

EI-558

JOHN DALY

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INTERVIEWER: ELISA MATSON

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ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: KIMBERLY MAIER

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SCOTLAND, 1929

AGE 6

PASSAGE ON THE "HMS CALEDONIA":

PORT OF EMBARKATION: LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

OLD COUNTRY RESIDENCE: DUMBARTON, SCOTLAND

UNITED STATES RESIDENCE (S): NEW YORK, NY;

ORAL HISTORIANS NOTE:

MATSON: Good afternoon. This is Elisa Matson for the National Park Service. Today is

October 20, 1994, and I'm in the home of Mr. John Daly, who came from

Scotland in 1929, when he was six years old.

DALY: Six.

MATSON: Mr. Daly, can you please tell me your name and your date of birth?

DALY: John Patrick Daly, born April 19, 1923.

MATSON: Can you tell me where you came from in Scotland?

DALY: A town called Dumbarton, which I had always called Dumbartonshire, which is now a suburb of Greater Glasgow.

MATSON: Can you tell me what your town looked like?

DALY: It was very rural. Small houses along dirt roads, and I happen to remember our street, which, apparently, the houses didn't have bathrooms because on this street, the middle of the road was a, an out house or a public blah, blah, whatever you call it where you would go in a door and then you could see the peoples' feet underneath, so you know what they were doing.

MATSON: What were the houses made out of?

DALY: Wood. With, some of them had straw, or thatched roofs which always looked yellow.

MATSON: Your house, can you describe what your house looked like?

DALY: It was a wooden, ah, a wooden, two story house, with a ah, a slate roof.

MATSON: How many rooms did it have?

DALY: Oh, I don't recall. I remember it was kind of rambly. There was 12 kids in the family.

MATSON: And what was your father's name?

DALY: His name was Patrick and he was a big guy with a black mustache of the Hitler type, only wider. Thick mustache. And he was from Ireland. He, he was asked to leave Ireland by the IRA, which he, he was a leader in an IRA group and the English, at that time, in Southern Ireland, the English were running around. They were called Black and Tans for some reason. Maybe the color of their cars, the color of their clothes – whatever – they were called Black and Tans. And that's what the Irish called them. And they would just go around in these lorries, which was a truck, and they'd come roaring into a town, looking for Patrick Daly, if they heard he was there. And they would ah, they would burn down houses to get at him. And they were arresting women and children, men, anybody at all, and taking them out of the area – they were making it very unpleasant to have Patrick Daly around. Very costly. So the IRA ultimately, the price was so high on his head that they ultimately asked him to leave the country and he ended up in Glasgow, where he met a gal named Annie McCann.

MATSON: And that would be your mother?

DALY: Yeah.

MATSON: What did most people in this town do for a living?

DALY: I know that my father was one of four boys of whom, he was the first-born. And in that culture, the first-born were sacrificed to a career of working to support the remaining children to go through college if they were able to. So he, with his help, he put his three younger brothers through college. They became doctors. He was a miner. Coal miner.

MATSON: And he continued to do that when he was in Scotland?

DALY: Yeah.

MATSON: Now, your mother. Could you describe her? What she looked like?

DALY: She was a um, I don't recall because they died when I was nine years old. So all I know is the pictures. And the vague recollection of my knowing her.

MATSON: What did the pictures look like?

DALY: The pictures were of a – I don't know how tall she was – but she was of average height and slender. She had auburn hair, which seems to be a trait that appears of and on through the family. Mostly in the girls. Not in the males.

MATSON: What was her maiden name?

DALY: Annie McCann.

MATSON: McCann. Do you remember a story from your childhood? Is there a story that you associate with your mother or your father?

DALY: Well, apparently I was dyslexic mathematically, but I excelled in English. And from my earliest years I had a problem with numbers and math, and whatever. My father was good at math, and he just failed to understand why I didn't absorb math. And he used to beat me. And ah, and the way he would do that is he would, in these big motions, threatening gestures, taking off his belt, and he was gonna whack me in the fanny with this belt. And that always set an uproar with my family and the, my mother, who threw herself in the way of the train so I wouldn't get hit, you know. This is the thing I remember about my father, I think, and my other brothers and sisters don't remember him as being brutal like that. Just me.

MATSON: That's your memory.

DALY: And I remember her as a, I remember one incident with her, after we arrived in New York City specifically, and we were in a kind of long railroad kind of

apartment with a lot of bedrooms along the way, this long hall. And it was a loud thunderstorm with a lot of lightening. Well, she herded me and some of my sisters into an inner bedroom, where we were away from the most light, from the lightening. She got us into the bed and she pulled the cover over us and then she put her body over us so we wouldn't be struck by the lightening. And she prayed as fast as she could. Well, this left me with a horrifying fear of electric storms and thunder. I now love it. I could walk out naked in a storm, you know. And I love this porch just to see it and hear it. And I love rough seas, and I don't mind a storm at sea. And I had a boating business after the war, a fishing boat business in New York City, and I used to love the rough weather. Like riding a horse to me. Everybody would be throwing up all over the place...

