



## Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

### Cat 10644 Easton, Ian (Ser 203 / IWM010644R02)

#### Object description

British officer served with 803 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm at Royal Naval Air Station Hatston and aboard HMS Glorious during Norwegian campaign, 1940; served aboard HMS Ark Royal during Norwegian campaign, in Mediterranean and at Dakar, French West Africa, 1940; served aboard HMS Formidable in Atlantic, 1941; POW in French West Africa, 1941-1942; served as Fighter Direction Officer aboard HMS Indefatigable during attacks on Tirpitz in Norway and in Far East, 1944-1945

#### Content description

REEL 1 Recollections of operations as pilot with 803 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm from RNAS Hatston, aboard HMS Glorious and HMS Ark Royal during Norwegian campaign, 1940: pattern of career prior to joining squadron, 1940; joining squadron at RNAS Hatston, Orkney Islands; protecting HMS Suffolk; opinion of Blackburn Skua; shooting down of Norwegian flying boat; role protecting British troops in Romsdal; technique of shooting down Heinkel III in Blackburn Skua; dive bombing attack on ships in Trondheim; crash landing in Norway and move northwards; dive bombing in Blackburn Skua. REEL 2 Continues: character of operations from HMS Ark Royal, 5/1944; reconnaissance flight to survey potential airfield; crash landing near Haastad; return to GB, 5/1944. Recollections of operations as pilot with 803 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm aboard HMS Ark Royal in Mediterranean and Dakar operation, 1940-1941: attitude to attacking French Fleet, summer 1940; sight of French Fleet being shelled at Mers el Kebir; attitude towards pilot who claimed to have machine gunned French seamen in water; French attacks on Gibraltar. Aspects of operations with 803 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm aboard HMS Indomitable during Dakar operation, 1940: character of operation; attempt to intercept torpedoes aimed at HMS Barham. Period as pilot with 803 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm aboard HMS Formidable in Atlantic, 1941: joining carrier. REEL 3 Continues: forced landing in French Guinea, spring 1941. Aspects of period as POW in French West Africa, 1941-1942: capture by French; attitude of French; attempt to deceive French captors about secret IFF equipment; escape attempt from camp in Dakar; character of imprisonment; friction with French captors; conditions in new camp; hospitalisation for illness; change in camp and character of prisoners; methods of passing time; circumstances of release, late 1942; amusing story of dealing with food hording captain on river steamer after release. REEL 4 Continues: Recollections of operations as Fighter Direction Officer aboard HMS Indefatigable during attacks on Tirpitz and in Far East, 1944-1945: period as instructor and fighter direction officer prior to posting to carrier; character of attacks on Tirpitz; move to Far East;

Japanese treatment of captured Fleet Air Arm officers at Palembang; interdiction of Japanese; advantages of armoured decks on British aircraft carriers against kamikaze attacks; fighter attacks on mainland Japan; hearing news of atomic bombs being dropped; attitude towards Japanese; effectiveness of kamikaze attacks; attitude towards Japanese and Germans airmen; attitude to having served with Fleet Air Arm during Second World War.

**Courtesy IWM March 2014**  
**Copyright Reserved IWM**