

INTERVIEW OF MAGGIE TEUTEN

INTERVIEWERS: CHARLIE McGUINNESS, MARY HYLAND
and JESS HUFFMAN

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0:00:07.7 Mary: We're sat here in Maggie's lovely cottage in Countess Wear. It's the 8th of July 2024. I'm Mary.

0:00:15.9 Charlie: I'm Charlie.

0:00:17.2 Maggie: And I'm Maggie.

0:00:22.0 Mary: We're here in your lovely home Maggie and we've got a photograph here of a young man in uniform. Could you tell us who it is?

0:00:31.0 Maggie: It's my father. He came over from Jamaica to fight in the war, and that's him in his uniform. Early on in the Second World War.

0:00:44.5 Mary: So how old would he have been then?

0:00:47.1 Maggie: He was 27 when he came over, so that would have been, and he was still 27 there. He'd had quite an interesting life before he came, but that was when he...

0:01:01.0 Mary: He came to England specifically because of the war?

0:01:04.1 Maggie: He did, he came from Jamaica, which being a colony, had very, very strong views about their country, their queen and their mother country. So consequently, when the war broke out, there was a great deal of talk about coming over to help. Then there was a call to the colonies and my father and his two brothers, who worked for a company called Eddie Hanna. Eddie Hanna, I feel like I know this man because people

always talked about him. They went to him and said, we want to go to fight and he was going to lose three of his best people.

0:01:58.8 Mary: What sort of company was this?

0:02:01.2 Maggie: Well, he was an extraordinary man. He had a whole load of companies that were all under one heading, which was Eddie Hanna and Sons. My grandfather, my father's father, was the accountant for that company. I suppose you'd call them financial directors here. So consequently, quite a number of the family were encouraged to work with Eddie Hanna, but Eddie Hanna was so pro, the coming, that he actually paid their fare to come over, the three of them. So he lost three good people who were running in - he had a whole load of companies, and each of them ran one of those companies. So he lost three major people from his company, but paid for them to come.

0:03:01.6 Mary: Did any of them ever go back to Jamaica?

0:03:04.9 Maggie: No, they all married well, one married a Scotswoman and the other two married English women. So they never did go.... Well, they went back to visit, but they didn't go back to live. When they came, they all brought, well, I have my father's letters, letters from, Eddie Hanna, and from the workers and from the people who were in the estate that my grandfather ran as well, and all these wonderful introductory letters, which are of an old way. When you travelled, you always took introductory letters saying what sort of person you were and whether they recommended you. It was just lovely having them because they were obviously all held in very high regard, and my father kept them all his life.

0:04:10.3 Mary: Do you still have any of these letters?

0:04:11.4 Maggie: Yes, I have five of them, which is quite wonderful to read, really. The people who worked on my grandfather's estate, it's such a charming letter that they wrote as well. They took part in the writing of it. So I think that tells of a different time, different period, different way of thinking. My father, to his dying day, and I mean this, all the time. He died, he had dementia at the end of his life and he still believed that he should be in London looking after the queen. He still, even for the first time in his life, he stole something

and that was a major thing, which was a bike. He saw one of the carers had a bicycle they used to keep in a shed, and he went and took it and tried... He was going to cycle to London and he was 95.

0:05:23.8 Mary: So he was very patriotic.

0:05:25.6 Maggie: Very that was the impression I was wanting to give you, incredibly patriotic. Not in the way we are, sort of the patriotic, slightly different to that.

0:05:38.0 Mary: But coming from the colonies.

0:05:39.5 Maggie: Absolutely, very particular, the way they see the mother country and the mother of that country being the queen, they were responsible for her care.

0:05:54.3 Mary: What sort of heritage did you father have?