But back to Scotland. What I remember about this dirt road is ah, a toy that I had was a large thing about the size of a large hula-hoop, but it was apparently some kind of heavy metal. A ring. And what we would do, is we would have a little bar of metal about a foot long with a hook on the end, and with the hook we would steer the metal rod, the metal ring, so it that it got faster and faster. And after a while you would hear the metal singing on this little hook as you ran along. And if it hit somebody it would knock them over, but we used to run with that ah, and steer it.

MATSON: Do you remember any other toys or games that you played as a child in Scotland?

DALY: Well, at the end of this dirt road there were sort of the ground rising up into, towards the Highlands. And I remember about two hundred feet up there was a kind of a level area which was a rabbit farm. And as small as I was, some of these big brown hares were bigger than me. I mean when they'd sit up they'd be looking down at me with these big brown eyes. And I have dreams about that, as if it's still (laughing) real sometimes.

MATSON: Did you have any pets growing up?

DALY: I don't remember any pets. I do remember being afraid of dogs because on that street (sound of plan in background) there was a big Airedale, which was taller than my head on all fours. And he just loved to play with these kids out in the street. But to me, I thought this guy wanted to eat me, you know? And when I see, and the dog's name was Roc, and when I'd hear Roc barking, I would run to climb up on something. And I remember there was like a, something like a telephone booth, which it wasn't, it was a shed or something against a wall, and I would have a way of making two bounds and getting on top of that so he couldn't reach me. But I remember him trying to get up at me cause he wanted to play with me. And all I felt was that hot breath, and he wanted to eat me.

MATSON: How about a garden? Did your parents have a garden, do you remember?

DALY: I have no recollection of that? Ah, I don't remember my house as much as I remember an aunt called Aunt Susan, who lived up on the corner of our street.

MATSON: Now, was that your mother's family?

DALY: My mother's sister.

MATSON: Your mother's sister.

DALY: What I remember about that house is that they had a cat, and the only way I remember that they had a cat is one day, I was going out of their house and I closed the door and I got the cat's tail caught in the door, and the shrieking of that cat put me into shock. (laughs)

MATSON: Do you remember your mother cooking? Do you remember what she used to make for dinner in your house?

DALY: Oh, one more thing about Aunt Susan's house.

MATSON: Okay.

DALY: What I specifically recall about that and why I looked forward to going there is because she doted on me. Ah, I was something special to her because I come

from a family of 12 children and you don't get a lot of doting. Especially if you're the third youngest. So ah, what I would get in Aunt Susan's house is, when it was time to go to bed, this big bed and I would go up two steps to get into the bed and then in the bed under the covers -- these big quilted covers -- she would have some kind of hot water bottles or something by my feet. Well, I was in heaven with these huge pillows (laughing) and all that attention.

MATSON: What was the thing that your mother would make for dinner, or what would you eat?

DALY: Well, okay. Well, I haven't had it since, but a big thing there was tripe. Tripe, which is the lining of the stomach, I don't know, of a sheep, or a... I think a sheep. And it had...

MATSON: Do you remember how she would cook it? Could you describe that?

DALY: Probably, probably boiled. Along with carrots and potatoes and things.

MATSON: Almost as if it was a stew.

DALY: Like a stew. I don't remember much else about what we were eating, except very specifically, I remember oatmeal. And oatmeal was made and poured out

onto a platter about two or three feet long, and what we did was we cut out the amount that we wanted and put onto your plate.

MATSON: So it was very thick. And would you eat that for breakfast?

DALY: Yes.

MATSON: Do you remember your grandparents?

DALY: Ah, I have absolutely zero recollection of any grandparents. Because my father's would have been in Ireland, and I recall hearing that my mother had originally come from Ireland herself, sometime before that. But she, she spoke Scottish and he spoke Irish. And when he asked me to get a pen, what he wanted was a pen, and I would go and get him a pin. And he would just blow his stack. Don't you understand English?

MATSON: He had a temper on him.

DALY: Oh, with me he did. I set him off easily.

MATSON: Why don't you tell me – you come from such a large family? Twelve siblings. Tell me your brothers' and sisters' names and maybe something about them. Do you want to do it in chronological order?

DALY: Okay. Well, there are four boys. Jimmy is the oldest. Deceased now. The other two are still living. Patrick is in Florida. He's three years older than me, and today's the 20<sup>th</sup>? Yesterday, Tommy, who lives in Long Island, flew down to Florida with his wife because he just retired. And he's going to visit Pat. Tommy is the younger brother. Two years younger than me. Who has paralytic polio. Married for many years, and has four children. And three grandchildren. And he was a design engineer. Just retired. Jimmy, the eldest, had been a miner, a coal miner, and when he came to the United States, he worked on the Lincoln Tunnel and the Holland Tunnel, and the East River Tunnel – whatever you call that. And the Battery Tunnel.

MATSON: And what kind of work did he do for that? Same kind of work you do in mining?

DALY: He was a sandhog. Where you had to go down and you use this digging equipment. Equipment that digs, whatever you call it. And he wore a, a badge or a, carried identification so if he was every found unconscious because of the effects of bends, which is a sudden deprivation of oxygen in the body, and you collapse, so that people didn't think you were a drunk or something, you had this identification so that people could rush you to a decompression chamber to save your life. And my brother Patrick also was working as a sandhog like that. And a couple of times he experienced those problems where he was found lying in the street in New York and rushed to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and the East, Hudson River,

wherever they had a chamber there. Because I think they had addresses on these ID things where they could take somebody to that place. And ah, he has horrible memories of that, struggling for air and then collapsing.

