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Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. R. E. Marcello

Terms of Use: Open

Approved: Hayes H. Bolitho

Date: 7/17/73

Oral History Collection

Mr. Hayes Bolitho

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas Date: July 17, 1973

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. Hayes Bolitho for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 17, 1973, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Bolitho in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Bolitho, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. Would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education, your occupation--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Bolitho: Okay, I was born in Butte, Montana, December 22, 1917. I went through grade school and high school, and attended the Montana State School of Mines. I located in Butte prior to my going into the service on April 8, 1941. At the present time, I'm employed by General

Mills as an assistant regional sales manager and have been with General Mills for twenty-six years.

Marcello: Just to go back a little bit, you obviously entered the service before World War II actually got started. Why did you enter the service?

Bolitho: Well, it was a matter of either being drafted and going into the infantry or getting into the Air Corps, which is what I was after. At the time I went in, I had two years of college. I took the physical examination to become a pilot, but my depth perception was off, and I failed the examination. So as a result, I enlisted with the idea of working on the planes or flying on them. I later became a gunner in a B-17.

Marcello: Now at that time, it was the Army Air Corps, wasn't that it? There was no such thing as the Air Force, really.

Bolitho: No, it was the Army Air Corps.

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service, did you have any idea the country sooner or later was going to get involved in the hostilities?

Bolitho: Yes, I think so. I think that it looked pretty black around the world. Europe was a turmoil, and I think it was obvious that before long the United

States would get involved in the war. But we were kind of surprised, of course, when the Japanese got into it.

Marcello: Where did you take your basic training?

Bolitho: I was sworn in at Fort Missoula in Missoula, Montana, and my basic training was completed at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City.

Marcello: Was there anything extraordinary from your training camp days you think we need to get into the record?

Bolitho: No, I don't believe so. It was just the normal run-of-the-mill training experience. Nothing extraordinary about it. I was sent to a couple of trade schools like they do with most of the fellows in the service. I was involved in the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 5th Air Base Group and had some gunnery training and then was called back to my unit. I can't remember the date. I believe it was in August.

Marcello: Of 1941?

Bolitho: Of 1941.

Marcello: When did you go overseas?

Bolitho: Well, that was when I was called back to my unit. We went to San Francisco to the port of debarkation

at Angel Island. From there we got on the . . . I can't remember the name of the ship--either . . . the Hugh L. Scott, which was a transport. We were on that for about ten or eleven days and landed at Honolulu.

Marcello: As an old boy from Montana, did you get seasick?

Bolitho: I was sick, boy, for days. Not for one or two days, but for days. Then the funny thing is that after we landed, I was sick, landsick, which, believe me, is possible. We spent one week in Honolulu. Then we were ordered . . . our code name was PLUM, and we were ordered south. We landed in Manila, Pier 7, on Thanksgiving Day, 1941.

Marcello: Now that's very interesting because I've talked with some other prisoners-of-war who were a part of that same code name or same outfit--PLUM. There are a lot of people here in Texas in the "Lost Battalion" who were a part of PLUM.

Bolitho: Right, this is correct.

Marcello: Anyhow, awhile ago, you mentioned that you were in Honolulu for about a week. While you were there, just as an aside, did you notice any extraordinary precautions or activities being taken there for the eventuality of war?

Bolitho: Not a thing, because all of our time was either sightseeing, or we returned to the boat and stayed on the boat at night.

Marcello: You said you did a great deal of sightseeing. Did you ever have any problems getting down, let's say, to Pearl Harbor or close to the Navy ships or anything like that?

Bolitho: No, I had no problem at all. No problem.

Marcello: In other words, anybody could have been down there and checked out the Navy ships?

Bolitho: As a matter of fact, I was running around with a fellow by the name of Joe B. Scott. He is dead now but he was from Duncan, Oklahoma. Joe Scott and I used to buy rolls of bus tokens and ride the bus from one end to the other of that line. We'd ride up to the university, for instance, which was the end of the line, turn around and come back to Honolulu, and take a bus and go out . . . I've forgotten the name of the point out there in Honolulu and look around and get on the bus and come back. We would do this . . . we did this two or three days, and we got a pretty good look at the island. But we were close to the air field, Hickam Field. As a matter of fact, we got on Hickam Field without any problem,

roamed all the way through it. We were down at Pearl Harbor. No problem getting on the base there.

Marcello: Incidentally, what did you think about going to the Philippines? Were you looking forward to it, or did you have some forebodings?

Bolitho: We didn't know we were going to the Philippines until after we left Honolulu.

Marcello: Oh, that's right. All you knew was PLUM.

Bolitho: That's right. We had no idea where we were going. Then during the couple of days, they would have classes and told us about the snakes and the various things to look for and be careful of and the rate of venereal disease and so forth, to be very careful what we did in the islands. Then we knew, naturally, where we were going.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you landed at Manila. What did you do when you got there? What sort of extra training or additional training did you receive?

Bolitho: We landed there, as I say, on Thanksgiving Day, 1941, and from there they took us out to A-Range behind Fort McKinley.

Marcello: It was called A-Range?

Bolitho: A-Range. This was an artillery range, A-Range. They kept us there for a couple of weeks, I suppose. I can't remember the exact amount of time. Then we were to be put on inter-island boats and to be taken down to the island of Mindanao.

Marcello: Well, at this . . . all this would have occurred after the attack, is that correct?

Bolitho: No, this was before the attack.

Marcello: No? Well, that could have been . . . you got there on Thanksgiving Day . . .

Bolitho: Thanksgiving Day.

Marcello: And the attack was on December 8th, your time . . .

Bolitho: December 8th, right.

Marcello: . . . which meant no more than maybe two weeks at the most? A two-week interval in there.

Bolitho: That's right. That's just about right. There were about seven of us that were sent over to Clark Air Force Base, and we were caught there when they hit the base, when they bombed the base.

Marcello: Well, during this two-week period, did you undergo any sort of special training or additional training of any sort?

Bolitho: No. Perhaps it wasn't that long. Perhaps it was about a week. Again, I can't really recall because as I stop to think of it, when we did get down to . . . no, it couldn't have been because I had come back down to . . . had got down to Del Monte Air Base on the island of Mindanao, and this was after Pearl Harbor had been hit and after Clark Field had been hit. Anyway, we got out of Clark Field and came down and landed at Del Monte Air Base.

Marcello: Well, let's just go back a minute. What were you doing and what were your reactions when you heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

Bolitho: Well, we couldn't believe it. There was a fellow by the name of Don Dell, I believe, who was the announcer for Radio Station Manila. We were having lunch, and we heard that Pearl Harbor'd been hit, all installations destroyed, all military personnel killed. We said, "That's not true." Because, in the first place, they'd had blackout in Manila from July until the time that the war broke out. We knew that war was imminent--there was no doubt in the world about that--but nevertheless, we still felt that Don Dell wasn't telling exactly what we could believe.

Marcello: Were you young and naive enough to think that it would be a very short war?

Bolitho: Well, I'm not so sure that I really gave it that much concern. I was young and naive.

Marcello: What was your impression of a typical Japanese? In other words, did he . . .

Bolitho: You mean prior to the time that I saw them?

Marcello: Yes, right. I assume you may have seen some of them on the islands while you were there, but in a civilian capacity.

Bolitho: There was no way that I could tell a Japanese from a Chinaman. I didn't know. I could barely distinguish a Filipino from a Chinaman or a Japanese.

Marcello: What I was getting at is that I think a lot of young servicemen at the time conjured up the caricature of the Japanese cartoon character--buckteeth, thick, horn-rimmed glasses, the perennial smile on the face, and this sort of thing.

Bolitho: Well, I suppose that crossed my mind, and I kind of conjured that impression, too. But by the same token, this was typical, as we found out later on.

Marcello: Well, what happened after you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. Let's take up the story from there.

Bolitho: Well, as we walked across the field . . . we were working on the strip, and as we walked across the field, we were expecting some B-17's. We were expecting some A-20A new dive bombers and some P-38's. As we walked across the field, why, here came these ships in beautiful formation, no camouflage, nice, bright, silver planes. We thought, "Boy, those are ours! They're the replacements. New planes." We watched them come right in, flight after flight. Just about the time they got over Clark Field, they dropped everything. Then we knew. Then they strafed us. They had so many planes in the air they could run down an individual man.

Marcello: Well, they virtually had wiped out all air resistance during that first attack, did they not?

Bolitho: There was very little air resistance. They had a little air resistance from, oh, some of the smaller fields around there--I can't even remember their names--where the 17th and the 29th and the 34th Pursuit Squadrons were. But those fellows . . . those pilots, it was just a hit-and-run job that they were attempting.

Marcello: What did it feel like to be subjected to this aerial bombardment?

Bolitho: Well, you've heard about wetting your pants. That was just about it. Just scared to death, frightened. There was no place to go.

Marcello: I understand that they could bomb the base with impunity because a great many of the antiaircraft pieces were so antiquated that the shells actually couldn't reach the planes.

Bolitho: Yes, the fuses on the shells were so short that they would explode prior to the time they hit the same level that the planes were flying. This is true. We had a number of the fellows from the 200th Coast Artillery in the camp with us later on, and this isn't hearsay. This is what they said, and, of course, that's what you have to go on.

Marcello: I gather a great deal of this ammunition went back for years and years and years. It was pretty old stuff.

Bolitho: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure this is true, particularly around Corregidor.

Marcello: Well, how many attacks were you subjected to altogether here at Clark Field?

Bolitho: There were three at Clark Field.

Marcello: In successive days?

Bolitho: Yes, in successive days.

Marcello: What did the field look like as a result of these attacks?

Bolitho: Just full of holes, completely. Barracks, fires, planes blown to smithereens--just complete chaos.

Marcello: Now they caught quite a few of the B-17's on the ground there, didn't they?

Bolitho: They caught most of them on the ground, right. The Air Force in the Philippines at that time . . . oh, I think if I'm not mistaken, I think it was the largest concentration of heavy bombers in the world. Don't really quote me on this, but I think there were around twenty-nine or twenty-seven flyable B-17's at Clark Field.

Marcello: Was there any reason for those B-17's being on the ground? Here again, I'm kind of asking you about some hearsay things, now, of course, because I don't think anybody ever really has established exactly why those B-17's were on the ground.

Bolitho: Well, they had gone out on patrol. They had come in. And they were lined up wing tip to wing tip. They were not camouflaged, that is, the majority of them weren't. And why, I can't tell you. I don't know.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you were subject to attack on three successive days at Clark Field. What happened from that point?

Bolitho: Well, from that point, there was a fellow by the name of Shorty Wheelus, Lieutenant Wheelus. Shorty grabbed a bunch of us, got us on the plane, and we flew south to . . . and we weren't the only plane that got out of there. Whatever remained of the B-17's went south to the island of Mindanao. Here we had a natural field that the 5th Air Base Group had prepared. The only preparation really was to cut the grass to a degree and make sure that we had fueling trucks and things like this around. We had some barracks built there. This is where the B-17's operated out of. Also, some P-40's that got out of there came down.

Marcello: In other words, it was just a hodgepodge of aircraft at this base?

Bolitho: Anything we could get a hold of, really, including some Philippine Airline planes. They used to hedge-hop those around the island. So we were there for . . . oh, we got . . . let's see, I think we were hit there then on December 21st.

Marcello: In other words, there was a certain time interval involved before the Japanese actually hit this field.

Bolitho: Before they get down to Del Monte, this is true.

Marcello: What did you do in the meantime?

Bolitho: Well, in the meantime, we tried to dig foxholes, and we tried to prepare ourselves as best as we could with the Enfield rifles and some of the antiquated weapons that we had. Also, we were on reconnaissance, some of us. We didn't have that many planes. We were rotated. I didn't see much of that.

Marcello: In the meantime, were you still expecting help to come?

Bolitho: Yes, we never gave up on getting help. As a matter of fact, we listened closely to the radio in San Francisco with that idea. What we heard broadcast from the United States was that help was on the way. You know, you keep holding off, and it'll be there. Of course, then MacArthur escaped out of the islands. We had to fly cover for him for 1,500 miles towards Australia.

Marcello: Were you in on that personally?

Bolitho: Yes.

Marcello: Was there anything exciting that happened while flying cover for him?