0:05:58.2 Maggie: Well, it's just recently, because of this project, my knowledge of my father's heritage and mine, of course, has expanded hugely. I can now go back to the 1600s. I knew that at some point in our family history, we had someone who went over to Jamaica. I think actually probably more than one, but that's where it all started from. Scotland, going over to Jamaica and running that, well, they took varying roles, from my father, I was given the impression that they were mostly, doctors and judges and we found other things. I've discovered since I've been in the project, that they were actually very varied in the pathways that they took over time in Jamaica, but it was a very colonial pattern of the family. One thing that I've learned is that my grandmother, my father's mother, we'd always thought that it was possible that her family, came from a history of slavery but we had no proof of that. We were blocked every which way when we tried to get some of the history. Since, again, being in this project, I know more about my grandmother's family, too, although it stops suddenly.

0:08:07.0 So it is still quite possible that she came from a slave route and how she got to be where she was when she met my grandfather, is still a little bit unclear, but she. She was considered to be a person of colour and therefore my father also, and what I learned, this was a few years ago, when I was working in South Africa and I was needing to focus on my own identity. Of course, I also had that distinction, and I think of it as a

distinction. I love the fact that that we are a mixed-race family, but it's totally hidden in me. No one meeting me would ever imagine, and I find that wonderful that I carry my father's history and my grandfather's history and my grandmother's history in me. It gives one a different perspective of life.

0:09:43.9 Mary: Because, of course, if I may say, you do look totally European, don't you?

0:09:47.3 Maggie: Absolutely.

0:09:48.4 Mary: Very fine features. So when your father came to this country because of the war, did he imagine, do you think, that he would go back to Jamaica to live?

0:10:01.7 Maggie: Oh, absolutely.

0:10:03.2 Mary: He thought he would.

0:10:03.8 Maggie: Yes, and all the people who wrote these letters assumed he would, and they would treat him as a hero. This was what their expectation was, but of course, he never went back.

0:10:25.7 Mary: Going off of that, I was just wondering how you think your dad might have adapted to coming to the UK, and how he felt about coming here from Jamaica, given that he intended to go back but obviously stayed here.

0:10:39.4 Maggie: Yes, I think, my father was a very silent man, and there were reasons for that, because of his early history. He was a very lonesome man in all the photographs of all these 13 children and two parents and all their friends and everything, my father was always set slightly apart. I am hope I am answering your question. So he lost his mother when he was 12, and it was very sudden, she died in childbirth. I won't go into, there is a significant story that gives me the feel of how it was for him, and being 12 with 13 children. There were 13 children, and my grandfather was running a plantation and he had this big job with Eddie Hanna's company and so on, that he couldn't cope. So he decided, or the family decided,

that they would split the children up in twos, so that they wouldn't be alone, and they were farmed out to families, parts of our family. My father was put with his brother, his eldest brother, Jasper, who was on board ship. So in other words, he was on his own. So from 13 to 15, when he was home from school, he cycled around Jamaica, just kept going, visiting family for only a day. He wouldn't stay any longer.

0:12:38.0 He was very shy and he kept that up until he was 15, when he was allowed on board ship as a bellhop. I've got a lovely photograph in his bellhop outfit, where he stayed with my Uncle Jasper aboard ship going up and down the Saint Lawrence River in Canada. When he was 18, that was when he could get a job back in Jamaica with Eddie Hanna, and that was when he went back. So he was shy, it made him shy and a loner. So when he came, he knew, absolutely, or his brother came with him, but they wouldn't allow them to be in the same company. So my father was here in Exeter at the barracks up here and my uncle was placed elsewhere. So they were separated and he was the only person he knew, but he was very stoic. So he would do the job he was asked to, and all of the reports given of his service has that feel about it, that he was a bit separate, a little bit isolated, but absolutely locked on the job and they praised him highly for the way he behaved, but they all note how separate he was.

0:14:25.2 So I think that affected him, but more than that, coming from Jamaica, a hot country, and he wasn't in the barracks here very long because Churchill put out a call. Churchill decided he was going to set up a commando group. We'd never had commandos here before and so he called for volunteers. Both my Uncle Ernest and my father volunteered. The third brother went into the RAF. So it was the two brothers, both volunteered for the commandos, this new commando group, and they trained up in Scotland, right up in the mountains and it was freezing. To come from Jamaica and doing all this training when it was so cold, I don't know how he survived, but he obviously did. I don't know how he managed it. I do recall that when they were climbing up Ben Nevis and what have you, all the mountains around where they were, sometimes the one worry he had was that his fingers got so cold, because he just wasn't used to this sort of weather. Neither am I, and I was born here, I still suffer. So I think I've definitely taken that from my poor dad, I can't bear it.