MATSON: Must be a frightening experience. What about your sisters?

DALY: Eight girls. And I make a joke about that. I say, from wearing, having eight sisters and wearing hand me down clothes, I was 11 years old before I found out I was a boy. But that's not true.

MATSON: Well, what are their names?

DALY: The, the oldest one was Mary. Who just died in Florida two years ago. Mary was a domestic for a wealthy family, cook. And ah, she retired many years ago and went to Florida with another sister called Lena, who has died several years ago also. Lena worked with um, AT&T all her time, since we came from Scotland. Another sister who is still in Florida is Kay. Kay was a fashion model. Blonde. Dyed blonde. Ah, Margaret was a college professor. She was a gal that um, she recently died. Her son was a New York policeman who went to law school and became an attorney. He ultimately founded a security organization, started his own business in New York and then his wife was an executive with some organization and she was being transferred to Paris. So he went with her and presently founded and is running is own security organization

in Paris. And he has two girls. Another sister is Ann, whose husband was a construction worker and she had three children. Two boys and a girl. Um, she died about five years ago. Lived out in Long Island. Trying to think of the... Another sister, Elizabeth, she's the one that's two years older than me, she presently lives out in Long Island. She and her husband, Charles King, um, have a business where they teach the finalists of the Harvest Moon ballroom dancers that you see on television. And then they also teach like in schools, school of dance. Another sister is Rose, who was two years younger than me, who... Oh, all of the girls in my family had cancer at one time or another. Some operable, and mostly they succumbed to it. The eight girls. The only two surviving girls now are Kay in Florida and Elizabeth, or Liz, in – her husband calls her Betty – in Long Island. The surviving boys are Patrick in Florida, and Tommy, my younger brother who is visiting Pat in Florida, and myself. Ah, so I guess there's five kids left out of the twelve.

MATSON: Now let's get back and think onto you leaving Scotland. Why did your family decide to leave Scotland?

DALY: Well, ah, that was the Depression; at that time was a world depression. I mean most countries, their economy collapsed completely.

MATSON: And you came in 1929.

DALY: Yeah. And that was the height of the Depression. That was the banner year. They call it the 1929 Depression. And there we were. I remember in Scotland, I'd hear people singing a song. "I know a happy land. Far, far away. Where you get ham and eggs ten times a day." (laughs) So, there was apparently this kind of image of this panacea country someplace and my father had apparently succeed in getting a job here before he left there. So he was superintendent of school. Like the maintenance. In charge of the maintenance people.

MATSON: Now he, did he go to America first and land this job or did he do that from Scotland?

DALY: No. We all came together.

MATSON: You all came together. And his first trip was with the family.

DALY: Yeah. I understand that a couple of the older gals had come over here prior to us all leaving, and gotten jobs here. Um, and then when we all got this big apartment in New York City, a couple of those older ones were out on their own in an apartment.

MATSON: They already had jobs.

DALY: Yeah.

MATSON: Now, do you remember what time of year it was when you left Scotland?

DALY: Ah, it was ah, it wasn't the dead of winter, I know that, because I remember just wearing like a sweater. And I remember going to the train station in Glasgow, and ah...

MATSON: So you took a train to Liverpool?

DALY: Yeah. Yeah. Ah, so this train station was a, all I remember is this big platform with the, some kind of glass roof and ah, my brother, Jimmy, had been with the um, Gordon Highlanders Regiment. And ah, the Regimental band was piping us off.

MATSON: Do you remember what you took with you? Was there anything special that you wanted to bring?

DALY: Yes. A bag of jellybeans. I hadn't seen jellybeans before. And I had this big bag of jellybeans. And when the train came into the station, and the wind almost blew us all way and the sound of the whistle, I dropped the jellybeans. I would not get on the train until I had picked up all the jellybeans. So they had the ah, the Regimental band had to help me pick up the jellybeans.

MATSON: What was the name of the ship that you came on?

DALY: The HMS Caledonia.

MATSON: Can you describe what the ship looked like?

DALY: I know that the ships horn, when it first went off, my reaction to that was I peed in my pants. (laughing)

END SIDE A, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE ONE

MATSON: Must have been a very loud horn.

DALY: Yeah. It was kind of a shocking sound that.

MATSON: Do you remember your living quarters on the boat? Where did you stay?

DALY: No. Ah, I didn't know, until I visited Ellis Island last year that where I stayed was probably in steerage, what they call steerage. And I don't physically recall the shape of it, or what I slept in, or how many people were in the room or whatever.

MATSON: Do you remember eating anything on the boat; do you remember having dinner, or what you ate when you were on the boat?