Bolitho: Not a thing.

Marcello: But I'm sure that didn't exactly help morale too much if one were to learn that the commanding general was leaving.

Bolitho: No, that's kind of demoralizing. Plus the fact that we were in a plane crash that crashed at Surigao and walked out. By the time we get back, all flyable B-17's had gone south to Australia with all the personnel that they needed down there--mostly pilots.

Marcello: In other words, there was a good chance that you could have gotten out at that point had you been back at the base.

Bolitho: Not necessarily, no. No, not necessarily because there were some other pilots that were left there, too. We had a couple of officers that shouldn't have gone that took a plane, commandeered it, and took off south. This is not hearsay, but there are no names, and they're back. I don't know whether they're still alive or not. But anyway, when we got back to our base, why, we had been hit and hit pretty hard by that time. They knew where we were,

so they came in and shelled what we called the Bugo Front, which is where the Del Monte Cannery had their canning plant. Let me see if I can pinpoint that for you. It was at Cagayan, a little town, barrio, at Cagayan. You've probably heard some of the fellows tell you about the Moonlight Parlor, which is where we used to go.

Marcello: No, nobody's ever mentioned the Moonlight Parlor.

Bolitho: The Moonlight Parlor is like a soda fountain shop in the States, where all you could drink was something that looked like Kool-aid with very little ice in it, and wink at the Filipino girls. That was the highlight of Cagayan. But anyway, the Japs came in and shelled this Bugo area and sank a ship loaded with beer, by the way. Some of those crazy characters were in there diving for the beer. They really weren't too worried about the shells going over, and they were diving for the beer. After they did this, then they invaded. There was a fellow by the name of Ray Richardson and myself, who were with a major. I can't remember the major's name. We had some Filipino troops there on this Bugo Front, and this is why we called it the Bugo Front. Ours was a delaying action which amounted

to that for about fifteen to twenty days, and they pushed us back into the Maramag Forest. It was harass them during the day and retreat at night. The Maramag Forest was almost in a central location, just north and a little west of Mount Apo, if you've heard that expression. This is where they finally pushed us.

Marcello: Did you really have much contact with the Japanese in this delaying action, or was it simply usually a matter of staying one or two steps ahead of them?

Bolitho: Just about that. There was not that much contact, really. The only thing is that we were scared to death, and we never laid down unless we had a gun in our hand. We didn't know . . . in the first place, they had killed so many Filipino soldiers, and they had retrieved their uniforms. As a result, they were dressed in the Filipino uniforms, and we couldn't even trust the troops that we were around. So we were pretty nervous.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had some Filipino troops with you. Were these from the Philippine Army or from the Filipino Scouts?

Bolitho: Filipino Scouts.

Marcello: They were Filipino Scouts. Okay, you had some pretty good soldiers with you.

Bolitho: The best, the best.

Marcello: I mean, the Philippine Army, I don't think, was worth a damn.

Bolitho: The Philippine Army was . . . no, they would run at the sound of a rifle bolt. But the Filipino Scouts were really good. We were captured in the Maramag Forest, and we were brought up to Camp Casisang.

Marcello: Let's just go back here a minute. You mentioned that you were captured. Now was this a matter of simply being surrounded, or had the word come down that you were to surrender, or what happened? Did the Japs just catch up with you by that time?

Bolitho: The word had come down long before this that we were to surrender. But the general that was in command of the assignment in our group ignored the command from Corregidor and from Luzon and severed connections, radio connections. We were on our own down there. We were the last group to actually be captured.

Marcello: Well, describe what this capture was like.

Bolitho: It was very simple. As a matter of fact, it was

either be annihilated or give up. We were completely surrounded by the Japanese. There was no way to go. So when we surrendered, we took sheets and put them over the top of the ambulances and over the top of the trucks and drove into this area where we were told to get off the trucks and raised our hands. We were searched.

Marcello: Were you looted?

Bolitho: To a degree. Our pen and pencils, wrist watches, rings. If you had an open package of cigarettes, you kept that. If you had a closed package, they took it.

Marcello: Did they rough you up any at this particular time?

Bolitho: Not at all. Not at all.

Marcello: I gather these were front line troops.

Bolitho: These were front line troops. They were entirely different. Okay, so then we went to Camp Casisang.

Marcello: Is that a town in the Philippines?

Bolitho: It's a cadre that was used by the Philippine Army to train their troops, and it was called Camp Casisang. It's near the town of Malaybalay. You've heard of Malaybalay before?

Marcello: Yes.

Bolitho: Okay, and this would be just about maybe fifteen kilometers from Malaybalay. There, the Japanese guards would come down to try and learn English with their Japanese-English dictionaries and had no fear of laying their rifle down, coming in the barracks, and sitting down and actually talking to you and trying to converse with you.

Marcello: Well, of course, I guess they knew there was really no place to go anyhow for the prisoners. The country was relatively hostile, and you couldn't blend with the local population in any way.

Bolitho: The only thing we had around us was some barbed wire between us and the Filipino camp to keep us away from the Filipinos, and that was all.

Marcello: What did the camp look like from a physical standpoint? You mentioned that there was this barbed wire, quite obviously, around it. How about the living quarters? What were they like?

Bolitho: Well, they were the old Filipino Army cadre barracks which were probably, oh, maybe twenty, twenty-five feet wide and perhaps three-quarters of a city block long and raised up from the path going through the middle, where you could put your bunk

roll and just lay right on the boards. I don't know how many men we had there--something like, I would say, maybe 800, 850, perhaps. They were most of the Americans that were on the island of Mindanao, which kind of surprised the Japs when they came in, too, to find that this was all the men that we had. They thought we had quite a large group there.

Marcello: While you were there, did you ever have to undergo any questioning by Japanese intelligence or anything of that nature?

Bolitho: No, we didn't. At least, I didn't. We were paid a visit by General Homma at one time. He came through on an inspection. At that time we had our shoes, we had all our clothes, we had mattresses, we had footlockers. Nothing was taken from us. The food was rice. We did have some flour. Periodically, they'd kill beef and carabao and bring us in the beef. The guards also--we became friendly with a couple of them--would bring in cans of crushed pineapple from the stock around the Del Monte warehouses. Or that is, from the Del Monte warehouses.

Marcello: Well, I gather then that generally, they didn't harass you too much at all there.

Bolitho: As a matter of fact, they were front line soldiers, and they knew what it was like to be a soldier. They respected another soldier, and we had no problems whatsoever. But then they moved them out. They moved them south, toward Singapore.

Marcello: About how long were you with these regular troops?

Bolitho: Oh, I'd say probably six months, maybe. Maybe not quite that long. Then from there, they took us on trucks, and we went up to this town of Cagayan.

Marcello: Let's just go back here a minute and talk a little bit more about this first prison camp. What was the daily routine like in this camp?

Bolitho: We had work details. We had work details of our own within the camp. We spent a lot of time trying to beautify the grounds as a method of something to do. But we had wood details, we had water details, and there were so many men that had to go out on these details. There were a couple of executions while we were in the camp. A couple of fellows tried to get away. One fellow stole something, and they took him out and shot him, and we were told why.

Marcello: What sort of rules did they lay down with regard to escape?

Bolitho: You were shot if you were caught.

Marcello: And they weren't bluffing, I gather.

Bolitho: No, no. They did it and they told us why. And it was a plausible explanation.

Marcello: What was their explanation?

Bolitho: Shouldn't try to do it. You're here; you're captured.

Marcello: Incidentally, I know at some of the other prisoner-of-war camps they divided the prisoners into ten-man squads, and if one man escaped, they would shoot the other nine.

Bolitho: They did that to us later on. This happened later on. Now the fellows on Cabanatuan on Luzon really had it rough up there because during the time that they held out, they had really made it so tough on the Japanese and embarrassed them, and when they did captured them, they were as rough as they possibly could be on them. But with us, it was entirely different.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the food usually consisted of rice and once in awhile, of course, some carabao meat and maybe sometimes some crushed pineapple. How was the food in terms of quantity?

Bolitho: We had sufficient. We had sufficent while we were there.

Marcello: Did you cook your own food, or was it prepared by Japanese commissary?

Bolitho: No, we were given rations, and we had various companies set up. Each company was given so many rations. We had our own mess hall and our own cooks.

Marcello: What was the medical state of the prisoners here at this particular camp?

Bolitho: Very good. Very good. Everybody was in good shape. We had suffered no real hardship at that particular time. No one had. Some of the fellows who had some shrapnel in them and a few things like that had it taken out. I had a piece of shrapnel taken out of my knee. There were all the sanitary conditions in the world when this doctor took it out.

Marcello: I gather there were adequate hospital facilities there at that time.

Bolitho: We lost none of the equipment that we had. We had plenty.

Marcello: Another question comes to mind here. How were the bathing facilities and this sort of thing?

Bolitho: Well, as you know, in the Philippines the water level is only about two feet below the ground. Like in every other camp, the only way to take a bath was

to dig wells, which we did. We lowered five-gallon cans tied to a rope and poured the water over each other. This held true in all the camps I was in.

Marcello: Did you ever have any nicknames for the guards at this particular camp? I know this occurred at a great many other camps, and I was wondering if at this camp there were names for the guards, especially since this camp obviously was a pretty good one.

Bolitho: Oh, sure. Yes, we did. We had one who was very friendly, and we called him "Whiskers." He was the type of guard who would lay his rifle against the barracks and then come in and sit down with his dictionary and try to learn some English. He was also one of the guards that brought down the crushed pineapple and the pineapple juice for us. There were several other nicknames. We had "Bulb-nose," you know, just depending on physical characteristics . . .

Marcello: Physical appearance.

Bolitho: Physical appearance. They would come by a nickname naturally.

Marcello: You mentioned that these guards would periodically come down with their English dictionaries in order to learn English.

Bolitho: Yes.

Marcello: Did you cooperate with them in trying to teach them English and this sort of thing?

Bolitho: Very much so, so we could learn some Japanese. Yes, actually it was not unbearable in this first camp.

Marcello: I gather that for the most part they left you alone as long as you did what you were supposed to do. They probably sent orders down from their commandant through their officers, down to your commanding officer among the prisoners, and they were carried out.

Bolitho: That's right. This is where we had a couple of generals and some high-ranking personnel in our camp. Of course, later on they were taken out, and we were moved. They were taken, I believe, to Manila and then to Japan.

Marcello: Incidentally, did the Japanese ever have a hard time understanding why so many Americans had surrendered, had not died a warrior's death, or anything of that nature? Did it bother them?

Bolitho: Yes, they used to tell us all the time that if they got captured like this, this was bad news for them. They were . . .

Marcello: A real disgrace.

Bolitho: A real disgrace, and they should have died for the emperor. They couldn't understand why we didn't.

Marcello: You know, in a lot of camps, some prisoners have given the opinion that this was one of the reasons they were treated so roughly. It was because they had surrendered, and therefore in the Japanese' eyes they didn't deserve to live. So consequently, the rough treatment came forward, also. There are all sorts of explanations given for the rough treatment. This is one which was sometimes put forward.

Bolitho: We were told this by a Jap major when we first entered this Davao Penal Colony--that we should get down on our knees and thank our God that the Japanese took us as prisoners-of-war.

Marcello: Were there any other rules and regulations that the Japanese had in this camp? Now, quite obviously, we've mentioned that had you escaped and were caught, you were shot. Now were there any other rules that you had to follow? In other words, did you have to salute all Japanese soldiers or bow to all Japanese soldiers?

Bolitho: Oh, yes, sure. This was a matter of courtesy with them. We didn't understand it at the time. I know

it now. But we'd rather salute. We'd never get caught outside without a hat on because we would rather salute than bow.

Marcello: Were you ever able to take advantage of any sort of recreation activities or facilities at this particular camp?

Bolitho: Well, there was nothing really to . . .

Marcello: I gather you weren't being worked too hard, and that's why I wondered.

Bolitho: No, we weren't. But so far as recreation is concerned, we didn't have any bats or balls to play baseball; no footballs to throw around. About all you could do would be to run races or something like this. I never saw a great deal of that because the weather was too hot. But there was a lot of chess played, there was a lot of bridge played, there was a lot of poker played. You could classify this as recreation to a degree.

Marcello: How about reading? Were there any books or anything of that sort available for reading?

