas War service. Describes life and duties as a road design draftsman in Port Macquarie.	Engineering Diploma Methodist NSW Reserve Fire Brigade Records Section Diploma Entrance Certificate Local Government Engineers Diploma Course AIF Civil Engineering Diploma Port Macquarie

379-620	Army training and keeping warm at Cowra; service in World War 2; father-in-law at Cowra; description of AIF; originally intended for a survey unit, was transferred to Victoria then to artillery regiment at Greta, NSW, uncle was instructor; describes training. Ended up in 2/7 <sup>th</sup> field regiment of 9 <sup>th</sup> Division. Jungle training at Canungra, Qld. First beer at Canungra.	Army Training Cowra Japanese POW camp Frederick Small America Greta 2/5 <sup>th</sup> Artillery, 7 <sup>th</sup> Division Syria Sergeant Bert Dearden 2/7 <sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, 9 <sup>th</sup> Division Canungra Jungle training and warfare Pacific Tarakan
End Side A, Tape IEA SYD: ES 01		

Tape: IEA SYD: ES 01, Side B		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
001-184	Pacific war, recall of overseas divisions. Dearden's unit left Townsville for Morotai, in preparation for landing on Tarakan; oil fields at Tarakan. Artillery description, worked in survey party supporting infantry. War over, no need to advance further. Describes how Army, Navy and Air Force took part in landing; war experiences. VP Day. Returned home December 1945, describes feelings. Homecoming bear hug broke mother's rib. Army discharge, and back to studies.	Pacific War Atherton Tableland Hong Kong Morotai Oil fields at Tarakan Regimental survey party Landing at Tarakan Sadau VP Day Brisbane Walker Street, North Sydney Army Discharge Main Roads Department
185-476	Reasons for enlisting in AIF; friends and relatives already in war. Involved in work, but failed maths exam then joined up. No choice regarding which battalion he was assigned to; glad to be in artillery survey unit rather than infantry. Return to DMR, takes up career and continues studies. Involved in engineering design, gives description of road designs. Describes returning to studies and details of course and subjects. Developing social life, Masonic interests. Met future wife, a nurse at Manly Hospital and became engaged. Marriage deferred until both finished studies. Posted to Port Macquarie before marriage. Other subjects in local government had to be undertaken as "second string" as not many engineers or opportunities then. However expansion of Department of Main Roads opened up further opportunities.	Christ Church Lavender Bay Survey unit Chatswood Return to work DMR Engineering Design Road designs Masonic interest Jean Small Manly Hospital Local Govt Powers & Duties
477-651	Transfer to Port Macquarie Works Office, main task reconstruction and sealing of road from Herons Creek to Manning Turn, junction of Oxley Highway; describes road. Very basic equipment – axe, stringline, level - earlier design experience stood him in good stead. No transport. Describes his first vehicle. Small work gang based in Port Macquarie, many of them farmers during the week. No	Assistant Engineer Port Macquarie Oxley Highway Basic equipment Frederickton Aboriginal workers



	problems between white and aboriginal workers.	
<b>End Side B, Tape IEA SYD: ES 01</b>		

<b>Tape: IEA SYD: ES 02, Side A</b>		
<b>Time/Counter</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names &amp; Keywords</b>
001-094	Gives details of road crews at Port Macquarie including aboriginal workers, highly respected. No aboriginal problems in Kempsey in 1951-52. Transferred to Frederickton, no accommodation for wife. Describes Blackmans Point-Telegraph Point section of Pacific Highway and its reconstruction, and comparison with Heron's Creek section.	Port Macquarie Kempsey Frederickton Blackmans Point Telegraph Point Pacific Highway Heron's Creek Profile Board
095-237	Talks about his children, their birth, education and achievements. Originally planned for 2 boys and 2 girls. No problems with primary schooling as transfers were to good towns for periods averaging 4-5 years each. Problems with differences in school curriculums. Children's university education. Two sons graduated in Civil Engineering, a third in Economics and daughter in science.	Children – Ross, Peter, Greg, Janelle Frederickton Tamworth Wagga Artarmon North Sydney Boys High Lithgow University of NSW University of Sydney
238-488	Works Engineer at Frederickton, describes how it differed from previous posting. Built bridges; flooding in Kempsey; temporary bridge; difficulty for dairy farmers transporting milk. Scarcity of timber. Experimental bridges built in timber, still in good condition today. Describes his role in design and construction of these bridges; had a capable construction team. Bridges designed in Head office; continuing scarcity of good bridge timbers. Intention was to build improved bridges; different methods, new ideas.	Frederickton Maintenance Construction of bridges Timber bridges Maria River Design and construction Assistant Engineer Longitudinal sheeting and decking Bridge piles and girders
489-556	Various bridge designs for different sites and comparison to today's designs; variety of building materials used. Description of hierarchy of engineers generally and how it applied to Wagga; supervision and workload involved. Heavy rain damaged road through Tarcutta, traffic stopped on Hume Highway.	Gladesville Bridge Divisional Engineer Wagga Holbrook Spray gangs Bridge gangs Tarcutta Walkalina ??? Hume Highway
<b>End Side A, Tape IEA SYD: ES 02</b>		

<b>Tape: IEA SYD: ES 02, Side B</b>		
<b>Time/Counter</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names &amp; Keywords</b>
Tape starts at 030-218	Further discussion about 1956 flooding, subdrains became saturated and therefore unable to support any load; therefore unsafe for traffic. Effects on highway, traffic stopped at	Wagga Subdrains Pavement