DALY: I don't recall that at all. But there were two specific incidents I remember about the trip. One was that it had these decks with the deck chairs and people would come out with their coats and sweaters and sit around in deck chairs. And I was up on deck and I, I found this wrench lying on top of a fire hydrant. So I turned it. And pretty soon the water began to come out pretty strong, and then after a while I was trying to shut it off but it was coming out stronger. And before you know it, I was washing people down the decks, and all the chairs tumbling over and the people getting their feet knocked out from under them and screaming and getting washed down the deck by the force of this water. And then finally, a sailor came out of the side door and he was trying to get up to me, and it knocked him down and washed him away too. And he ended up in the pile of deck chairs. So I don't remember the end to that story, but I remember it left me in some kind of shock that this was happening because of what I was doing. And the other thing that I remember was ah, seeing quite a few whales. And you would see them breaking the surface and coming up and down in long lines. Um...

MATSON: Were the seas rough?

DALY: I don't remember um, experiencing bad weather. I don't remember the weather specifically. But I remember coming in to New York City. And we came in...

MATSON: Was it nighttime or in the morning?

DALY: It was afternoon, I think. And ah, as we came in to the lower bay, the Hudson Bay, and we were approaching the Statue of Liberty. Everybody was up on deck and they were holding me up so I could see it in the crowd. And I remember people weeping.

MATSON: Do you remember how long it took?

DALY: No.

MATSON: But that was an emotional time for many people.

DALY: Yeah. Yeah.

MATSON: How about types of people? Were most of the people on this boat English, Scottish? From different countries?

DALY: Well, coming out of Liverpool, the only other people I recall was a family called Hickey, which were close friend of ours. And that was another large family. And one of the girls was Nan Hickey, and then Tina Hickey and my older brother was infatuated with Tina Hickey and so was I. She was older than me,

she was more about his age, so she was a couple of years older than me. And she had this voice that cracked – wa-y-a-a-a (imitates the noise) – like that you know? And wow! That’s all I had to hear is that voice and it turned me to jello. (laughs) And Pat was in love with her.

MATSON: And what else do you remember about coming into New York? Do you remember getting off the boat or coming to Ellis Island?

DALY: Okay. I didn’t know until last year that I had remembered something about Ellis Island because I had this terrific experience, or re-experience of the registration room. And I sat there stunned by this déjà vu feeling that I’d been there before. And, and I could hear the sounds again, as if it was happening now. The roo-, the kind of rumble of the many, many voices and the people’s names being called out. And the resonating through this big room, with the very high ceilings. And it just chilled me. (pauses) My wife asked me what was going on, because I looked so strange to her, and I told her I was just re-experiencing this thing which I didn’t recall. I didn’t know that I had been there before. And there I am, reliving it.

MATSON: Do you remember who came to get you from Ellis Island? Did anyone come to get you? Were you greeted by, by anyone or did you just go to your apartment?

DALY: Well, I don't recall the Ellis Island experience, other than, than... I sort of recall taking the ferry from there to Manhattan, to lower Manhattan, and when we got into Manhattan, what I definitely recall is two large orange colored Desoto taxi cabs, which we filled up, and they had these jump seats and we just loaded them up and we went to this apartment near Houston Street in lower Manhattan. It was the lower East Side, and it was that polyglot mixture of many Jews, and a lot of my friends, lifelong friends, became Jews that I met there. These families. In fact, um, I was what they call a Shabbat goy. You know what that is?

MATSON: No. I do not.

DALY: On certain holy days of the week, on their Sabbath or Shabbat, they're not permitted to do things like drive a car, or turn on the gas or whatever, so they could cook. They would have to have a Shabbat goy, Shabbat is Sabbath and goy is a Christian, come in and be allowed to turn on the gas for them. And for that service, what they did is they would cook like a pill of challah (pronounces it holly) which is a kind of Jewish bread or cake and they would give that to me as thanks for being the Shabbat goy. And I remember loving that. The challah. It was kind of a bread. A lumpy bread that you just grabbed a lump and you just pulled it off, and you buttered it.

MATSON: So you still keep up relationships with people that you knew from that neighborhood, your first neighborhood.

DALY: Well, I did, until I left New York and then we sort of dissolved. But the names of – there was the Fines, F-I-N-E. There was Milty Fine and Bernie Fine were my brothers' and my friends. And then ah, (pausing) the others were ah, ah, I can't think of the other name. Ah, Baronofsky. Baronofsky was another family which had boys the same age as my brother and I and became our lifelong friends. And when we lived up in the Bronx we were near the Baronofskys and the Fines and we still saw each other? What was your question?

MATSON: What did your house look like in that neighborhood?

DALY: In New York?

MATSON: In New York, the lower East Side?

DALY: Oh, it was a, probably about a six story tenement building. I guess it would be a tenement building and um, about five years ago, I went back to re-experience that neighborhood. And again, like the registry room, I was experiencing something that I didn't know that I knew. The, the Jewish stores along Hester Street and Delancey Street, the Lower East Side there. And I walked into them and I had this feeling that I'd been there before because behind the counter were these guys, the Jewish guys, with the very white faces and the hawk-like nose and the black eyes, and the pais, the black velvety hat, with the black cloak. And

the pais, the hair coming down the side. And ah, and I re-experienced something that did happen when I first came over here. And there I am, into a candy store. A Jewish candy store. And a little kid, you have to look through this wall of glass, and see the candy and you point to what you want, and you see a face looking at you through the glass on the inside, saying, which one kid?! Which one?! (with an accent) You know? And you're pointing. And I went to give him the money for what I picked out, and I was giving him three penny bits, and half-pennies (thruppeny bits, and haypennies in a Scottish accent), Scottish money, and he says, what the hell is this kid?! You know? This is no good! (laughing heartily) But I relived the experience of the Jews who were my friends there. And it was such a warm feeling. Like I was back to my childhood and I was home. And it was this crowded street, with the kids playing out in the street, and the cars double-parked. And ah, crowded. And these tenement buildings one after the other. I was home.