Bolitho: We had a few but not too many. Most of the fellows that had them, they hoarded them and kept them pretty close. Not primarily to read but primarily to roll cigarettes with.

Marcello: I gather that most of the work projects that you had at this initial camp were the type that would be required to maintain the camp. You mentioned cutting the firewood and things of this nature. In other words, for the most part here, you weren't sent outside the camp to build roads, repair bridges, or things of that nature?

Bolitho: No, because, you see, this island never really did take any damage to speak of. The only damage that they really suffered on that island was probably at Del Monte Air Base, where we were bombed several times, and this was because we had the military installation there. But farther on down where we were, in the center of the island, there was very little damage done. Very little.

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with Filipino civilians at this camp?

Bolitho: No, very little. The only time we had any contact with the civilians is . . . the Japs paid us so much. When we'd get this paper yen, why, we could go down to the PX, so to speak, and here was where the Filipinos would bring in their wares--candy and bananas--and we could buy a few things like that. That's the only contact we had with them.

Marcello: Okay, so you were there for about six months, as you mentioned. I would gather that during this time, your weight was about stable?

Bolitho: Yes, there was no reason for it to go down.

Marcello: What did you weigh at that particular time? Do you recall offhand?

Bolitho: Oh, probably about 125, 130.

Marcello: During the period of time that you were there, did you manage to observe any particular rough treatment that the Japanese guards dealt out to the prisoners? You mentioned, of course, the execution for having escaped and so on. Did you see the usual type of physical punishment about which so many of the prisoners talk, such as slapping and hitting with gun butts and kicking and things of that nature?

Bolitho: Not as much there. We did see and did witness a few of the fellows getting slapped around, but this is because they weren't doing what they should have been doing. This was a natural thing. Later on in the camps, we saw a great deal more.

Marcello: Well, I gather the slapping was something that was rather commonplace in the Japanese Army, also. High ranking officers would physically punish lower ranking officers, and lower ranking officers would do

the same to the enlisted man, right on down the line. There was a regular pecking order.

Bolitho: This is true. This is true.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you were at this initial camp about six months, and then you were moved. Now where were you moved to?

Bolitho: Well, we were taken back down to Cagayan, and we were forced to load rice on . . . it was the USS Montana, by the way, which is rather odd. But this ship had been captured in Singapore. We loaded rice on there--carried it on board, stacked it up. Then we got on this boat. They allowed us up on the deck. We slept up on the deck. We went from Cagayan right down around and up to Davao, round the east side of the island of Mindanao.

Marcello: About how much of a time span are we talking about here from the time you left the first camp until you got to Davao.

Bolitho: Oh, perhaps three days or four days at the most.

Marcello: I see. It wasn't too long, then.

Bolitho: No, no. It was a beautiful ride because we were just offshore. We weren't out in the rough water.

Marcello: I assume this was, however, pretty hard physical work, loading that rice on that ship.

Bolitho: Yes, it was. Then when we landed at Davao, this is when things got different. Things got rough. We had to march from Davao to the Davao Penal Colony.

Marcello: Which was a distance of about how far?

Bolitho: I don't know. Maybe eighteen miles, sixteen miles, fifteen miles. I don't know.

Marcello: Was this the entire camp?

Bolitho: This was the entire group, right.

Marcello: Did the Japanese try and humiliate you on this march? In other words, did they make sure that you were marched in such a fashion or manner that the Filipino civilians could see you and could see how the white man had been humiliated or any of this sort of thing?

Bolitho: Yes, pretty much so. One thing they did odd though. Some of the older men who fell out, they picked them up on trucks and took them on up to Davao Penal Colony. But we were late getting into Davao, and we landed there at Davao in the morning. When we were late getting into Davao Penal Colony, why, it was almost dark. This is when this major gave us this big speech about being late. We had an interpreter there by the name of "Running" Wada. Wada was his name, and we called him "Running" Wada because he was constantly

running. He told us that we were late. He said, "You are late. You are very late, and you will not eat supper." Then this major came out and gave us this big speech. This was our first glimpse of Davao Penal Colony.

Marcello: What was the gist of the major's speech?

Bolitho: That we should get down on our knees and thank our God for the Japanese being willing to take us as prisoners.

Marcello: Now at this time, I gather then that you were no longer under the control of regular troops. These were reserves, perhaps, or something of that nature? These were rear area troops.

Bolitho: These were troops from Formosa that had been sent down to actually act as guards while the front line troops went on down to take Singapore.

Marcello: Now you say these were troops from Formosa. These were Japanese troops, however.

Bolitho: These were Japanese troops. This is right.

Marcello: The reason I asked that question was . . .

Bolitho: These were Formosans, who were Japanese.

Marcello: Okay, they were in the Japanese Army.

Bolitho: From Formosa. But they were not from Japan.

Marcello: Right, that's the point I wanted to make. These were Formosan conscripts, in other words.

Bolitho: This is correct.

Marcello: Okay, that's the point I wanted to make because I think in most of these camps, whenever they employed these foreign troops, whether they be Formosans or Koreans, this is when things really got rough. Apparently, those people have probably been tromped on for so many years by the Japanese, and now they found somebody that they could work over pretty well, too. Again, it was a good way, of course, of getting in good with their masters or superiors.

Bolitho: I think this is true. Yes, and we knew, too, that they would delight in trying to kill an American, just to be able to go back and say they'd shot one. So we were pretty careful.

Marcello: I gather that this march from the city of Davao to the Penal Colony was no repetition of a miniature Bataan Death March or anything of that nature.

Bolitho: In no way. No, in no way. There was no one shot. Sure, there were some of the fellows hit with rifle butts, some of them slapped, some of them kicked. But no one was murdered. Nothing like that.

Marcello: Well, from a physical standpoint, what did the Davao Penal Colony look like. I'm sure you have some vivid memories of this place.

Bolitho: Well, this was quite a shock when I first saw this. This thing, I would say, was probably two and a half or three city blocks long and perhaps, oh, one and a half to two city blocks wide and probably had maybe ten or twelve barracks in there which had corrigated roof . . . corrigated tin roof tops. In the Philippines, that's almost unbearable. The whole area was pretty dingy . . .

Marcello: You mean, because of the heat.

Bolitho: Because of the heat, right. It was pretty dingy. They had the machine gun . . . what do you call them?

Marcello: Towers, I guess. The guard towers.

Bolitho: Towers in each one of the four corners. We had to go across a bridge, a small bridge over a little stream, to get into the compound.

Marcello: Of course, I gather there was barbed wire around the place.

Bolitho: Barbed wire . . . three different series of barbed wire fences.

Marcello: Was any of it electrified?

Bolitho: No, no.

Marcello: I think for our record, we'd better explain what this Davao Penal Colony had been before the war. It was a prison for Filipinos.

Bolitho: It was a prison for political and incorrigible Filipinos. It was self-sustaining. They raised their own cattle, they raised their own pigs, they raised their own chickens, they had their own eggs, they had fruit trees--papayas, lemons--they had everything there. Unfortunately, when we were in the camp, they never gave us any. The papaya and the lemons and limes would just rot on the trees, and everyone had scurvy so badly that you could hardly talk. But in some of these work details, we did manage to steal some of this fruit and help the scurvy.

Marcello: What were the barracks like at this camp? You mentioned that they had the corrigated roof and this sort of thing. What were they like inside?

Bolitho: They were exactly the same as the Filipino cadre. They make them all that way. I don't think they know any different on the islands (chuckle).

Marcello: How about the shower and bathing facilities here? What were they like?

Bolitho: Same thing. Same thing. Dug a hole in the ground, and we lowered the five-gallon cans. Unless you have a five-gallon can in the Philippines, you're in deep trouble.

Marcello: Was there any running water or anything like that at this camp that was available to the prisoners?

Bolitho: We had two spigots that ran in a slow stream. You were allowed so many hours a day to stand in line to get your canteenful. About the time that you'd get there, they'd shut off the water, and then you couldn't get any water until the next day. So with so many men in each barracks--and I've forgotten how many men were in the barracks--we had just about enough space to rest your shoulders on. We would take a blanket when we had them, which was not too often, and fold it up into about one foot in width, and this is what we would lay on. Those boards were pretty darn hard. But after awhile, we became pretty callous to them. We were crammed right in, shoulder to shoulder. Then some of the fellows got some shelter halves and made some bunks by pounding boards together. You ask where we get the nails. Of course, that's an obvious question. Well, we'd find the

nails around the camp, pull them out of the boards. It was a wonder some of those barracks didn't fall apart.

Marcello: Well, I gather that as time went on the prisoners became real scavengers. In other words, any item, any article, that they thought was or could be of any future value to them was automatically collected, put in some sort of a bag or container or kit or whatever the prisoner may have had.

Bolitho: Very much. And each prisoner had his own little tiny sack of belongings.

Marcello: What did you have in yours? Do you recall?

Bolitho: I really don't recall. My sole possession over there was two G-strings. They took our shoes away from us.

Marcello: Where did they do that? At Davao?

Bolitho: At Davao, yes. They took our shoes away from us. We had no hats, no shirts. We did, later on, set up a weaving group which consisted of some of the older officers and enlisted men who weren't capable of going out and doing the heavy physical labor. They wove hats and baskets. These hats which we wore were a protection. But so far as possessions

was concerned, my possessions were very few. I can't even remember what they were, what any of them were.

Marcello: What was the food like at this particular camp?

Bolitho: Well, this was where it got pretty rough. We would go out--you've probably heard the expression from some of the other men--and have kang-kong. This was a word or words that we gave to this weed-like flower growing on top of these puddles of water. They weren't puddles of water. They were like stagnated water, shallow. We'd go in there and cut those darn things down and boil them because they were green. At least we got some of the chlorophyll and got some of the benefit. We'd go out on a detail, a kang-kong detail, and they'd fill these great big wicker baskets just full of this and bring it into the camp and cut it up. By the way, I worked in the kitchen there for awhile, and one of my duties was to cut the kang-kong. We put it in fifty-five gallon drums and boiled it. Then once in awhile, they'd give us fish heads, and we'd throw the fish heads in there. This was kang-kong soup which you'd pour over this rice, the little bit of rice that you got.

Marcello: How did you manage to get to work in the cookhouse? I'm sure it wasn't because you had any particular skills in the culinary arts.

Bolitho: No, they tried to rotate that as much as possible, especially when you got to the point where your physical being was being deprived and you needed help. It so happened that I was on a rice detail for quite awhile.

Marcello: This was actually out in the paddies?

Bolitho: This was actually out in the paddies--harrowing the paddies and planting the rice and weeding the rice and harvesting the rice. I had beriberi. My legs would swell, and the rice would cut in, and I had just deep gashes in my feet. So they took me off of this and put me in the kitchen for awhile. One of the benefits of working in the kitchen was that when you went for supplies, we had a good Japanese soldier who was a two-star private. His name was Okomoto. But Okomoto San was a pretty good guy. When we went to the bodega, we'd pick up these sacks of dried fish, and he'd always turn his head, and we'd make a raid on the canned milk which was there and throw so much of the canned milk in the fish bags.

Also, we managed to hide a sack of brown sugar--and when I mean sack, it was like fifty-five pounds--and bring this back in the camp. Then we would dole it out as much as we could to the fellows outside the kitchen . . . outside the galley. But the majority of it was kept in the galley, and it was given to the older men who really needed the nourishment and to the hospital. But we always got our share just by virtue of the fact that we stole it. If you stole five cans of milk, you got one-fifty. One can was yours.

Marcello: I think that this was a procedure that was followed in most of the camps. Usually it was the physically unfit, if that's a good term to use, that usually worked in the cookshack in most cases.

Bolitho: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: You also brought up another very interesting point there, and it's one that I'm glad you put into the record, and this is that every Japanese soldier wasn't sadistic. There were some good ones, and there were some bad ones, and the majority of them probably were average just like any other soldier.

Bolitho: Very much so. As a matter of fact, we had two or three Jap officers who were educated in the United

States and made a pretense of not knowing English. But we knew who they were, and we were careful what we said when they came around. There was one Jap officer who really understood English and was a pretty good Jap officer. But we had some there that . . . we had a little sadistic character. I can't remember his name either, but he was a little syphilletic, a Jap second lieutenant. He was forever trying to practice judo on some of the big, tall Americans. He was about, I'd say, maybe five foot even, if he was that. He was a great one for trying to inflict as much punishment as possible.