0:16:23.3 The other things I think that he found very difficult, was when men were in war together, there are certain groups of men who swear a lot and who perhaps were disrespectful of women in their speech, and my father wasn't used to any of that. He was

so shocked, even right up to his death, he found it very difficult. He'd almost cringe when he'd hear some of the language that occasionally you would hear. Of course, when people are together in war, it would have been probably much worse than we would normally experience. To give me my talk on sex, because my mother, I'm afraid, opted out. First thing he said to me, there are some very unpleasant men who do not think of women in the way they should, and you must be careful. That was my sex talk. I loved him for giving it to me because my mother wouldn't, and he was so embarrassed, but he did. This is this gentle, quiet man, but he wanted his girls to be safe.

0:17:57.0 Mary: He sounds like very much a gentleman, a very lovely, caring kind of man. Obviously, had a lot of respect for your mum and, you for yourself.

0:18:05.2 Maggie: Absolutely. Yes, and also a very unusual man in that he treated me... I'll speak for me as opposed to my sister and I, because we were brought up different slightly differently, but it's probably not necessary to go into that, but he treated me as an equal. He thought women were equal and when he came back from the war, he would make clothes for my mother. He'd never been taught, but he used to ask her what she wanted. He'd lay material on the floor and sort of cut a pattern out and then fit it, and it actually used to turn out amazingly well. He'd cook and he didn't see the difference, and it's much later in my life that I valued that so much when I realised how unequal women generally had been. When I was 17, I wanted to go to Italy on my own. Now in Devon then, probably as far as you went, was London, and that was a major trip, but I wanted to go to Italy. I have no idea why. So I went to my dad and I said, dad, I want to go to Italy on my own, and I come to you because I know mum won't let me go.

0:19:50.8 He quietly nodded and said, leave it to me, because I knew he would let me go. He'd argue my case and I went, and I knew I was on to a good thing because I could say, well, you went on board ship when you were 15 and I'm 17. I mean, it's like I'm really grown up and of course, he couldn't say no because he believed we were equal and probably has made me a bit unusual in that that's what I thought I was, was equal.

0:20:31.8 Mary: Did he ever talk to you or the rest of the family about his wartime experiences?

0:20:39.4 Maggie: No, very little. He'd signed the Secrets Act because the work that the commandos did was very, it had to be very secret. I know very little [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] when I asked for my father to be assessed, when he was actually, I found the actual age that he was when we did, had to do this when he was 88. I wrote to the MOD and asked if he could be assessed by the MOD because I believed he had post-traumatic stress disorder, which got considerably worse at 88, and my mother was sometimes at risk while he was asleep. He put her arm behind her back, I don't know what he was dreaming. I didn't know then what he was dreaming of and we were fearful for my mother. My father would never have harmed her if he was awake or if he wasn't driven by post-traumatic stress disorder, and because they did agree that he should be assessed.

0:22:17.7 An MOD doctor came and assessed him and then two young men, it was perfectly ridiculous, he was 88, and these two young when he looked about 15 themselves. I was with them, they came and they told him that he must talk to someone of his choice, and that he mustn't hold it, because I said to them, my father has never spoken of it because he signed and he wouldn't speak about anything. They came to tell him that he must and they would pay for a therapist for him to go to, and he just shook his head. No, he wasn't going down that route. They said, well, someone or of your choice. He one short finger, because he cut it off and he was a little boy, and he pointed with his middle finger to me because I was a trained therapist. So what he's saying he would... I wasn't supposed to work with, and I couldn't work with a member of family, but I could use my skills with him, so I agreed to do that. So I learned a little of his service record, through that. I had to write a report for the MOD, which I still have a copy of.