MATSON: Do you remember any holidays growing up in your house? Can you describe a holiday? Christmas?

DALY: Well, in this big apartment we got in the Lower East Side, I remember that the parlor was the room for festivities, and ah, parties. And because liquor was being served, they didn't permit us little children into that room. So we were back in another part. And then we would have to sneak in there and peak in the door and see what was going on. But there would be this, the dancing and the

hornpipe, recordings of the hornpipe music. My, my sister Kay who lives in Florida now, she was a champion sword dancer. Do you know what the sword dance is? Where there are crossed swords on the ground and on tiptoe, ballet style, you dance over the swords without hitting them. And quite often males did that too.

MATSON: What did your father do for a living when he came to the United States?

DALY: He was in charge of the maintenance of schools. One or more schools.

MATSON: And did your mother work here?

DALY: No. She was too busy with that big family.

MATSON: That was enough work.

DALY: And it wasn't too proper for the maternal person in the family to work.

MATSON: Work outside the home.

DALY: Yeah.

MATSON: What can you tell me about school, when you came? Do you remember any stories from going to school? Grade school?

DALY: Well, in Scotland I remember what must have been the first day of school. And school was a long, long walk. I think school was in Paisley. We were in – Paisley or [Auchinsterry]. And I walked from home to that school. And I guess my mother or somebody would have taken me there and then I would come home with older kids or whatever. I don't remember the logistics of it, but I do remember one day having to go to the bathroom while I was in school. And the routine was that you hold up your hand and when you get recognized, then you have to come up to the teacher and she hands you a, a lump of wood with a key tied to the end of it, and that becomes the key to the bathroom. Well, I, I was just thoroughly embarrassed by this whole routine, so what I did was I decided to go home and go to the bathroom. Now, home is like, I don't know, a half a mile away, a mile, which I was gonna walk. So, and the school had this high metal fence around it and what I had to do was climb over the fence and they had these spikes on top. And in climbing over the top the spikes caught my pants, and I was hanging from the top of the fence by my pants and then I defecated. And (pauses) it was a mess. Anyhow, I had to rip the pants to get down, and then I went all the way home, and my mother got a hold of me. She washed me up, changed my clothes, and sent me back to school. And I go back into the school, over the fence, and into the school and I remember the teacher saying, oh, Jock –

she called me Jock – she says, Jock is back, you must have really had to go, Jock! (in a Scottish accent – laughing hard).

MATSON: What about religion? Was your family a religious family?

DALY: We were raised as devout Catholics. That ultimately changed for me personally, which I'll tell you later. But one of the things, we all went to church together. And ah, I remember sweating with a suit on, in a church on a, I guess warm weather or something, ah...

MATSON: Now is this in America that you're remembering this?

DALY: I don't remember church in Scotland.

MATSON: Just in America.

DALY: Ah, but in America specifically, church. Going together. Walking to church and ah...

MATSON: What can you tell me about, maybe your first job or your family?

DALY: My personal family?

MATSON: Yes.

DALY: Okay. I'm presently married. I got married in 1950, so that's 44 years ago. I worked in a company in New York City called Endicott Johnson. Which you may know is a shoe company. And you don't see Endicott Johnson stores in New York, but if you were up in the country, you'll see the Endicott Johnson shoe store, you know. And ah, I was in finance there. My friend, and who ultimately became my best man when I got married, was a Greek fellow named Sam Protentis. He knew a girl from Bloomfield, who came to work in, with us, in New York. And she'd take the ferry back to, and the Lackawanna Railroad, back to Bloomfield. Then one day, Sam asked me if I wanted to come to a party in Bloomfield. And at that time, Sam had a car. Big Buick. And we drove to Bloomfield, and we came to this house. It was at, the party was in his girlfriend, Lois's, house. Ah, so when I walked into the house I saw people dancing in this big living room, and in another room, behind the living room, there was a big fireplace, and there was three women standing by the fireplace. And just from seeing one of them, that struck me in a certain way, that if you've ever heard of somebody being rendered speechless, or um, the other kind of effects that you can have from falling in love with a vision, um, anyhow. Where it affected me was in my knees. I had the urge to sit down on the floor because my knees weren't working. So I had to struggle to get over to the couch and sit down real quick before I fell on the floor. And Sam happened to notice me. And he said, what's the matter? You're all white. And I told him, I said, you see that gal?

Over by there? Yeah. I said, well, that's the effect she has on me. So he had a big kick out of that because I was brought out to meet her, and I didn't know it. And I married her in 1950, and we're still married, and I still have that feeling.

MATSON: That's wonderful.

DALY: We have three girls. The youngest one is Jackie, Jacqueline, and she's graduate of Montclair State, Montclair State College. And she's an editor for a medical company. And the oldest one lives in Nutley, New Jersey, with two, her husband and two children.

MATSON: So there's some grandchildren there.