Marcello: What were some of the types of physical punishment that you saw handed out to the prisoners at Davao? What were some of the usual forms of punishment?

Bolitho: Well, there were several. We used to have to stand at attention and this . . . I believe his name was Yamata, but I can't say for sure. He'd come down through the barracks and look at your eyes and look to see if you would follow him with your eyes. If you followed him with your eyes, you were bound to get the quirt across the face or across the chest. I've seen them take men out and physically beat them

to the point where they could barely stand up, almost kill them on the spot.

Marcello: They would be beaten with fists, clubs?

Bolitho: Fists, clubs, guns, quirts--you name it. I wouldn't say there was a great deal of this, but I'd say there was a great deal more than there should have been.

Marcello: This is what I was going to ask you. Was a great deal of this punishment undeserved?

Bolitho: Yes, very much so. Almost all of it was undeserved. It was done just from a sadistic point of view.

Marcello: I would assume that a lot of times the language barrier may have had something to do with this, too. Is that a fair assumption to make in some cases? In other words, a lack of understanding due to language difficulty.

Bolitho: If it was, it was simply because it was used as an excuse because generally speaking, we had an interpreter there. Anytime a Jap officer came in, there was generally an interpreter.

Marcello: What were some of the types of jobs that were done here at Davao. Now you've mentioned the cookshack, and you've mentioned work on the rice paddies. What

were some of the other typical jobs that prisoners might have to perform here?

Bolitho: Well, then we had to go out in the chicken coops and cut the grass out there and make sure the chickens were able to get around. To show you just how sadistic they were, they had some chickens there that wouldn't lay like they should, so they put them in cages and wouldn't feed them until they laid eggs. You know, real smart. We had to clean out the pigpens. We had to clean out some of the gardens they had down there which was reserved for the Jap troops, but nevertheless we cleaned them out. While we were doing this . . . when I say clean them out, I mean weeding them. We were always allowed by these specific guards to take so many of the vegetables and boil it up for our own noon luncheon. But if they ever saw an officer coming, why, we had to throw that out quickly. Then there was the rice detail which was the real bad one. That was rough.

Marcello: I gather this was the bad one in all the camps.

Bolitho: Yes, this was really bad.

Marcello: You might talk just a little bit about this rice detail.

Bolitho: Well, in the first place, you were working in mud that was just about up to your knees. It's that slimy, thick, miserable mud that when you step out in it, it'd just dry on your legs and just pull the skin tight. There were always sticks and stumps and everything underneath this water that you were stepping on, and you forever had infections in your feet from the open wounds and dirt getting in there. We had boards that were probably six or seven feet long and about a foot wide. These had like horns on them, and this was the harrow. We would stand on those, and the carabao would pull this. This is the way we'd harrow this field or this pit, I guess you'd call it. Then when we got through with that, they'd take so many Americans, and they'd line them up about as far apart as your arms would stretch fingertip to fingertip, and they'd give us rice seedlings. They had ropes with knots in it, and they'd pull this rope, and wherever there was a knot, you had to plant this rice seedling. You'd move backwards constantly.

Marcello: In other words, the rope was stretched across the paddy.

Bolitho: Right.

Marcello: And you walked backwards putting in these rice seedlings.

Bolitho: Right. The place was full of coral snakes. We got to the point where we didn't pay any attention to them. But it's a wonder that somebody didn't get bit and killed, but nobody did.

Marcello: I would assume that this was rather back-breaking work for an American, who, let's say, was anywhere from five feet ten on up through six feet tall.

Bolitho: Oh, yes, this was brutal. Then we'd have to go through and weed that rice. Then after the rice was ripe, we had to go in and weed that rice. Then after the rice was ripe, we had to go in and cut it. Then we'd bring it down to this . . . we carried it in baskets and brought it down to this harvester. This thing would run it through and shake the rice into sacks. Then we had to pick the sacks up and carry them over and put them on the train. Then we had to get on that train and go down to the warehouse or the bodega and unload them and stack them up. Then we'd complete the cycle. This cycle went on for twelve months out of the year. This field here was being cultivated; this field here was being harvested; this field here was being weeded and so forth. So it was a constant process.

Marcello: You have some vivid memories of this, and I expect that this is where you spent most of your time when you were at the Davao Penal Colony.

Bolitho: I spent a great deal of my time there.

Marcello: Describe what a typical day was like. Now you've talked about work in the rice fields. Let's describe what a typical day was like from the time you got up in the morning till the time you went to bed in the evening.

Bolitho: Okay, we'd get up in the dark, and we would wash as best we could. We'd go down to the mess hall. We'd have breakfast. We'd come back and line up again . . .

Marcello: You had a mess hall there?

Bolitho: We had a mess hall, yes. It was the Penal Colony mess hall where our own cooks . . . with the number of men in the camp, we were given so many sacks of rice, so to speak. Then after we ate, we'd go through the line again, and they'd put rice in our messkits. We'd go out and board this narrow-gauge train and go out into the fields and start working right off the bat.

Marcello: What were the guards like out here in these rice paddies?

Bolitho: They were pretty rough, pretty miserable. We worked on what we called the contract basis. We finally got that across to them. We'd do so much work, and that was it. We were through for the day. But as we did this and hurried up our work, they kept increasing the quota so that we got to the point where it was almost impossible to finish. So we'd work all day, and we'd have a half an hour for lunch, if that. We'd have enough time to eat. Then we would work right up until dark and board the train, come back in in the dark, go to the mess hall, come back, and go to bed. Same thing over and over.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the guards were pretty brutal out here on this detail. In what ways? Again, were they continually on you all the time to get you to work harder?

Bolitho: Yes, it was a constant "speedo, speedo, speedo" operation, all the time. If you slowed down or if you weren't feeling well, if the sun began to get you, you could make sure you'd get a rifle in the back.

Marcello: How sick did you have to be to require medical attention or to get off the rice planting detail?

Bolitho: You had to be pretty sick.

Marcello: Did you ever have any ways of supplementing your food here? I think you went into this a little bit previously.

Bolitho: Yes, the rice detail, you didn't. There was no way. This was the bad part of the rice detail. It was the hardest work and the most miserable work, the most distasteful work. There was very little opportunity, if any, to get additional food. The only thing you could do would be to forage for some of this kang-kong, and out there you didn't have the means of boiling it. You sure as hell didn't want to eat it if it wasn't boiled. Generally, this was just a bad detail all the way through.

I was sent on another detail down to Davao. It was the Lasang detail. This was the Lasang lumberyard. There was a small group of us, and our job was to . . . we had a couple of Filipinos who cut the logs, brought them in, and ran them through the big saw. As they came down on the rollers, it was our job to take the heavy Philippine luan wood, which is real heavy . . .

Marcello: That's hard wood, real hard.

Bolitho: This is real heavy. It was our job to take that bark and take that over to one side and put it on another roller where it would run through another saw. Then the planks, as they came through, they were separated by size and by grade. But here we were given two breaks a day plus a lunch break simply because it was so heavy. We were fed good there because the work was heavy. But it was dangerous because that wood was so heavy, and one slip . . . more than one fellow had his foot crushed. It was clean. We had running water. We were allowed to swim in the ocean every night when we got through. We were allowed to fish. They caught shark and caught everything else and brought it in and let us cook them. We had our own kitchen again.

Marcello: In other words, when you were on this detail, you did not go back up into the penal colony itself.

Bolitho: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Oh, you did? In the evening you were sent back up to the penal colony.

Bolitho: No, no, I take that back. We stayed there. But after a period of time--and I can't tell you how long I was there--then I went back to the camp. They

would rotate men on this job. When you got to the point where you looked pretty healthy, then they'd send you back to the Davao Penal Colony again.

Then I was on a detail where they were making synthetic silk. This was a plant that we had to weed, plant, cut, wash, and stack the leaves. This was sent to a factory, crushed, and then woven. It was synthetic silk. This was miserable because that stuff would cut into your skin, into your flesh. We worked without gloves. I was only on that detail for a short time because I got a couple of bad cuts in my leg, and then I was sent back up to the camp.

Then I was taken down to . . . I can't remember the other camp. This was an airfield that we had built for the Japanese. I don't know if you've ever heard anybody talk about this or not. This is where we worked in coral. We dug the coral by pick and shovel.

Marcello: Now were you moved down there altogether, or were you still going back to the penal colony at the end of the day.

Bolitho: No, we were physically moved there.

Marcello: Okay, before we get to that point, I have a few more

questions to ask you about Davao. Now were there very many escape attempts made at Davao?

Bolitho: Yes, there was one man that got away alone. He made it and came back to the States. There were ten man that got away. This was Mellnik, Doverman, Grashio--I've got the book here. I could tell you who they are, but I can't remember the rest of them. They escaped. Here we were in mortal fear because we were in the blood brother group up there at that time. Ten men escaped, and they told us they were going to kill a hundred.

Marcello: Were any of these men from your group of the hundred?

Bolitho: Yes, there were.

Marcello: What happened?

Bolitho: They kept us in solitary confinement. They didn't allow us to work. We didn't do a thing for about two weeks--cut our rations, constantly harassed us, lined us up, and made us count off. We didn't know really what it was for--whether we were going to be taken out and shot or what. They sent search parties out constantly after these ten men. Never caught them, of course. Then after a two-week period of time, why, then they relented but the work got tough, and we

never really got the rations back that we had before they took off.

Marcello: I would gather that on Mindanao, if you had the guts to do so, escape might have had somewhat of a chance of success here because of the guerrilla activity. There was a great deal of guerrilla activity on Mindanao.

Bolitho: There was a great deal of guerrilla activity around the Davao Penal Colony. As a matter of fact, when things got a little tough and we got low on quinine, we could find quinine in cans that were on the side of the road. The Filipino guerrillas were leaving this for us. We didn't know this. We didn't know but what the whole surrounding countryside was completely controlled by the Japanese. This was probably one of the few areas where you could have gotten away without any problem. You could have gone twenty-five feet in the jungle and been picked up by a Filipino guerrilla. Now this is what happened to those ten guys. They were picked up almost instantly and led up into the hills.

Marcello: Well, this is what I gather. When you look at Mindanao, the only principal cities that the island

has, I think, are right along the coast, and even they aren't really that big.

Bolitho: That's right.

Marcello: And Mindanao is a rather hostile island, I think, when you get back into the interior.

Bolitho: Very much so. Very much so.

Marcello: Like you say, unknown to you, probably that countryside was controlled by the guerrillas.

Bolitho: And even the hostile natives, that is, the primitive Filipinos . . . and there were some back there in those jungles. We saw some. I ran into some and lived with some up there. When we were there as Americans, they were very hostile to the Japanese and very friendly to the Americans. They knew that much. They disliked them intensely. So the opportunity to escape was on the island. There was no doubt in the world about it. But we didn't know it.

Marcello: Did you witness any executions of prisoners who had attempted to escape and were caught?

Bolitho: No, I only witnessed one shooting in this camp. This is where a fellow was outside . . . we had two camps. We had the . . . they were both penal . . . Davao Penal Colony camps. But one was perhaps a mile from

the other. This is where they sent fellows who had beriberi so badly and had the rice poisoning so badly that their feet were swollen. We slept in cages. I was over there for awhile. These cages were about maybe three and a half feet square, and they had a sliding door on them. But these cages were to keep the mosquitoes out. Here we did very little work. It was just a matter of going over there. It was a recuperative area, so to speak. But when you were there, you were there for one purpose, and that was to get as well as you possibly could. We had a fellow outside the compound, right underneath the guard tower, digging camotes, which is like a sweet potato. He hollered to one of his friends inside to throw him a canteen of water. This guard misunderstood what he did. He threw the canteen of water, and this guard was right above him with the rifle and aiming down at him. He was begging the guard not to shoot him. He pumped two bullets in him, and then he fired at this other fellow running across the compound. Now that's the only actual shooting that I saw in the camp while I was there. But later on, there was a great deal of it, as some of the fellows have probably told you.

Marcello: By the time you left Davao Penal Colony, what was your physical condition like? Yours personally?

Bolitho: Well, I . . .

Marcello: I'm referring to the time when you were ready to move down to the airstrip.