0:24:03.6 So I did know a little, but I knew the damage it had done to him because when he came back from the war, I didn't know at the time what the problem was. The thing that triggered his post-traumatic stress had only recently happened. It happened, in 1945, and he was a demob. They actually, I've forgotten what they call it that the commandos were broken up and there was a word for it, which I can't think of at the moment. He came back in November 1945, and this had happened in May. Which I don't see that there is a reason why I can't tell the story at what caused his post-traumatic stress because it was pretty horrendous. He was obviously in the commandos, and he was, I think, by then, I can't remember what status he had now. I know he was a lieutenant at one time, but he was also something else. So whatever it is, that's one up from that, possibly, and because there was

an issue that I do believe that because of his colour that he wasn't promoted, even though he was very good.

0:26:00.0 I think it just would have been beyond thinking that he should be promoted further but he was leading a group of men. This was in Germany, at a place called Lubeck, and which, strangely, a neighbour of mine, she was born in Lubeck and that was very interesting a bit later on, which I might may well say if there is time. At the end of the war, the Germans, obviously the camps were closed and almost 10,000 of the occupants were put on boats to two passenger boats two other boats, and they were put, in fact, I have the write-up of it, in the holds. They weren't given food or water for quite a while, quite a few days. On top of the passenger boat there were German SS and they were heading for Sweden. It was said, to start with, but it turned out they weren't heading for Sweden and they were supposedly now headed for Norway and the idea was, when they got there, that they were going to scuttle the boats once the SS people were off, and these were human beings.

0:28:10.1 My father arrived, they got into Lubeck quite easily. They arrived just at the time when the RAF was told, I can't remember the name of the type of plane, but anyway, they were asked to fire at these boats, not knowing that the prisoners were down below. They thought that they were SS people on this boat, and they got rid of all three, four, there were four boats at nearly 10,000 people on the boats. The boat that my father was involved with, particularly, was the Cape [O'Connor 0:29:13.8] and it was alright, because it had been hit. These people were not the SAS, not the SS, they were still on the boat, but because the boat had been damaged, there were people below decks that were trying to get out of the boat and they were getting out of holes, or however it was. They got out and they were trying to swim, even though they were emaciated because [unclear word 0:30:02.9] there was over before they got on the boat and then they hadn't eaten all this time, and many of them were drowned, but many of them were shot by the SS as they swam away.

0:30:16.0 My father was on the beach and trying to rescue people and they persuaded, well didn't persuade, they insisted that the local people, who of course, were German people, and any SS that they got hold of had to dig huge graves on the beach. They had to put all these bodies, and there were nearly 8000 that were killed. I mean, a huge amount of bodies and right up until '71 had been pots, you know, the bones and things coming ashore in Lubeck and also being washed up from underneath. So it's a horrible

story. The reason I tell that is to give reason for my father when he eventually arrived home in November '45, I was one, he couldn't bear to touch me or have me near him because he felt that he had spent so long taking bodies and burying them, and he didn't want to contaminate me as a little girl, or baby. You can imagine how much that affected him. It was a horrendous story. All I know is that my father, if I went, and my mother and grandmother would always encourage me to go to him, even when I was a toddler, and I would happily go towards him, and he would absolutely go rigid because it wasn't that he... I now know, it wasn't that he didn't love me or didn't want me, it was that he couldn't bear it.

0:32:45.9 All through his life, so from the Second World War, since '45, he suffered from post-traumatic stress, but he managed it. He never told anybody, nobody gave him any help. It was only when it got so bad at the end of his life, because he had dementia and so therefore there was no way that he could manage his post-traumatic stress any longer, that it was becoming dangerous for my mother, and he wasn't the man, this was not the man, but that was mostly his dementia. It meant that there were no barriers for him to cope with his post-traumatic stress anymore. The sad thing is, I will tell you, the shock that I had when we sent the report to the MOD, they eventually, a letter came in the post and when my father opened it, it was a cheque for £2,000. Now, my father had never asked for any money, so he was incensed by that. So that's my father for you. The fact that a human's life had been affected, it appeared that somebody, somewhere thought that £2,000 would make it better.