DALY: Yeah. And ah, he's an executive with ah, Bell Telephone. And the middle girl, who's name is Siobhan – S-I-O-B-H-A-N – which she spells Schevone, no, two “n”s ‘cause nobody can pronounce the Irish was of siopan. But she loves the name Siobhan, because it's different and she is different. (emphasis on different). She married a hillbilly and she's down in West Virginia with two children. He was a tobacco farmer. Ah, do you have a question?

Oh, so my three girls and I just retired, I retired ten years ago from the corporate world. I was vice president of finance of the National Farmer's Organization in Iowa. Um, then when I came back to the East Coast, back to Nutley, the old

haunts of Nutley where I had raised the three girls, all my friends are saying, John, get into real estate. That was ten years ago, because the market was zooming up. The very first house I listed sold eight days later for \$5,000 more than we rated it at.

MATSON: Oh, so you went into real estate after retiring from your corporate career.

DALY: Yeah. So ah, real estate, you became your own entrepreneurial, you become your own company. You set your own limits to what you can do or not do, or how much want to make or not make. And you're not in a corporate structure where you have to be the right age and all of this kind of thing. Ah, but the market, the real estate market got so slow that last year I just got out of it. Last summer.

MATSON: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us on this tape?

DALY: I've been back to Scotland. During the Second World War. My brother Pat and I, and my sister, Liz, or Elizabeth, who was two years older, and Rose, who was two years younger, the four of us got together and we had our own apartment before the war. And that, that was ah, while I was going to high school. And that was some years of real stability, ah, because my parents had died when I was nine. And I was handed about from brothers and sisters ah, and I can imagine what kind of a burden I must have been. And I tended to be a little bit

undisciplined. Imagine a guy like this going into a military thing like the United States Army. Ah, but I did. I did okay. My brother and I got drafted on the same day, and the reason he got drafted is because I had come of age to be drafted and he was the head of household, which is why they didn't draft him until I came of age, and then we went in together. And where did we go? We went into Fort Dix, New Jersey, and we both succeeded in becoming, you know, in testing you for aptitude, we both became radio operators, you know, with code, Morse code. And we ended up in the same division in Camp Butner, North Carolina. The 78<sup>th</sup> Lightening Division. And we were there for a year, doing maneuvers and training and blah, blah. And it got to be a kind of, what is known as a hot outfit. We were rated highly in military circles, because of maneuvers against other armies and what we did, and blah, blah. Anyhow. Then, in my camp, I got a notice that I got to take a seven day vacation and after the vacation, report back, because we were gonna be shipped someplace. So I took the train up to New York and was off for a week. Then after the week was over, I went back to the camp. I got back to the camp and the place had nothing but two military policemen. And that was all. Everybody else was gone, and I had to go and find out where the hell's all the guys. So they said, oh, well, where were you? They're all gone. They were shipped to Italy and they all died on the Anzio beachhead.

MATSON: So you were lucky that you weren't with them.

DALY: They all had received telegrams to come back.

END SIDE B, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE TWO

MATSON: We're beginning our second tape. I'm here with Mr. John Daly, and he was telling me some stories about the war. He had returned to his camp, and had found that everyone was gone. And he had not received the crucial postcard...

DALY: Telegram.

MATSON: ...telegram, which would have sent him almost surely, to his death. Is there any more to that story, Mr. Daly?

DALY: Yes, there is. Ah, shall I put the mike on?

MATSON: One second. Some more about that story.

DALY: So when I returned to camp, I found out that my whole outfit had received telegrams at home, which brought them back to the camp prematurely. And I had not received mine. So when I got back to the camp, everybody was gone. And they were all shipped to a place in Italy called Anzio, where they all were killed on the beach. I was told to, to become a prison guard in a stockade in the 78<sup>th</sup> Division stockade, and for several weeks, I was doing that. Guarding prisoners, during which time two capital prisoners, who were being guarded by

one guard named Campbell, they, they, he was taking them out to a field to work them with a pick and shovel, and at a certain time, both of them turned at the same time, and struck him in the face with the tools, knocking him out, and then they escaped. Campbell was assigned to complete the remaining sentence of both prisoners. So he was put into the prison, along with the other prisoners. And he caught hell. This, after he come out of the hospital. But then several weeks later, I found out that those two prisoners were captured about four states away and were brought back, and Campbell was released. Then, I, I was assigned to a transit outfit who were on their way to England. And I was assigned to a liberty ship. And I was put into a company, to travel with a company. The various companies on this liberty ship were assigned various duties such as one company was assigned to kitchen police, or KP. Another was assigned to guard duty, and some for cleaning up the ship and different things. My company was assigned to guard duty. And my duty was in the bow of the ship, in the very point of the ship. Now this is a little liberty ship. And my position was under a gun turret which was up on stilts, and there was a five-inch gun up there, with a crew, a Navy crew of five people. And we were in a convoy that went from horizon to horizon in every direction. There was an aircraft carrier. And battleships and cruisers and destroyers. And hundreds and hundreds of ships like mine. And we zigzagged for three weeks in stormy seas. It was winter. And my, my job was at nighttime to be out on the bow of the ship in all kinds of weather. And one, and we ran through three major storms and the water would be breaking on to me, and I would have to hang on to the legs of

