

Object Summary



Oral history of the Malta Dockyard:

Karmenu Falzon

Date

27 November 2020

Primary Maker

Karmenu Falzon

null

Dimensions

49 minutes, 9 seconds

null

Extent

1 digital audio recording (WAV)

Object Type

Oral history

null

null

Collection

Malta Dockyard Oral History project

Museum

Malta Maritime Museum

Registration Number

MMM.AV0001

Description

This recorded interview was made as part of the Malta Dockyard Oral History project by the Digitisation Unit, Heritage Malta, under the direction of Joe Meli. Carmelo entered the dockyard in 1948, as an electrical fitter apprentice. He was assigned to the electronics department then known as the Radio Shop. Eventually he was promoted to the Commercial and Sales Department involved mainly with repair of ships from the Maghreb countries. He retired in 1995.

Transcript / Summary

(This summary is a work in progress. Timings are approximate.) (04:30) Carmelo Falzon was satisfied working at the Dockyard, in fact he had various opportunities to leave but still remained there while working part time with 'Peralta and Kinds' on television repairs. (06:30) As a worker he received promotions as by time the electronic department from its primary stage was slowly expanding and evolving. He attended three to four courses in England as the system was changing fast in the dockyard. (13:00) Carmelo spent half of his life in the Electrical Department and he states that post WW2 electricity developed rapidly. He also worked with the equipment of submarines, and the torpedoes which were the most significant weapon of the submarine. He mentions that accidents used to happen, including burns and shocks. (21:00) Falzon recalls the transition from the Admiralty to Bailey, where previously it was a naval shipyard and was shifted to an independent dockyard for commercial ships. With this drastic change, workers claimed that the importance of the dockyard was lost with Bailey's intervention. Carmelo's father always encouraged him to keep working at the dockyard as he too used to work there. (24:30) With reference to family, Carmelo describes his father as an illiterate person and by time he had to learn how to sign

his name in order to get paid. (24:30) Falzon states that by the time he joined the dockyard he was paid 1 Pound a month (Lira fil-gimgha) as apprentice. A memory that Carmelo will never forget is when the manager notified him that he was going for a course in Germany. (29:15) He mentions the epoch of TVs in England as they were the first to use the TV system and had their own system which was different from that use in Europe as the English system was 405 and Europe's system was 600. (22:30) Carmelo argues that on sick and leave days he was paid only due to his position. In fact, during the Admiralty period, on sick days he received half the wage. Moreover, during the same time, about 16,000 workers were employed, however when Bailey took over the number of workers were reduced. Finally, he mentions that during Admiralty period the majority of chargeman in the Dockyard were Maltese.