

ORAL HISTORY - K

Transcriber's initials: T

P1: We stayed in Pollokshields, in a flat at 23 Darnley Gardens. And that became my, more or less, earliest memories. The home was very nice, actually. The flats down there, Darnley Gardens, were very big flats. Very spacious. They were meant for people who were fairly well-off, you know? We had a maid there. A maid called I. Young lady from Uddingston. She was a lovely young girl, yeah.

But of course, the factory, being engineers, they had immediately to be put on to war footing. And they made guns. They made 25-pounders I think, mainly. And 25- pounders howitzers. Then father decided, since we were in Glasgow, we were likely to get bombed. So, we took a house in East Kilbride at 45 Auldhouse Road. It's still there, I believe. It's not called Auldhouse Road anymore. I think it's called Brouster Avenue. But it's near the Dollan Baths.

During the war, when father was working, the army was short of anti-tank guns. Our anti-tank guns were not terribly effective against the German Panzers. The main one was a two-pounder anti-tank gun. It was ok but it wasn't powerful enough. And then they made a six-pounder, which was ok. Then eventually they devised a 17-pounder gun, right? Now, father would come home and would talk to mother about them, and all that. And that sort of all sank into my head. And then one day, the master of my school said "Right, come on boys, let's draw pictures of guns". And so, we all drew our favourite guns. And he said "Oh yes, that's a two-pounder, very good..." and "That's a 25-pounder, very good for you...". "And Ross, you've drawn a 17-pounder. There's no such thing. There's no such gun. Don't be silly. Bottom of the class!". So, I went home that night and said to father and mother at the tea table, "Is there actually a 17-pounder gun?". And I explained that the teacher had said there wasn't, "There's no such thing!". And

there was a dead silence at the tea table. "Oh. Oh dear". And he said "Kenneth, it's on the secret list. You're not supposed to know about it!". "Oh. Right". So, they wondered, "What can we do?". And he said "Better just do nothing". So, the next day at school I had to say "I was wrong, there isn't a 17-pounder, there's nothing there...". So, I am afraid that was my... That was my contribution to the war effort!

We had a dog at one time. A small, smooth-haired fox terrier. And he was a rascal, the dog. In those days of course, everything was rationed. And you only had an allowance for your meat. So, you went down to the butcher's and you got your meat, and he took it off your coupons. But one day, mother was down buying the meat ration and suddenly the dog, Max, was scurrying out... and he had a chop in his mouth! So, she grabbed the dog and got the chop out his mouth and gave it back to the butcher. And said "All right, you'd better put that on my ration then". And he says "No, no, no Mrs. R. I'll just give it a wash and I'll sell it".