this gun turret so I didn't get washed away. So one storm, I heard somebody calling me. And it was the Navy guys, looking down from the gun tub over my head, saying, hey buddy, come on up here and get out of the blah, blah. So I, I crawled up and got into the gun tub with them and it was like a three foot steel wall around the tub, and they were all seated inside that, leaning against, with their back against that wall. And they were passing around a bottle of 4Roses whiskey. And I got in the row and they were passing it around. And lord, did that taste good. Then, we ah, we ultimately came around the top end of Ireland going down into, I think it's the Irish Sea which separates Scotland from Ireland. And this was a beautiful, quiet day. Blue sky. And not much wind at all, just an idyllic kind of day after all the storms we'd been through. The guys were just laying out on deck, soaking it up. And then we turned and headed in towards the Firth of Clyde. Now, that's where I was born. And as we approached the mouth of the Firth, I was struck by the purple color of the hills. And I remember dreaming about that, and I thought it was a dream, but I was recalling the heather on the hills. And it was just so striking to me, I was fascinated. But as we approached the mouth on this quiet, quiet day, the ship suddenly tilted all the way over to one side, and I could hear the guys screaming all over the ship, as if we were gonna be dumped into the sea, and then very slowly, it went the other way and tilted all the way back to the right until you looked down towards the right, you're looking at water and if you look to the left you're looking at the sky. Well, this was so disorienting, for such a nice quiet day like this, sunshiny day, that the ship is acting like it's gonna turn over. The guys were freaking out

and screaming all over the place. And then we ultimately entered the Firth, and I found out later what was causing that reaction to the ship was the surge of the sea going in to the basin and those hills, the purple hills, rising straight out of the water, acted like a bowl. And the sea would surge in and go up one side of the mountains, and then recede back and go up the other side of the mountains. And there we were, flotsam and jetsam on the sea, tilting left and right and it was disorienting. Anyhow, we wended our way in through the Firth. And we came, we anchored in this, like a basin. And I could see the just beautiful, beautiful fishing village with the hill rising up behind it. And these little houses, and ah, a fishing boat came out from that port, and headed right for our ship. And by the time it got to the gangway where these guys could come up and talk to us, they had already spoken to men on our ship who knew now what they were gonna do. They were gonna buy cigarettes from us. Cigarettes and candy and soap and anything we wanted to sell. Many of which were things that these people in Europe just didn't have any more because of the war. And ah, and the price was very high. For something like American cigarettes called Lucky Strikes, and Camels and Old Golds and Chesterfields, and when they found out that these Scotsmen wanted to bargain with us, and buy everything we had, people called me over, the guys called me over to the rail, they said, hey Daly! They're talking Scottish, you know, come on over! And I was supposed to interpret. Well, I couldn't understand them with the [speaking in heavy brogue]. And all I could understand Lucky Strikes and Camels and Chesterfields. And then the money,

we would just have to figure out the pounds. But I was the negotiator. (laughs heartily)

MATSON: The Scottish negotiator.

DALY: Then ah, we ultimately worked our way down into England and ah, I had to do beach landing trainings with this outfit of guys which I hardly knew except for this little trip. And ah, we became ah, reserves for the guys who didn't make it on D-day in Normandy. So we landed with them, as reserves, and I landed on D-day in Normandy. The regiment that landed in front of my regiment suffered 95 percent casualties. (clears his throat) By the time I got into the water with this big pack radio on my back because I was going to be a radio operator, ah, I went straight down to the bottom, and I had to claw my way up through the bodies of all the guys who didn't make it. And I was never shot once on D-day. Ah, a month and a half later, I was shot three times. I was flown back to England, and I spent a couple of months in the hospital and then I wanted to go back to my outfit. And ah, which I did. And I went back through the same beach, except now they had sunken a row of ships out there and then put these cement walkways in between 'em so ships could land up to that as if it was a dock and then drive trucks in, whatever. So we landed up to that, and we went up this hill again and Omaha Beach, and we went in through a town that I was shot trying to take, called St. Lo. L-O. And that town was reduced to white powder because the buildings were sort of white stone, and from the bombings and the shellings

so that the Americans could finally take it, it had reduced it to white pumice. There was no two stones on top of each other. There was no such thing as a brick on top of another brick, it was just white powder. Piles, And it had been bulldozed of to the side to make a road through it. And that was an appalling sight. And I know what it cost us. (pause) Can we shut it off for one second?

MATSON: Sure. We can pause for a just for a second.

We're back with Mr. Daly, and he's talking about World War II and his experiences.