Now that I think needs to be known to, that that's not an appropriate way of dealing with someone who needed help, not money.

0:34:42.4 Mary: He'd suffered from post-traumatic stress for the best part of half a century?

0:34:47.2 Maggie: Yes, and when he left, after the war, he, as many men did, they went for jobs that had uniforms. It was like a comfort zone to them, I suspect, and because he was here in Exeter, because he married my mum, he went and he was... Not a volunteer or something, policeman in Jamaica, when the problems in Jamaica, he became a policeman. I forgot what you call them something or other policeman, but anyway, not full-time one because he was working, but he also was a policeman, that he became a prison warder, thinking he was going to be able to help these man. Thinking he would understand them

because they'd been through war too, and so on, but the regime was so, so awful. So other than he thought it was, it wasn't about helping men at that time. It was about containing them, and he didn't believe in that. He left after a very short space of time, and he went and worked in the fire service, and he stayed there until he resigned.

0:36:20.7 He managed his post-traumatic stress the whole of that time. Nobody knows how he did it, but he did. He then retired and got a part-time job just to keep him out of trouble, as he put it, but then retired. All of that time, that post-traumatic stress had been there, and that's extraordinary, I think.

0:36:59.2 Mary: Do you think maybe being in the fire service and being able to more so actively help people might have helped with post-traumatic stress because he got to, I guess, help in a way?

0:37:12.0 Maggie: I think certainly helping other people, would have helped him, as well, as it always does when you're helping others, you can't help others without it impacting upon you. It's a two-way thing. I'm sure that it did help, but again, he was very separate, but he was very much admired. He got quite high up in the fire service. In fact, when he died, I wrote to the fire service to let them know he died. When I arrived at the crematorium there was the fire engine and the men in their yellows, because poor men, they had to be at a fire. They were called out last minute because it was all you know, I didn't expect them to be there because I thought they would be out fighting fires, which they had been beforehand. They apologised for being in their yellows because their uniform underneath was not to be seen because they'd been firefighting. So they had the yellows on. When the officer talked to the men about the period that my father was in the fire service, he said, imagine the job you do today without any of the equipment that you've got, it was a horrendous time.

0:38:53.0 I felt very pleased, my dad would have been horrified that they arrived. He didn't like any show or whatever, but they did it with great heart and I'm sure he would have been all right with it. Anyway, he couldn't do anything about it because they arrived, but it was lovely.

0:39:20.7 Mary: I've got a question because you mentioned that you were slightly aware that maybe your father hadn't, gone up the ranks in his roles, maybe as quickly or as high as he maybe should have been worthy of doing. You mentioned that you

thought that might be because of his race? Do you know, were there any other examples of where your dad might have been faced with prejudice, while he was here?

0:39:52.5 Maggie: Yes, I but I never heard it from my father. I heard it from my mother. My mother was horrified by my wish to talk about my father being West Indian, because I loved it, and she would try to shut me up even when I was older. She'd say it slightly differently when I was older, but when I was younger, she'd want me to be quiet. There were times, like when I was at school, where she couldn't control, and I would just want to share that. So it was much more my mother knowing and my own experience too, because when I did speak, I remember, my first day, when I was 13 at a particular school, because I only went to live with my parents again when I was 13. So I went to a new school and I had to write an essay, we were asked to write an essay on our families, and it would appear that I ignored that and only wrote, well, I did write about my family, but it's mostly about my dad and the fact that he was West Indian and that we ate different food, and we had coffee and we ate rice and we had varying other things that I described.

0:41:44.2 That was probably the most foolish essay that I wrote, because there were quite a lot of response to that with new girls that I met, and I was very isolated. People didn't come to my home, as you do, and I wasn't invited much to other people's homes either. I'm sure if they had, they'd have realised how foolish they were, but sadly - when I say foolish, I mean it in the gentlest sense, because mostly it is because we don't know, there is an ignorance rather than any other reason for behaving. We're fearful of the other, and the only way to overcome that fear of the other is to meet the other and speak to the other and experience their lives and know that the biggest part of us that is the same is our humanity.