Bolitho: I was not in very good physical condition. I was losing weight and was not too strong. I wanted to get out of Davao Penal Colony on any work detail because I felt that if I could get out, the opportunities of surviving were a great deal better simply because the food would be better.

Marcello: Things couldn't get any worse.

Bolitho: Couldn't get any worse, no. And there was no escape out of this Davao Penal Colony. That is, we were watched too closely, and in my condition heading for the hills was out of the question because I didn't think I could make it.

Marcello: Did you have any of the usual diseases that prisoners contracted, like dysentery or beriberi . . . well, you mentioned beriberi, pellagra.

Bolitho: Well, everybody had dysentery. This was common. You had to get up in the middle of the night three or four times or five or six times. We all had beriberi.

We had yellow jaundice. We had yellow fever. We had malaria. Very little Atabrine and very little quinine--just enough to stave it off a little bit. Everybody's eyes were yellow, and their skin was yellow.

Marcello: Most of these things were caused by dietary deficiencies, isn't that correct? Except, of course, the malaria and the yellow fever.

Bolitho: Strictly. Beriberi was a dietary deficiency. The pellagra was a dietary deficiency and, of course, the scurvy.

Marcello: Did you ever resort, let's say, to eating some of the more exotic things like snakes, rats, dogs, cats, things of that nature?

Bolitho: Oh, sure. We had some fellows that trapped the rats over there and would stake them out, that is, clean them and dry the skin. Dry them, and this was jerky. I tried this. This was good. We also caught a cobra in the camp one time. We also caught an iguana lizard in there one time and cooked them. We also stole a couple of chickens one time, cut them up, and brought them back in the mess kit, and for that you could be killed. Usually, they'd

search you before you went in, but it so happened they missed it. I had it right in the mess kit and walked right in.

Marcello: You mentioned that you stole these chickens, and if you had gotten caught, you would have gotten killed. I think this perhaps indicates just how desperate you had become for food at this time.

Bolitho: You knew the penalty, but the food was worth taking the risk for. Secondly, we'd go out and when we did get a chance, we would take one of these great big lemons which were huge. They were the size of a grapefruit. I've seen fellows--and I've done it myself--cut those up into little tiny pieces and throw them in your mouth so you could swallow them, and it wouldn't touch your mouth. It would hurt so badly. Just throw them right down your throat because your tongue was swollen, and your lips were cracked back into your cheeks. Here were all those lemons, and all we needed was one. One a week would have cured the whole thing, and they were rotting on the tree.

Marcello: And there was no reason for them denying you these lemons.

Bolitho: No. No, not a thing.

Marcello: Now what was the thought that was most constantly on your mind the whole time you were at Davao Penal Colony?

Bolitho: Food.

Marcello: Okay, I wanted to get that in the record because . . .

Bolitho: We used to sit around and dream up recipes.

Marcello: You don't have to tell me anything about that because I've interviewed several prisoners who kept diaries or notebooks, and 90 per cent of the notebooks or diaries consist of recipes--some of the most God-awful recipes you've ever seen in your life.

Bolitho: Yes, this was a constant thought. Everybody really always would just sit around and really talk about, "Well, when I get back to the States, the first thing I'm going going to do, I'm going to make this kind of a sandwich." Or, "I'm going to open up a restaurant, and I'm going to serve this."

Marcello: You know, some prisoners told me that the thought of food was so constantly on their minds and so deeply ingrained in their minds that at times they could actually swear that they smelled a particular type of food cooking somewhere in the camp. One

prisoner, for example, had a fixation about bacon and eggs. Somewhere in that camp, he could smell bacon and eggs cooking, and he combed that camp looking for those bacon and eggs.

Bolitho: Yes, we could sit around on Thanksgiving and on Crhistmas, and we'd talk about turkey and everything that went with it--all the trimmings. And you could smell it. You could actually smell that turkey cooking.

Marcello: Well, the reason I ask you this is because I think most people, or a great many people, would think right away that with all these men together, it was women, sex, or something like that that was first and foremost in everybody's mind. But again, 100 per cent of the prisoners have told me it was food.

Bolitho: That's right.

Marcello: No question at all about that.

Bolitho: That's right. Not even cold beer or a drink, or anything else, but food. Ham sandwiches or a piece of bread, a piece of toast, something like that.

Marcello: How much news did you get from the outside while you were at Davao?

Bolitho: Well, we had a transmitter in the camp.

Marcello: Was this a clandestine transmitter?

Bolitho: Yes, right.

Marcello: In other words, you had enough men there that had enough skill and expertise to put it together?

Bolitho: I don't know where it came from. I have no idea. I do know that by word of mouth we got news. I do know that some of it was true. I do know that a lot of it was rumors. I don't know when the thing was operating and when it wasn't. But anything we heard, we took it as being news from San Francisco.

Marcello: Were you able to follow the course of the war very closely as a result of this news?

Bolitho: No, not at all.

Marcello: How about letters? Were you ever allowed to send any postcards or letters or anything of that nature?

Bolitho: Yes, we were allowed to send postcards. I don't know how many I sent. I've got some of them here.

Marcello: These were some of the usual type, I'm sure, that said, "My health is . . . "

Bolitho: "I am well."

Marcello: "Good, fair, poor" or something like that. And if you didn't say good, the postcard didn't get out.

Bolitho: Or you underlined. You underlined the word that you wanted to indicate. Then you were allowed fifteen

words that you could write down at the bottom. If the wording was right and if it didn't take "Running" Wada a great deal of concentration to figure out what you were saying, and if there was nothing there that might indicate the opposite of what you were saying or was within his command of the English language, it went through. But if it was something that he wasn't too sure of, it didn't go through.

Marcello: Did you receive any mail from the outside?

Bolitho: None.

Marcello: How about Red Cross packages?

Bolitho: Well, we had Red Cross packages, and we got them twice. And when I say twice, I will take that back. There was one shipment, but they doled it out to us.

Marcello: They did give you the Red Cross packages?

Bolitho: Yes, right.

Marcello: They did not hold any of them back from you?

Bolitho: I don't know. I don't know how many we received over there or that were sent to us.

Marcello: What was in the typical Red Cross parcel?

Bolitho: Well, there was canned spam and cigarettes. Of course, cigarettes was the means of barter. Gosh, I can't remember.

Marcello: Don't forget Klim. Klim was in there, the powdered milk.

Bolitho: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: And cheese, I think there was cheese and butter.

Bolitho: Canned butter, and most of the cheese, by the time we got it, was pretty moldy.

Marcello: You must have got some of the Bordens' cheese.

Bolitho: I think we did.

Marcello: Some of the prisoners have told me that they have a warm spot in their heart for Kraft (chuckle). Apparently, if you got Kraft cheese, it was good.

Bolitho: That's right. I forgot about that. That's true.

Marcello: And they don't have a good thing to say about Bordens for some reason.

Bolitho: Bordens' cheese all came through moldy and crushed-- bad news. But you're right. The Kraft cheese . . . and I had forgotten that. The Kraft cheese was alright.

Marcello: When you received this Red Cross package, did you gobble the food down, or did you ration it out?

Bolitho: No, we rationed it out. There were four of us that went in together on our food. We'd put a can of corned beef in for one meal. We'd have one meal a week so that we could ration it out as long as we

could. We'd cut that corned beef, almost weigh it spoonful by spoonful, to make sure that everybody got the same amount. Of course, if you smoked, you were trading your canned meat and everything else for cigarettes. I did smoke but I gave up over there because I was more involved in the food than I was in the cigarettes.

Marcello: It's hard to imagine--and I'm sure it's true--that people would actually trade cigarettes for food.

Bolitho: They did. And they were starving.

Marcello: I would assume that these Red Cross packages were real lifesavers. Anything above and beyond what you had would certainly be helpful.

Bolitho: Well, you can say that, but at the time when we got the Red Cross packages, then they cut down our food ration. So then when we ran out of the Red Cross packages, and they knew that we were out, then for about a month after that, we were still on the light ration. Then when they knew we were completely out, they increased the ration again. So we really didn't gain a great deal.

Marcello: My next question might be a ridiculous one, but I'll ask it anyway. How great a problem was theft at Davao?

Bolitho: Not as bad as you would think.

Marcello: Well, I say ridiculous because I'm not sure what there was to steal. I'm speaking prisoner to prisoner.

Bolitho: That's what I'm saying, too. I'm thinking primarily when we had the Red Cross packages. It was almost an unwritten law that you didn't steal your friend's food ration. Now if somebody came in from another barracks, he was watched closely. But in our own barracks, nothing was touched.

Marcello: How about discipline? What sort of discipline was maintained among these prisoners?

Bolitho: Excellent. As a matter of fact, we had our own . . . set up our own commanding officer of the camp. In our camp, he was a Navy commander. We had our own officers in each barracks. We had details assigned to us in each barracks.

Marcello: Now the officers and the men were segregated, however, were they not?

Bolitho: They were. Right, they were.

Marcello: Were the officers forced to work at this camp?

Bolitho: Not as much as the enlisted men. No, they went on the basket weaving detail. They had generally most of the good details.

Marcello: Was there ever any resentment because of this?

Bolitho: Not a great deal, no. No, we were all in it together. We were all dying of starvation. Some of us had to work harder than others. This just happened to be it. Some of the fellows looked forward to going out and working in the rice paddies, if you can believe that. Yet they knew if they did work hard and if they did get all these cuts, they would have maybe a month where they didn't do a thing. But then when you had this month, you didn't get fed as well either. That's why you were segregated in that other camp.

Marcello: What were the hospital facilities like here at Davao?

Bolitho: Well, they were pretty primitive. We didn't have enough medicine to do the job. We had a breakout of infantile paralysis there, too. A fellow by the name of Stan Dawson is still paralyzed. He lives in Wyoming. I believe he lives in Buffalo, Wyoming. We were scared to death of this, those that knew about it. Because that's all we needed, was an epidemic like that to go through. But the hospital . . . when a man got in there and he was really sick, there wasn't really a helluva lot they could do for

him. Of course, we had burial details just like up in Cabanatuan in the prisoner-of-war camp. You'd dig a ditch--you were in water--and you'd take them out and throw them in and throw rocks on top of them. Put them down with a pole, and then throw the dirt on them to keep them down. Then, of course, the wild dogs would come through, and you'd see an arm out the next day with just the bone. But there wasn't anything we could do about it. It was just conditions.

Marcello: How great was the attrition rate here at the Davao Penal Colony?

Bolitho: Well, it was pretty bad when we first got in there because they brought so many of those fellows down from Cabanatuan who were in such bad shape. We were giants and in good shape compared to those guys. When they brought them in, those fellows began to die right and left. They tried to keep it as quiet in the camp as they could, and they tried to take the bodies out at night. But there were an awful lot of them that died and were buried. They'd take them out of camp and bury them during the day. These were the fellows that you had to be careful of because they had been deprived of so much that if

they thought they could steal your eye teeth, they would. But as they began to get a little more food and things began to pick up for them, this changed. But as I told you, if you recall, when we were at Camp Casisang, we were fed well, and by the time we got to Davao, we were in good shape. But these poor fellows that came down, they had had nothing but rough times all the way through.

Marcello: Awhile ago, we talked about escapes and this sort of thing. When a prisoner planned to escape, was he on his own, or was there an escape committee in the camp to help them if they had a feasible plan or anything of that nature?

Bolitho: No, there was no escape committee as such. And generally, because of the blood brothers, the ten man teams, anybody that was going to escape, they kept it pretty quiet. Now these ten that got away--Mellnik and the rest of them--these fellows kept it pretty quiet. But nevertheless, it did kind of get out, and we did have some Red Cross packages. There was a fellow by the name of Parks, Bob Parks, who was the commanding officer of the cabin that I

was in. Parks had been my first sergeant, and he collected chocolate. We knew in our own group, that is the group that he was working with, that these fellows were going to take off. We gave him the chocolate which he in turn gave them to take with them. But it was a real hush-hush, quiet thing. We didn't know when they were going. But we knew they were going. Of course, the method and idea of escape would come up every once in awhile. You'd see something, "Well, if we took off, we could probably get through that path and get up into the jungle. They'd never catch us." But we weren't physically capable of doing this. Secondly, we didn't know the island that well, and where do you go? You can run around in circles on that island because that island of Mindanao is a real rugged, remote place.