	Tarcutta and Holbrook due to flood damage. In later years pavement later widened and dual carriageways constructed. Discussed change in workload and what it involved. DMR co-operated well with staff particularly in regard to transfers and housing for staff. Describes accommodation in Frederickton and Wagga and arrangements made for housing; wife had to remain in Sydney until house available.	Tarcutta Holbrook DMR Port Macquarie Frederickton Wagga
219-358	Transfer to Head Office in Sydney, worst experience in career due to illness and low standard housing. Hernia operations and sick leave; son's appendix operation, other son's broken leg; daughter's serious illness causing permanent deafness; wife's illness after last son's birth. DMR expanding, became RTA, insufficient government funds to carry out necessary work; roads needs studies, origins and destination studies; NASRA established (National Association of Australian State Road Authorities); introduction of computers to industrial and commercial world by way of punchcards; talks about cost benefit studies.	Wagga Artarmon Hernia Tamworth Peter, Greg, Janelle North Sydney Boys High DMR RTA Roads Needs Studies Origins & Destination Studies NASRA Computers Punchcards Ten Year Needs Programs
359-511	Talks about reasons for taking the Sydney job, happy to belong to organisation that moved him around to good towns, loved country life. Enjoyed move to Tamworth. Discusses type of work and magnitude of the work conducted by the Advanced Planning Section in Sydney; involved in analysing and tabulating information leading to establishment of 10 year programs to project future needs; discussion about increase in pavement width and construction materials used; field engineers responsible for inspection of fatal accident sites, usually caused by speed. Funds not available at the time for the construction of safer, wider roads.	Sydney Tamworth Advanced Planning Section Liverpool Plains Shire Bituminous material Construction materials
512-635	Transfer to Tamworth, higher-level administrative appointment. Talks about structure of department and flow of promotion. Had ambition to become supervising engineer, then Divisional Engineer; liked country life. Black soil country posed no problems if it had good pavement and adequate drainage.	Tamworth Supervising Engineer Drought Bridgeworks Breeza
<b>End Side B, Tape IEA SYD: ES 02</b>		

<b>Tape: IEA SYD: ES 03, Side A</b>		
<b>Time/ Counter</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names &amp; Keywords</b>
001-160	Discusses involvement with Methodist Church in Tamworth and duties as Sunday School Superintendent. Comparisons between engineering workloads at Tamworth and Wagga. Outlines responsibilities and workload as Divisional Engineer in Lithgow; new home; various projects in Lithgow area; unpleasant working conditions in bad weather, but a good town to live in.	Methodist Sunday School Superintendent Workload Peel River Bridge Lithgow Bathurst Williamson Springs Kirconnell Little Hartley Village River Lett Yetholme Rotary



161-317	Transfer to Head Office as Assistant Highway Engineer and responsibilities involved. Reflects on his involvement with Legacy movement in Tamworth, and also Rotary. Describes hierarchy of Head Office; responsibilities of Highways Section and workload; membership of various committees; safety and health officers. Talks about Bushfire Council and its operations; firefighting methods and equipment; allocation of government funds.	Assistant Highway Engineer Legacy Tamworth Rotary Lithgow Sydney Dee Why Highways Section NSW Bushfire Council Inter-Departmental Committee of Occupational Safety and Occupational Health Sub-committee of Paint & Protective Coatings National Plan for Control of Oil Pollution State Emergency Services Civil Defence Department of Main Roads Phil Koperberg Commissioner
318-480	Discusses landscaping work carried out by Department of Main Roads, ecology, financial restrictions; landscaping on freeways; plant nurseries; visit by Japanese Highways Organisation team; tree plantings; exchange of ideas on engineering progress between countries.	Department of Main Roads Landscape designers Freeways Plant nurseries Yennora Japanese Highways Organisation Hornsby
481-700	Discusses expressway landscaping, says that the type of landscaping works carried out are reliant on funds available; provisions made for animals to cross expressways; need to consider local flora and fauna, as well as needs of farmers. Discusses differences between being an Acting Deputy Highways Engineer and Assistant Highways Engineer and duties involved; Deputy Commissioner's absence overseas resulted in temporary move of staff to a higher level. Appointment as Engineer for Country Council Works in 1982, discusses duties and allocation of priorities and funds.	Ponding Erosion control Catch drain Culverts Expressways Boundary fences Animals Acting Deputy Highways Engineer
<b>End Side A, Tape IEA SYD: ES 03</b>		

<b>Tape: IEA SYD: ES 03, Side B</b>		
<b>Time/ Counter</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names &amp; Keywords</b>
001-091	Continues discussion about duties of Engineer for Country Council Works, also road networks and classifications. Parochial attitude of councillors; claims for funds. Accepted challenge to allocate funds and determined priorities; describes types of roads and their uses.	Trunk roads Main roads Parochial attitude Commissioner
092-256	Summarises history of Department from 1940 when State divided into 10 territorial divisions up until 1980's; growth in staff and activities and opportunities for promotion. Retirement at age 60 more or less mandatory at that time. 16/2/1985 received NSW Long Service Medallion for	History of Department of Main Road NSW Long Service Medallion Retirement Cost of living

	Meritorious Service, first time it was issued. Discusses retirement activities, interests and hobbies. Reasons for move to Port Macquarie instead of East Ballina; cost of living, superannuation, financial arrangements. Travels overseas. Move from Killarney Heights to Port Macquarie. No intention of going into consulting, enjoys retirement and a busy life with lots of interests, activities and membership of local service and community organizations.	Superannuation Retirement finances Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia New Zealand Malaysia Thailand Indonesia East Ballina Killarney Heights Masonic activities "Playtime" Retirement activities
End Side B, Tape IEA SYD: ES 03		
END OF INTERVIEW		