0:43:07.1 Mary: Would you say, what you said about meeting the other and just really connecting people with people on a human level, obviously given your dad's experiences and your experiences, sharing that you ate different foods and these things and people being a bit just not very nice about it. Is that a big part of why you'd like to do this project, to spread that message of how important it is to get to know other people and to learn about their cultures and really connect on that human level?

0:43:07.1 Maggie: Yes, it is, but strangely, I was invited to be involved to start with because I got involved when the Ugandan Asians came to Honiton. It was all very quick and fast, and we were living in Honiton at the time, and a lot of preparation needed to be doing and I realised that now it's the project that made me realise why I - it just didn't occur to me not to get involved, because these were people who were leaving a country and coming to another country with nothing. My father was much better off than they were, but nevertheless, all the issues of difference and otherness I knew would be around. Plus, the fact it was the opportunity of meeting people who were other, for me, was an attraction rather than a deterrent or a fearful situation. So that was how I got involved. The strange thing is that this project has offered me something it never occurred to me that it would, which is the opportunity to talk about my family and my father. I really value that.

0:45:27.3 It's not only linked me with my reasoning for being involved, but it's linked me with my history and broadened my link with my history and deepened the link with my history, has taken me right back to my roots and it's given me the one thing I would want, as a parent, to give to my daughters and my grandchildren are roots. The older I get and the knowledge that obviously my life is shorter now than it was, is the deeper those roots can be for my daughters and grandchildren, the more secure they will be. So this has been such a privilege for me to be able to expand that for myself and deepen that for myself, and through me, to deepen that with them, with my daughters and with my grandchildren as well, and to make them as secure as I possibly can for when I'm not here any longer. I'm the only parent that's left now. It's quite a responsibility you get left with when you're the last parent. You're the one that the door gets closed on for them, to their history, if you don't pass it on.

0:47:22.3 So this project is also important as far as that's concerned for them. So it has many facets, the project. So I'm very grateful to have this opportunity because I think we need to know how it is to be people who are considered other, and the lasting impact that difference and unease can have down through generations of people.

0:48:18.0 Mary: I'd love to just ask Maggie, going back, because you talked a little bit about the cultural differences that your dad experienced, which it sounds like you too then, as the next generation, experienced with your peers. You talked about how at home you had coffee. So can you tell us a little bit about why that was unusual in that time?

0:48:42.3 Maggie: Yes. Well of course, it was of a particular time. I was born in 1944. So the war hadn't ended yet. We were on rationing. Britain drank tea. Everybody knew that. I had never really drank tea and so consequently, that was a bit of a shock for some people who would say, 'You're British and you don't drink Tea?!' Now, of course, we drink more coffee, but at that time we didn't. The only coffee that was available was something in a bottle called [Camp Coffee NAME INSERTED BY INTERVIEWEE] Chicory, chicory coffee, and it looked and tasted - it looked like oil. The sort of consistency of oil, yuck. It had a very strange taste to it. That was what coffee meant. Can you imagine my father coming from a country where some of the best coffee in the world is growing, and that's what he was used to, and he came here and suddenly he's drinking coffee out of a bottle that is made of chicory plant, which I don't even really know whether I've ever seen a chicory plant. Anyway, it wasn't quite what one would understand coffee to be.

0:50:26.3 Of course, rice wasn't something that you would have either. My father drinking and eating British food must have been quite an interesting experience as well for him. To him, the most important thing that he gained - my grandparents were very poor actually, because my grandfather was gassed in the First World War and also had post-traumatic stress. So this is second generation. But he fully understood how it was to be a soldier away from home and he'd come up into the centre of Exeter on a Sunday, and what he was looking for were lonely soldiers. He didn't actually find my dad. It was my mum who found my dad. My grandmother was asked to look for this - they called him a dark boy, who was very quiet and seemed to be isolated. My grandmother was looking for him. She was involved in running the NAAFI at that time. By the time she found him, my mother had already found him, and I don't blame her, he was very beautiful.