Marcello: There are just a few more questions I want to ask you before we leave the Davao Penal Colony. I can't think of some of them now. I had them on the tip of my tongue.

Bolitho: Well, let me go down and tell you about the airport detail. This was a rough detail, and then if you think of those questions, we'll go back. There were 750 of us . . .

Marcello: Incidentally, how long were you at Davao altogether?

Bolitho: Two years and a half.

Marcello: Okay, two and a half years, six months at the other place--about three years gone. Now you've been a prisoner for about three years.

Bolitho: Yes. This is altogether. This is including down at . . . I can't remember the name of that airport. I'll think of it.

Marcello: Now was this a voluntary thing, this detail? Was this a voluntary one?

Bolitho: This is where they wanted so many men. Usually, when they went on one of these details, they would come in and tell the commanding officer of the camp they needed so many men, like they'd come in and say they needed 800 men. Okay, then it was up to each barracks commander to take so many men out of the barracks. You could volunteer, or you could be chosen. But I volunteered to go on this one. As I said, the reason I did it was because anyplace was better than Davao Penal Colony. When we got down to this place, these were barracks that they had built primarily for this detail. The barracks were in better condition because it was newer. The work detail was

rougher than hell because we were digging coral out of the side of a hill with pick and shovel and throwing it on trucks. The trucks were taking it out and dumping it on this field that we were preparing. Then we had a wheel of cement that was perhaps four feet in diameter and had a two-inch metal ring around it, iron ring, with four bamboo poles coming out, solid bamboo, that were perhaps three inches . . . no, perhaps an inch and a half in diameter. There were four of these, and eight of us had to pick this wheel up and crush the coral. You do this all day, and it gets pretty tiresome. The only thing that saved us was the fact that the trucks would break down, and it would take a little while for another truck to come. So altogether, we might pound one truckload of coral in an entire day.

Marcello: Was this a daylight to dark operation?

Bolitho: Daylight to dark, right. We'd get up in the dark, and we'd go to work in the dark. They'd put us on trucks and take us out to the field. While we were there, by the way, a B-17 came up from Australia and dropped a bomb right in the middle of this field. We all cheered and the Japs, it scared them to death.

There's a distinct difference between the motor of an American plane and a Jap plane, and as soon as we heard it, we knew it was an American plane. They must have known that we were there because there was no doubt that they hit that field, and it was for morale purposes; they didn't even come close to the barracks, the area we were in.

But we did this day after day. Every once in awhile, when we were out there, why, one of these Jap pursuit ships would come in, a Zero or a little light bomber, a Betty, and the coral, because it wasn't packed down tight, the wheels would get stuck in these things. They'd get all these Americans over there to push these planes. The first thing we grabbed a hold of was the ailerons and the rudders and just bend the hell out of them. It's a wonder some of them ever took off after we got through with them (chuckle).

Marcello: I was going to ask you what sort of sabotage attempts you made at this particular place.

Bolitho: As much as we possibly could.

Marcello: Awhile ago, you mentioned that trucks were used to haul the rough coral down to the field. Did Americans

drive the trucks and this sort of thing, or were the Japanese driving the trucks?

Bolitho: No, the Japanese drove the trucks.

Marcello: How about maintenance? Were the Americans in charge of the maintenance of those trucks?

Bolitho: No, the Japanese.

Marcello: I was going to say that that would have been a good opportunity to foul up the works quite a bit.

Bolitho: No, generally speaking, the motor pool was run completely by Japanese. They didn't want us around on the trucks. They ran those trucks on alcohol. Those things would break down right and left. They were wrecks when they got them. They were put together with baling wire.

Marcello: Can you think of any other attempts at sabotage made here at this airfield?

Bolitho: No, that's about the only attempts we got, except to . . . oh, we poured dirt in the gas tank of the trucks whenever we got the opportunity. Of course, this clogged them up. But this was a tough detail. This was hard work.

Marcello: Who was running this camp, the Army?

Bolitho: The Army, yes. The Army was running it. But we were still under guard with these . . .

Marcello: Formosans.

Bolitho: Formosans.

Marcello: I assume that the harassment was continual.

Bolitho: It was continual. Again, there was no contract work here. This was just tough labor, rough labor.

Marcello: In other words, you didn't have a quota here. You just worked from daylight to dark.

Bolitho: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: What was your weight down to by this time?

Bolitho: I have no idea.

Marcello: Now we're getting into the latter stages of the war. I'm sure it was well below a hundred pounds.

Bolitho: Yes, when I . . . well, let me say this. When I got on the boat, on the submarine, and hit the island of Waigeo, which was a naval base where they let us off, they weighed us in and looked us over physically, and I weighed ninety-eight pounds at that time. And I had been living out in the jungles for thirty days and had eaten like a king. So in thirty days I must have put on twenty pounds. I imagine I was probably down below . . . around seventy.

Marcello: How long were you at this camp altogether?

Bolitho: I can't rightly remember. Maybe six months, five months. They told us that we were going to be moved,

and we were going to be taken to Manila because the camp there was not self-supporting and they couldn't get the foodstuffs. But in the meantime, the American forces were getting too close for them. Unbeknown to us, they had moved out some of the prisoners from Davao, and they had taken them on up to Manila. And a couple of these boats had been sunk.

Marcello: Was the airfield pretty well completed by the time that you left there?

Bolitho: No, it really wasn't. We had a couple of strips that were completed, but they had some revetments that they had us dig and sandbag for their pursuit planes. These weren't completed; they were just skeleton. There were more runways planned, but we never did complete them.

Marcello: You know, it was amazing--the primitive methods and tools that the Japanese used in constructing these airfields and bridges and what have you.

Bolitho: That's right.

Marcello: It's almost amazing to me how they could have stayed in the war as long as they did. All the prisoners I've talked to have confirmed this.

Bolitho: Yes, the only thing that they had to their favor was manpower. They didn't believe in wasting good machinery when they could sacrifice a human being, let's put it that way. We used to see them beating their own troops for things that they had done that they should never have beat their troops for. Some of these fellows were out there working and would keel over from the heat. These were Japs working on trucks or working on the planes, and they'd come up and really slam them around with those rifles.

Marcello: Did you ever meet any compassionate Japanese down here on the airfield?

Bolitho: No. We met a lot of curious ones. Most of these pilots that came in were sergeants. They were curious. They would come over and talk with the guards and stand around and look at us. But so far as compassion was concerned, there was none there.

Marcello: Here again, even the officers in these camps, I'm sure, were the eight-balls. If these had been good officers, they wouldn't have been running prison camps. They would have been out on the front lines, probably.

Bolitho: Yes, I think this is true because the front line

soldier was an honored soldier. These characters were not.

Marcello: Let's face it. Prisoner-of-war camps were of low priority.

Bolitho: That's right. So, as I say, I don't know really how long we were there--perhaps five months, something like that. Then they told us that we were going to leave, and they marched us out five abreast. Five abreast, and I believe there was a hundred men. The outside men had strands of rope around their neck and around the front so that they really had to hang on to these to keep from being choked. We tried to count cadence so that there was no strain on these fellows, but it was pretty difficult.

Marcello: Just the men on the outside had these ropes?

Bolitho: Just the men on the outside, right. So they marched us down to the dock, and we got on small boats, and they took us out to this boat that was in the harbor.

Marcello: Before we leave this airstrip, you might again give us the name of it for the record. In the beginning, when you had moved to this camp, you couldn't recall the name.

Bolitho: Yes, this was called the Lasang detail.

Marcello: I gather that you were pretty glad to get out of there.

Bolitho: Out of the Lasang?

Marcello: Right.

Bolitho: Yes, because the war was just beginning to get to the point where we were about to get involved in it again. We could see and hear too many American planes close to us. We knew, and as the Japanese told us, that the brave Americans came over and dropped a bomb, which they did, but our pilots shot him down. So when they started telling us this and admitting American planes were there, we were glad to get away from that airstrip because we would have been pretty vulnerable.

Marcello: I gather the Japanese in no way had identified these prisoner-of-war camps as being prisoner-of-war camps.

Bolitho: No, no, no way at all. But the . . . I don't want to say underground, and I don't want to say . . . I guess you'd have to say guerrillas . . . they knew and pinpointed the location. They knew where we were, where all the camps were. We didn't know this until we got back. But we were told that they knew we were at the Lasang detail and that when they dropped that bomb on the airstrip, they knew

we were there. But, of course, we had no way of knowing at the time. But anyway, they took us, as I started to say, when we cut off here, they took us down, marched us out of this Lasang air base, down to Davao, with the outside men with the ropes around their neck, loaded us on this ship . . .

Marcello: Incidentally, were you in the outside, or did you manage to get on the inside?

Bolitho: No, I was on the inside. They loaded us in broad daylight. As we got on this boat, and got down in the hold, they put 650 of us in one hold and 250 in the other. They had brought the other 100 men on another detail back, which, as I told you, there were 850 of us that went out to begin with. So they brought this 100 back. There were 850 of us on this prisoner-of-war ship.

Marcello: What did the ship look like?

Bolitho: All I could tell was that it looked like a big rusted hulk of steel. It evidently had been hauling cement or something because there was a good inch of dust on the bottom, and we were right in the hold. They put us in there so tightly that we were just almost shoulder to shoulder. When we got on that ship, we

were no more settled down then the Japanese . . . we could see them just about going wild up there, and we could hear bombs dropping. American planes were in the bay.

Marcello: What sort of a feeling did that give you?

Bolitho: We cheered.

Marcello: Even though you knew that you might possibly be hit?

Bolitho: Even though we knew there was a chance we'd be hit. We cheered and the Japs got really irritated with us.

Marcello: Psychologists could probably do wonders with that particular reaction.

Bolitho: Yes, this is against all human nature--to risk your life for a cheer, so to speak. But this was down in the hull of the ship. The ship was riding high, and it was just hotter than hell in there.

Marcello: Was there room to sit down?

Bolitho: No. No, we were standing up, and for defecation purposes we had two five-gallon cans.

Marcello: And all these people still had dysentery yet.

Bolitho: Yes. And we were divided into . . . I believe it was eight groups. Four groups to begin with. Well, let me see. I can't quite remember. But anyway, we would sit down for two hours and then stand for two hours. We did this twenty-four hours a day until we finally got ourselves kind of organized.

Marcello: It's amazing that even that much discipline still prevailed down in the hold of that ship.

Bolitho: Well, it was a matter of survival. You didn't dare panic because if you did and started to stampede, three-quarters of the men would never make it out of there because there was no place to go. But after the ship took off out of the Davao Gulf, they put the hatch covers down. They had two tunnels, canvas tunnels, bearing air down into the hold, and the rest of the hold was covered with the hatch covers. Then they stacked rice and camotes and everything else on top of the hatch covers.

Marcello: In other words, it seemed like they were telling you that if the Americans did bomb that ship, you weren't getting out.

Bolitho: We were dead. There wasn't enough air. They would lower a barrel of water once a day. This was barely enough to give each one of us half a canteen cup per man.

Marcello: Did discipline still prevail at this time?

Bolitho: Had to. Yes, had to. We went on to . . . let's see, we were on that ship for seventeen days and eighteen nights.

Marcello: Where were you headed for? Did you know?

Bolitho: Yes, we were told we were going to Manila. But all of this time that we were on this thing, we only went as far as Davao, out of there, around the southern coast of Mindanao, and around the tip of Zamboanga. At Zamboanga, we pulled in in the dead of night, and they transferred us to another ship.

Marcello: But you were on this initial ship for seventeen days? What was the attrition rate? Did you lose very many men?

Bolitho: Not a one. Not a one. They transferred us to this other ship in the dead of night, and then we sat in the bay there. Now when I say seventeen days and eighteen nights, I'm talking about from the time we got on the ship until we were torpedoed. This is both ships, not the one ship.

Marcello: Oh, I see. How long were you on the first ship?

Bolitho: Oh, it must have been probably fifteen days, I would say. I think it took us about three days . . . maybe sixteen days.

Marcello: Were you ever allowed up on deck at all?