DALY: After I got back from the hospital, I rejoined my outfit. I had to drive this truck load of replacements. We drove up the Normandy peninsula, and we got to the end of it and turned right, and went down the Brittany peninsula to the very end of it. And there I met up with ah, my outfit, which was observing a thousand bombers bombing Fort Brest, hoping to crack it open. Which the bombing failed to do because it was a heavy earthenworks, and the Germans had a whole city built under the ground there with a hospital, a munitions works and where the guys lived and theaters and all kinds of things under there. But finally we just hammered at it and hammered at it, 'til ultimately they put out a white flag and the war ended there. And 42,000 Germans came marching down this hill from the fort. Three abreast in the road. And surrendered. Imagine, over 40,000 guys surrendering to you? So then, we got on a train and we were shot up to,

through the edge of Paris, and all I saw of Paris was the Eiffel Tower in the distance, as we headed up towards Belgium. And then we began the war again. Belgium, Holland and, and ah, we broke into Germany at a town called Aachen. A-A-C-H-E-N. And there was the Siegfried line. Ah, and I was in a radio squad, in a radio jeep, gong on an assignment for an attacking outfit and we got lost in this Siegfried line before the American army reached it. There I was, and passing through these small mountains which were man-made things and they had all this artillery firing at us going down this road. Just me and three other guys. And somehow, when we escaped back towards the American lines, we found out that none of us had been shot, but because we passed through, we passed a ah, a wooden shack which was struck by a German shell as the jeep passed it, our bodies were full of splinters. And ah, we had to go and get all the splinters removed. But we didn't need hospitalization and we were all able bodied. And, but we just got lost in Germany before the American army got there. (chuckles heartily) Oh, and I was in the, I landed with the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry division. It's called the Blue & Gray. It was a Virginia outfit. Virginia National Guard. And they were one of the four divisions that hit the beaches with the Americans. The first, the fourth, the ninth and the twenty-ninth. Then, we went all the way through Germany and we ended there, at the Elbe River where we were told not to cross it because the Russians were coming from the other side. And I made a joke about, you could begin to establish the difference between the sound of German artillery and Russian artillery because the Russian artillery went (softly) shhhhweeee, boomsy. (laughs) And then um, and then I tell a

story about we were not permitted to cross this Elbe River and fraternize with the Russians because we didn't know what the hell would happen. So there was a rule, you don't cross the river, but being John Daly and this slightly undisciplined type of guy, I always would get somebody else to go with me and climb over fences and do things and go into these little English towns and go to a dance with the girls and blah, blah. And I would find out later that it was off limits and there was only MP's in the town and I wasn't supposed to be there, and ah, the girls would all hide us though, in those towns. But I never stayed in camp with the rest of the guys. I always, over the fence and gone. I figured if I was gonna die, it would be on my terms. (laughs)

MATSON: A free spirit.

DALY: Yeah.

MATSON: Did you cross the river then?

DALY: Oh, so, I tell about this. I grabbed some soap, we had Lifebuoy soap and cigarettes, and candy and chewing gum and all of these things that were like solid gold to the Germans and the Europeans, and had a little satchel of that and we got this little rowboat thing and we crossed the river. And there was this Russian tank outfit on the other side, all bivouacked out, between tents. And I went into the first tent, and I noticed that these guys had, they were big guys with

red hair. And I don't know what part of Russia they were from but they were like wild looking guys. Anyhow, I'd stick my head in the tent and I'd say, haben zi vodka por chocolada y cigareta? And usually my pig Latin – do you have vodka for soap and cigarettes and chewing gum and blah, blah. And I knew the way to say it. And I figured they knew a little German or whatever, so. In fact, I was the interpreter for my outfit. Ah, I became linguistic in German, like the minute I stepped into Germany. I don't know why. Maybe being from Scotland I could recognize sounds.

MATSON: Languages are similar like that.

DALY: I don't know. But I picked up the language and I still have it. Fifty years later. So, then the Russians would say, nyet! Nyet! They don't have vodka, so finally one guy said, da, da! And he waved us in, and we sat down on his cot and he gets out this bottle of vodka, and we're taking a pull at it, and then he's putting his hand in this duffel bag I have and he's looking for things, you know, to eat. Chocolate, and whatever. Then he grabs out this bar of Lifebuoy soap and he tears off this cardboard box and he takes a big bite of it, and I say, nay, nay, nix - das is Lux! Das is soap! Don't eat that! You know? And he says, prima, prima! He loves it. Then he wants more. I said, by god, we better get the hell out of here.

MATSON: He was eating the soap?

DALY: He's gonna be doing bubbles. (laughing heartily) So we left some stuff and we grabbed another bottle of vodka for the guys and we ran. And that's the end of my war. Oh, eventually, eventually, after the shooting war was over, I was assigned, my outfit was assigned to Bremen, as occupation troops and I stayed there as a regimental communications officer for the rest of the war, until I acquired what they called enough points to be shipped home in a random group of guys with enough points. And then we took a train all the way south from North Germany to Marseille, France and from there we shipped home. And that's the end.

MATSON: Well, if I asked you one last question, and this has been a wonderful interview, um, the question would be, are you happy that you ended up in America? Are you happy that you came here?

DALY: Well, having been back, having experienced it before I left there, and then having been back there, no matter where I was -- and I was in nine countries, I can't think of anyplace I would want to be other than right here. And that has never changed?

MATSON: How about your parents? Do you think they were happy to come to America?

DALY: Well, I wasn't really that familiar with their experience in Scotland, but I think that they might have believed that they made a good choice, because their kids had an opportunity to do more here.

MATSON: Than they would have maybe, if they had stayed. Well, I want to thank you very much for doing this interview today.

DALY: My pleasure.

MATSON: I'm going to sign off now for the National Park Service. This is Elisa Matson, and it's October 20, 1994. Thank you very much.

DALY: You're welcome.

END INTERVIEW