0:52:21.9 What he found was not just my mother, but he found a family. The family he'd left behind in Jamaica. The family he really lost when his mother died. I have letters and cards that he wrote to my grandmother and grandfather, and he calls them mum and dad. So he seems to have, in his psychology, fully transferred his family status into my mother's family. So it was terribly important that that happened. So I think he would put up with anything. He was very easy going, food-wise, really. I suppose he had to be because we were in a rationing time. It was much more than food that fed him. It wasn't the food itself. It was the people that fed him, I think. What else did he...

0:53:33.5 Mary: Did he talk much about his memories of life in Jamaica?

0:53:38.3 Maggie: My mother closed him down immediately if he started. He had one friend, I remember, coming over. Sadly, I missed him but my sister was there, and he started talking about when they were young together and what they did, and she's told me a bit. My mother just didn't want - she kept trying to change the subject.

0:54:09.7 Mary: Do you know much about what her reservations were, or what were her fears?

0:54:14.2 Maggie: We found a letter, when my grandmother died, from my grandmother to my father's commanding officer. This was before they got married, because she wouldn't allow them to get married, this is my grandmother, until the day before he left, to go away and not come back for months and months. She was obviously very worried because it was not easy if you were in - we didn't have many mixed-race families here, particularly in Devon. The letter she got back was that he was of very good family. I don't know how they looked into it, but that he was of a very good family. So that presumably satisfied her. So I think she'd been made very fearful. My mother suffered from chronic anxiety all her life. So I think having been made to feel uncomfortable, she would have carried that through, right the way through her family, through her life, I mean.

0:54:14.2 So it wasn't easy for them, but she had some very good friends, and my father, once people got to know him - the men in the fire service, it was amazing when he broke both his legs at one time, and you have to be A1 to be in the fire service, and I'm not going to tell you how he broke them, because it was absolutely horrendous but that's by the way, because my mother was involved, but unintentionally, it was an accident. I can't tell you how amazing the men were. They all really were very fond of him and they would do anything for him. He always led from the front, evidently. He would never ask a man to do what he didn't do himself. He taught them how to aqualung down at Budleigh, which is where his ashes are now, where he taught the men to aqualung.

0:57:03.5 Mary: Can I ask what aqualung is?

0:57:06.1 Maggie: Aqualung diving. He was an absolutely amazing swimmer and also - I mean, he was born in Jamaica, what else are you going to be really? He was a good diver,

a very good diver, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] INCIDENT REDACTED BY
INTERVIEWEE AS NOT IN PUBLIC DOMAIN]

0:58:45.4 I know my father would not have done it lightly. He had a deep recognition of the humanity, even of people, I remember him saying that it wasn't people, wasn't civilians, it wasn't you and me that start wars, it's governments that start wars, and it's men that have to carry it out then. They were all men then. Now it's men and women that have to carry out these horrendous tasks, and it's a very - is there any philosophical sort of answers to this sort of thing about killing the few to save the many, and it doesn't sit easily and wouldn't sit easily with my father. But he did, he was protecting his mother country. That was his purpose, and he carried this out and of course, there was great risk that he would not come back with these limpet mines strapped around him and putting them on the bottom of ships, and then, of course, them blowing up, and he had to get out before that, and he was swimming.

1:00:22.8 So it's those sort of things he was capable of and did because he was asked to do it. Rather than send someone else, that was the way he was in the fire services. I remember another instance in the fire service. There was a - what do they call them where you keep - a hopper with seed in it. No, it was corn. It's a very dangerous place to be. If you get sucked into the corn, it's like quicksand, you can't breathe. This man, this farmer, got sucked in and they called the fire brigade and my father was quite a senior then, I don't know how senior but anyway. He was a thinker. This was the men who told me this, that he would always pause. Most would rush in and just try. My dad would pause, not for very long, but he would work it out, the safest way to do this, whatever it was. On this occasion, he did it because he could see that it was extremely dangerous. They lowered him down into this place and they did get the man out. My father had to go down with a mask and aqualung

because of the dust from the - this poor man was down there without any of that, but he did survive.