Bolitho: Yes, to begin with, we were. They would allow us up

in groups so that we could relieve ourselves, so to speak. They would only allow so many up and then run us down. But on the ship that came into Davao just ahead of us, two of the prisoners jumped overboard. One was this Colonel McGee, who jumped overboard, swam ashore, hid in the water for so many hours with a reed in his mouth, and then went up in the jungles. He later became our commanding officer up there when we got away. So when that happened, then they kept us in the hold. So as we left this Zamboanga area . . .

Marcello: I assume you really couldn't see what this second ship was like, except it was another scow like the first one, probably.

Bolitho: No, that's right. As we left there and got around the tip of Zamboanga and came up the western coast of Mindanao, it was in the afternoon, and we were hit by a wolf pack of American submarines.

Marcello: I would assume that by this time the Japanese were just scared to death of those submarines because you were hugging the coast all the way.

Bolitho: Yes, very much so. We probably weren't any more than about three or four miles from the coast.

Marcello: Were there other ships in this convoy?

Bolitho: Yes, there were eight ships in the convoy. They sunk six. And our ship . . . and they beached a tanker.

Marcello: Describe what it was like to get hit by that torpedo.

Bolitho: Well, if you can . . . let me see if I can draw . . .

Marcello: Let me just go back and ask one other question first of all. Did you know that the submarines were tracking you? Now some of the prisoners mentioned that when they were down in the holds of ships, they could hear the pings from the sonar against the side.

Bolitho: No, we had no idea. The only time that we knew something was up is when we looked out this one air hole that we had, and we could see the Jap guards becoming real excited, and it wasn't more than two minutes after that that the torpedo hit the ship.

Marcello: Okay, just take it up from there. What was it like from the time you got torpedoed?

Bolitho: Okay, let me see if I can draw a parallel. Let's take a room similar to this, which is probably eighteen feet wide, and let's say it's thirty feet long. In the center of this room was the hatch covers, and underneath the sides here was the steel deck. We were divided into the groups of five men across and

five men back--twenty-five men into groups--and this is how we rested. I happened to be in the group that was over here on the righthand side. The ship was going north. When that torpedo hit, the torpedo came in over here on the lefthand side, almost diagonally from where I was sitting. When it did, it killed all the men in the north corner and that north side, almost all of the men on this west side, and all of the men in the middle, and the only fellows that got out were down here in this corner where I was. You can imagine how out of 850 people on this ship, there were only eighty-two of us that got away.

Marcello: What did it sound like when this torpedo hit?

Bolitho: There was no way of knowing because immediately you were knocked unconscious. How long you were unconscious . . . but we knew. I knew I was knocked unconscious. I had a broken jaw. Some of the fellows . . . fortunately, I had my mouth open. Evidently the concussions slammed my jaws together. Also, a steel deck plate came flying through the air and ticked me on the chin and killed fifteen men on my right. The two rows, the one row of five on my left and the row I was in--I was the first one in this row of five--

the ten of us got away. The other fifteen were crushed right against the deck.

Marcello: Did the concussion toss you around any or things of that nature?

Bolitho: Yes. One thing I remember was the water coming in, and I thought I was hitting sponges, pushing sponges away, and these were dead bodies. So the Japanese immediately . . . all of these hatch covers, the rice and everything, fell into the center and killed everybody there. They were firing and throwing hand grenades down. So the only way we could get out . . . we went around the side . . . at least I did--I can't tell you about the others--and I went out through the hole that the torpedo made. Now how I got out through that water, I don't know.

Marcello: Now this was below the water line.

Bolitho: Yes.

Marcello: And the water was rushing in.

Bolitho: Rushing in. I remember, there was a fellow by the name of John White, and he said to a little Mexican boy who lived in Texas . . . Hernandez was his name. I've forgotten what his first name was, but he called him by his first name. He said, "Come on,

Hernandez." Hernandez said, "I can't make it." And he said, "Why not?" Hernandez lifted up his legs, and they were nothing but stumps. His both legs were off, and he was just slowly bleeding to death. Anyway, I went out through the hole that the torpedo made, and it slammed me back against the side of the ship, evidently, and then threw me up on deck.

Marcello: Somehow the rushing water coming in there had . . .

Bolitho: Slammed me against the side and threw me right up. Threw me right over, and right up on deck.

Marcello: You were outside the ship, though, right?

Bolitho: Right. But when it did, I broke five ribs, I had my right arm broken, and I had a broken jaw. I can remember looking around, and the machine gun bullets were just whizzing by. They had this machine gun up there, and they were just sweeping the deck. I was so dazed that I just walked right across and never got hit. I went over to the other side. The ship listed. I remember sitting up there wondering whether I could clear that bowing of the ship if I jumped in. Then I could see the machine gun bullets coming, and I jumped and did just clear it. When I got in the water, why, there was another American

right there close to me. His name was E. L. Browning from Centralia, Washington. We were quickly surrounded by Jap guards.

Marcello: They were in the water, too?

Bolitho: They were in the water. One had a bayonet and one had a small bat which is about two feet long. This is what they used to crush their rice and make a rice powder with in a bowl. They jabbered to us and pointed towards this ship. The ship that they pointed towards was a tanker that had been beached. So Browning said, "I think they want us to go to this ship." He said, "Are you hurt?" And I said, "Yes, I think I have a broken arm. I don't think I can make it."

Marcello: I imagine you had trouble talking, too.

Bolitho: Yes, I didn't realize I had a broken jaw at the time. He said, "Well, I'm not hurt." I can remember this just as plain as day, just like I can remember his name, E. L. Browning. He said, "I'm not hurt." He said, "The next time this Jap makes a lunge at me, I'm going to get that bat. Can you grab that bayonet?" These Japs were pretty leery of us. I said, "Sure." He grabbed the bat and hit this guy with the bat and

swung around and hit the other Jap that had the bayonet. I took that out of his hand, and we fought our way out of about six or seven Japs. I had this bayonet in my left hand. We found a hatch cover, and I put my left arm over the hatch cover. Oh, I got hit with a bayonet along the side here getting out, and it was bleeding profusely there in my right side.

Marcello: This was from the skirmish with these Japanese soldiers in the water?

Bolitho: Right. The tide fortunately was going in. The distance to the island probably was not more than maybe three or four miles at the most. But the trees looked like matchsticks. It was that far. It was probably about four o'clock in the afternoon. So he and I swam together as much as we could until they catapaulted a plane from one of these . . . I believe they had a light cruiser or something out there. This thing came back and forth strafing the water. Well, when it did, why, we'd have to dive under the water. Then we separated because we were a target, a real target, with two of us. Then they had lowered a motor launch, and this thing kept coming through the water, and they were

strafing everything. This little syphilletic lieutenant was handling this boat, and there was a lieutenant that we had, a graduate from Annapolis, from the 4th Marine Corps, Lieutenant Chabeau. Chabeau hated this Jap with a passion, and Chabeau and another enlisted man, Marine, went after this guy and got him. They got killed in the process, but they got him. To go back to what I was doing, I was swimming in the water as best I could, trying to paddle in. Fortunately, the tide was carrying me in.

Marcello: By this time you had lost your hatch?

Bolitho: No, no, I still had the hatch.

Marcello: Oh, you were still hanging on to the hatch.

Bolitho: I'd have never made it without the hatch because I couldn't swim with my right arm. Fortunately, as I say, the tide was going in. But unfortunately, it was drifting me toward this tanker that was beached. I finally got in. What time it was, I don't know. But it must have taken two or three hours because it was getting to the point where the dusk was beginning to . . . not dusk because there's no daylight and dusk. It's light and then dark. But it was about to that point where it was going to get

dark. As I got in close, the beach was all . . . there was no beach. It was all coral. I saw another American sitting there. I went over and his name was Tresnewski. He was a first lieutenant. Tresnewski was a lieutenant in the 31st Infantry. He had been hit right between the eyes. He had a gash that was about four inches long and about a half an inch wide and probably about three-quarters of an inch deep. The gray matter was oozing right out and running down his nose. He wasn't bleeding--just this gray stuff. He was blind, completely blind. I asked him if he knew me, and he told me no. I told him my name, and he said, "Yes, Hayes, I know you." But he said, "I can't go. I can't go into the jungles because I'm blind." I said, "I can't go. I've got a broken right arm, and my jaw's broken." I realized then my jaw was broken. He asked me then, "What island are we on?" I said, "I have no idea." We weren't outside that ship long enough to know. We didn't know where we were. So he said, "Well, let's give ourselves up." He said, "Can you see anything around?" I said, "There's a tanker beached up here." So we stood up in the water and waved, and they waved back to us. Farther

down on the right, an American crossed and went over the beach. And when he did, they opened up with a .60 caliber explosive shell. We could see those tracers coming right close. This American made it, went into the jungles. When that happened, I said to Tresnewski, "They're firing at us. We have no choice." His sight came back at that particular time, and he went one way, and I went the other. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the bullets coming, and I dived over this mound of coral, and they cut the top right off of it. Then they went on, and they were after him. I ran through another clearing and headed for a big tree. As I did, I could see the tracers coming again. I hit the ground and rolled right behind this tree. When I did, the shell exploded. I got hit through the bottom of the right foot and across the right finger here (gesture). Another shell fragment caught me there (gesture).

Marcello: How far away was this tanker?

Bolitho: Oh, maybe, I suppose, half a mile, something like that. Then they almost cut that tree off firing back and forth. So I had no idea where Tresnewski was. Then my foot was bleeding. My side was bleeding. My hand was bleeding. I was drooling blood from my jaw.

Marcello: Your arm hurt (chuckle).

Bolitho: No, I didn't hurt anyplace, really. But I took off the G-string, which was the only thing I had, and wrapped it around my foot. Now why around my foot, I don't know, instead of tying up my arm. But I wrapped it around my foot. I walked into the jungle and down this path. I had no idea where I was going, just down a path, and came into a clearing, and here was another American there. It was a fellow by the name of Snowden. So he recognized me. We went down this path for awhile until suddenly we got lost. We had to come back out to the beach in order to see into the jungle to see where we were going. We could spot this high area through the clearing, and we wanted to get a bearing on that and see if we could get a bearing on a star and head right straight for it. But, of course, as soon as we got into the jungle again, why, we got lost. We came into a clearing, and here was a little Filipino boy about three, four years old, and an old man, probably his grandfather. All this old man could say was, "Americano. Americano." This little kid could speak English. So he took us by the hand and took us down this path and pointed to another path and said, "Go that way."

Marcello: Could you trust these Filipinos? Or didn't you have any choice, really, at this stage?

Bolitho: Sure, you could trust them. We had no choice. But we could still trust them. As we went down this path, and for perhaps, let's say, about twenty minutes to a half an hour, it was dark immediately. Here we were in the jungles, didn't know where we were. But we knew we had to get away from that beach. We knew we had to get into that interior because we knew that they were going to send a search party into the jungle--no ifs, ands, or buts. This was just natural to do. As we walked down this path, all of a sudden we heard a lot of noise. We stopped, fell in the path, rolled into the jungle, and laid there real quiet because it was jabbering. We couldn't really make out whether it was Filipino or whether it was Japanese. Then all of a sudden into this clearing, which we were on the edge of, was thrown this fire, a lit stick. Then nothing happened.

Marcello: Was it a torch or what?

Bolitho: A torch, a torch, just tossed right into the clearing and this path. So Snowden said to me, "Well, I think we're caught." I said, "I think you're right,

but let's just stay here." Then pretty soon we heard some noise, and we heard it around us, on all sides of us. So then, instead of having them fire blindly, which we thought they would do, we stood up and raised our hands, and into the clearing came these Filipino guerrillas. I never saw such a good-looking sight in my life. They had the big earrings in the ears. They had shorts on and great, big barrel chests and big arms and just looked great. They threw their arms around us and kissed us on the cheek. This one guy was crying. He pointed to me and asked me if I was hurt and I said, "Yes." He saw my foot. He turned around and said, "Climb on." I climbed on his back. They picked Snowden up, and they dog-trotted with us through that jungle for about four hours. Never stopped, right straight through, and brought us up into that hill up on that point. Here was a schoolhouse. This is where they were gathering all of the Americans that got off of this ship. You've heard this before, I think, haven't you?

Marcello: Clem didn't go into a whole lot of detail on this.