1:02:22.4 It was that sort of thing that the men - it was the men who told me that, not my dad. My dad never told us anything, but the men who admired him, and they said they always felt safe with him. So that was from the war, taking that on and using those skills and that leadership after the war. I've probably gone right off your question, if I haven't, [over speaking 1:02:54.6] I have.

1:02:56.6 Mary: I think what you've done beautifully is sort of - I mean, I just wonder, do you think the next generations or the generations that came after these men understood the risks and the commitment that these men had given to a country that they obviously felt allegiance to, but had come from somewhere else?

1:03:19.2 Maggie: No, they've not been remembered in a way, but I mean maybe the reason is, if they were all like my dad they wouldn't step forward anyway and expected to be or wanted to be even. It's me, next generation, with D-Day, it's recently been very much in our thinking. My father was at D-Day and he wouldn't have been persuaded to go to something like that and to have heard that it was valued. He might have watched the television. So I think it's not just one way, I think it's true to say. On all his material that he's kept, that is official, if there is a description of him, he's sunburned or brown or it's the stumbling for language that, at that time, we didn't have, and even now people are discomforted by. So we're still struggling really, with the language to use. In fact, I think it's become quite problematic now because now it's not just not knowing the language, but if you don't know the language, you can get it very wrong now and upset people and it upset people probably then, but nobody spoke of it either.

1:05:28.4 I think my father probably just smiled and shook it off. His right shoulder would always rise slightly, like so, does it matter? But of course it does matter really, and it used to make me angry for him. Yes, so there was stuff around, yes.

1:06:05.1 Mary: I think we've probably exhausted you, Maggie.

1:06:09.5 Maggie: Well, as you can hear...

1:06:09.6 Mary: What an amazing story. I think you did touch on it a little bit earlier, but one of our final questions is just asking you, based on all the things that you've talked about today, why do you feel it is important to share these stories?

1:06:29.6 Maggie: I've been sitting on all of this the whole of my life, and do you know what a pleasure it is to meet people who, when they ask a question, they want to hear the answer? So for me, it's a very precious time and I'm so pleased that somewhere my father's going to be recorded. He wouldn't have said that at all. So I'm not, in a way, strangely, I'm not doing it for him, I'm doing it for me. I want him recorded. He was my dad and I loved him and he couldn't - I remember he had a psychotic incident [brought on by drugs administered following an operation - *INSERTED BY INTERVIEWEE*] once when he was older and my mother was so terrified that she couldn't deal with it, so I was called. I went, because obviously I didn't know what had happened, so I stayed with them and we dealt with it gradually. When he was getting better - my father never held me or cuddled me, he couldn't right the way through his life, except this one time and I've never forgotten it. It's precious and it's tucked away. He held me and he patted me on my bottom. I'll tell you, that was the most extraordinary thing for my father.

1:08:29.3 He said, 'I'm sorry I wasn't more involved in your rearing.' I said, 'It's all right dad, you were just there and that was important.' That is the choicest memory that I have. To be able to share him in some way that records that he was here and that he was special to me is really important, and I'm very grateful to the project for that. It is also important that we understand that the other is precious and unique, and if we don't engage with the other, we miss so much. It's so glorious to be in the presence of others who are not necessarily the same. Not a reflection of ourselves, but a reflection of the other. We are bigger, we are stronger, we are richer for that, and why I think projects such as this are so important. We must not just stay in our small world and think that the rest of the world is the same. It is gloriously different. The more we do these sort of things, we will all be enriched by it.

1:10:42.2 Mary: Thank you, Maggie. It sounds like your father paid a huge contribution, and that was at the expense of his maybe happiness and his ability to feel happy maybe at points in his life, but a huge contribution. So it's an honour to be able to share his story as part of this project. So thank you.

1:11:06.3 Maggie: Thank you, Jess.

1:11:08.7 Mary: Thank you very much.

1:11:09.7 Charlie: Thank you very much.

1:11:12.6 Maggie: Thank you very much. I made it difficult for you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]