Bolitho: Didn't he really? So this is where the whole group

was congregated--right there. Well, I began to get prett sore about this time. We stayed there overnight. There was a fellow by the name of Ralph Pearson, who was in my outfit. Ralph had found a nest of eggs, hens' eggs. I was laying on my back, and he was cracking raw eggs in my mouth. I was just swallowing the whole thing. He must have cracked a dozen of them. So they tied my arm to my chest as best they could, bound up my leg, and tied up my jaw. They took a door off the schoolhouse--this was the next day--and put me on this door, and then these Filipinos dog-trotted through this long opening. This was the longest open space I think I've ever been in in my life. Here I was, looking at the sky, and scared to death these Jap planes were going to come over. So they dog-trotted, and we had landed . . . let me go back. We had landed at Liloy Point, Sindangan.

Marcello: That's the island?

Bolitho: No, Sindangan was the barrio. Liloy Point, Sindangan, Zamboanga, Oriental Mizamaz, Mindanao, P. I. That's the entire address where we were. This was the only complete area that was controlled by the guerrillas--

this whole area, perhaps maybe 100 square miles. I say 100, I'd say probably fifty. I'd be better off. So they took us up to a hospital that they had prepared. It wasn't really a hospital, but we turned it into a hospital. This was a shack, a bamboo shack, with a thatched roof on it that was probably, oh, twenty by twenty-five and had bunks built in. There was a fellow there by the name of Kirker, who had a broken back. There was a fellow by the name of Walter Alexander who had a mastoid that was really pronounced behind his ear and just giving him a fit. There were several fellows that had gunshot wounds. They put us all in these bunks.

Marcello: I assume the Filipino guerrillas really had no medical facilities or any knowledge of medicine to take care of you?

Bolitho: Yes, there were . . . yes and no. There were two doctors up there, one of whom was a dentist. He got hold of some piano wire, and he tied my jaw together with this piano wire. He brought it all up and tied it up tight.

Marcello: Was this a very painful operation?

Bolitho: Oh, terrible. Just absolutely terrible.

Marcello: No anesthetics at all.

Bolitho: No, nothing. And my jaw was just at the point where it was kind of beginning to knit. This was after I'd been up there for about two weeks. So not to rebreak it, but just to pull that up tight, was just absolutely horrible. Plus the fact I had swelling in my neck. Infection had set in, and it was just . . . it was bad. There was another doctor there. I've forgotten his name. He was from the island of Cebu. He was a surgeon. He was stitching up the wounds and cleaning them out. There was also a fellow by the name of Platter, Captain Platter,who had been caught on the ship and dragged down by the force of the water. He kicked his way free, but got caught on the propeller. The propeller had gouged out flesh from the waist down to the knee, right down to the bone. He and I used to sharpen mess kit knives and cut the gangrene out daily. But you had to get down to the point and get that gray, dead flesh out and get down to the point where it would bleed, or we'd never make it. It was bad on Platter. We used to give him a stick, and he'd put it in his mouth and just bite on that something terrible. So

they put us in this hospital anyway so to speak. We had some Filipino girls up there that acted as nurses. They came in and dressed the wounds and put on what medication they had.

Marcello: About how many people were there altogether?

Bolitho: Eighty-two. There were eighty-one. One man died on the beach of wounds. I've forgotten his name. So after we were up there for about two weeks or three weeks we could see these Jap planes constantly coming around and strafing the surrounding area. But they never really got close to us. I don't think they knew we were there because this thing was out so much in the clearing that it would have been foolish for anybody to be there. We were scared to death. But it was the safest place we could possibly be.

But out of this clearing one of these days, we saw this . . . it looked like a Filipino but we weren't sure. He was armed to the teeth--bandoliers of ammunition across his chest, and a rifle. He came out on a point, and down farther another one came out on a point and stood there and looked around for perhaps ten minutes. Then they proceeded to cross this clearing and headed towards us. We thought,

"Japanese! We've had it!" Pretty soon, out of the clearing came this American riding a pony, with a full beard. The roughest looking guy you ever saw in your life, and the most welcome sight I've ever seen, and it was Colonel McGee. He had jumped the ship, as I had told you, and laid in the water for awhile and had gone up into the jungles. He had gathered all these Filipino Scouts together. We were completely surrounded by them and completely protected.

Marcello: These were Filipino Scouts that had moved up into the hills as guerrillas?

Bolitho: Right, these were Filipino Scouts.

Marcello: Did you eat pretty well while you were at this camp for two weeks?

Bolitho: We lived like kings. We had meat. They had parties for us. They brought Filipino girls in. They brought people that could play musical instruments. They had dances and just a real fiesta for two solid weeks.

Marcello: There was really no fear of the Japanese, or very little fear.

Bolitho: No. Scared the hell out of us because we thought they were right next door to us all the time. Then we were told that they had made contact with the

submarine, and the sub was going to pick us up. So we had to go back down to the beach, and we had to go across this water. Here's Kirker with his broken back, and he's riding a carabao. I'm riding a carabao. In the meantime . . . before I get into that, we all had Tompson submachine guns. We had pistols. We had all kinds of ammunition. We had uniforms. We had shoes. The Japs were coming up into this particular area with ponies, looking for us. I don't know whether Clem ever told you any of this or not. But they sent a scouting party out--of our people. I can't remember this one fellow's name who . . . he was from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania . . . Freeport, Pennsylvania. The home of the brave, that's what he used to call it. I'll think of his name in a minute. Anyway, he led the detail. I don't know how many Japs they shot up. But anyway, they had sufficient _____ponies to come back and take us out on those, that is, the fellows who were really in bad shape, rather than riding these big-stomached carabao. So we got down on this Liloy Point, and I'm kind of hazy in here. We stopped one night in a Filipino house. I remember they had a big party there

for us. This Filipino captain was there. He sang a song, "America, I love you. America, I have a son for you." I can remember those words. A very emotional-type individual. Then the next day, we crossed this river, went on down to this clearing on this Liloy Point. That night they built a great big bonfire. This thing had to be about two stories high, this bonfire, which was something that the sub could see and come in. We thought, "Boy, we've hat it. We're surrounded by Japs." But after we got on the sub, we were told that there were about 15,000 Filipino Scouts around us, completely armed, and there was no way that anybody could get in, no way at all. So the sub did come in, signaled. They came in in these small rubber boats. I never saw such <u>huge</u> Americans in my life. These guys were just tremendous.

Marcello: How much of your weight had you regained?

Bolitho: Well, I didn't know until I got down to this island of Biak. So they put us on this submarine, and I had never been on a submarine before. I was in the forward torpedo room, and, of course, they told us to stay out of the aisles, to stay back. This submarine

was the USS Narwhal. This submarine carried a complement of eighty men. Here we were, eighty-one men, getting on this thing, so they were really loaded. But they busted out all the winter equipment they had and threw this on the floor, and we made our beds right on top of this winter equipment. So we no sooner got out of there, then all these crazy sounds that we never heard before erupted--the dive sound, the "aooga, aooga." The sailors would run back and forth like crazy, and they were closing hatches. They're all wearing dark glasses. I thought to myself, "Now isn't this a helluva situation to be in. Here I've survived all this time, and I'll probably sink in this submarine." I had claustrophobia. We had to go through what they call the Sibutu Straits. The Sibutu Straits is a narrow section between the tip of Zamboanga and some of the islands that jut up from Borneo. Evidently, the Japs had put coastal artillery on either side. Not that the range was that close where they could actually hit something, but nevertheless, it was a possibility. Secondly, the current submerged was something like fifteen knots, and this ship could only do about seven knots when it was submerged. The current was against us, so

we had to go through surfaced. Well, this scared the hell out of us because I don't know whether the sailors were kidding us or not, but this is what they said.

But anyway, to go back, when I first climbed on the submarine, and I was the . . . we went on in priorities. Alexander with the mastoid was first. I was second because of the broken jaw and the ribs and the arm and so forth. When we got on that thing, they were playing "White Christmas." They served us jelly sandwiches, milk, and tomato soup, and I never tasted anything so good in my life.

Marcello: I bet you even remember what kind of jelly it was.

Bolitho: It was strawberry jelly. It was absolutely delicious. One thing I forgot to tell you, going back. When we were up there in the jungles, up in the hills, around this hospital, I had this broken arm. There was an old Filipino woman that came down and had them cut a piece of bamboo about seven inches long, green bamboo, and then carabao, green carabao hide. She put this bamboo around my arm and then tied with the green carabao thongs and put my arm up were (gesture) and tied it around my neck so that my fingers were on my

left shoulder and put a weight at my elbow, right where my arm bent. I stood up and I walked around with that weight like that. This pulled that bone out. When I was x-rayed in Australia, there was nothing. They could see the break, the hairline crack, but that was all. The arm went back completely, just beautiful. She also put leaves of some kind . . . I don't know what they were . . . I had trouble breathing because I had five broken ribs. And just terribly painful. She also had wet leaves that she put around and bound my chest. In an amazingly short periof of time, like, would you believe a week, I was able to walk around and breathe pretty deep. I still had the pain but not nearly as bad.

Marcello: This says something for folk medicine or home remedies.

Bolitho: Yes, right. So back to the submarine. This is always interesting to me because I never will forget it. I was so petrified, I guess you'd say. So we got through this Sibutu Straits, although they fired . . . we went through surfaced, and they fired a couple of shells. When they'd fire, they'd go "psheeew," almost like a torpedo. But the submarine would rock. These things are not too wide. You don't have that

much space in them. Any motion or concussion on that water rocks this thing. So we got through the Sibutu Straits and got on down . . . we were cutting across toward Halmahera. Any surface craft or aircraft was a potential enemy for a submarine. They spotted a plane. So the "aooga" came on again, and it was a crash dive. As we went down, the front elevator stuck. And we kept going down and down and down and . . . did Clem say anything about this?

Marcello: Yes, he did. He mentioned this.

Bolitho: All of a sudden, the intercom came on, and it was the captain speaking. He said, "Everybody aft." As I said, I was in the forward torpedo room, and you talk about sailors and everybody who was capable of running! They all went to the tail end of the submarine. They were using the hand cranks to turn that elevator up. We just about got down to maximum depth when that sub straightened out. They published a paper on this submarine. The next day the paper came out, and it showed all of the cripples with crutches and broken arms and everything, racing to the back of the submarine.

Marcello: They had taken pictures of this?

Bolitho: No, they had a cartoonist.

Marcello: I see.

Bolitho: Did Clem mention going around in a circle with a Jap?

Marcello: No, he sure didn't.

Bolitho: Well, I guess I was in the forward torpedo room, and I saw a little bit more of this than perhaps he did. But as we got down closer to Halmahera, the Battle of Halmahera was raging. So rather than try to get around there, they circled and came back. But as they circled and came back, we ran into a killer submarine, a Jap submarine. The first thing you know, we were going around chasing each other underwater. So we could watch these guys that were at the front of the torpedo . . . at the torpedo. They had four tubes. They had these other tubes down on these chains and on a . . . what do you call it? Well, it's a brace of some type which they could swing over and push right in front of the breech and then push the torpedo in. So we could see these sailors up there in the front. As I say, we were going around in a circle with this Jap submarine chasing us, and we were chasing it. All of a sudden, evidently, they were given the word to fire because they had the

headphones on. We couldn't see. But they pressed something that looked like a big rubber bulb, and you'd hear "psheeew," like that. The submarine would rock back with the concussion. After going around in circles like this for what seemed about an hour or so, we finally straightened out and headed on. The next day, the paper came out and it showed two submarines chasing each other. That's how we knew that we were in conflict.

Marcello: I would assume that as a result of these experiences you acquired some sort of an appreciation for a submariner's life also.

Bolitho: Oh, beautiful! Let me tell you another one while . . . they took us down to the galley. The galley is very small, but they had six tables. The tables were probably two feet, at the most, across. They could probably seat three men on either side. Our first big meal there this cook made hotcakes. He had them stacked almost to the ceiling there. He couldn't believe it. The sailors were standing in the galleyway looking. He'd set those big platters down, and they would disappear just like that. All of us would go through those pancakes. I don't know how

many hundreds he cooked up. But we'd just go through them, just like that. And pitchers, great big pitchers of milk, we'd go through those.

Marcello: Now by this time, you could eat fairly well, I gather.

Bolitho: Just cut it up and throw it down and swallow it whole. I couldn't chew it at all. The piano wire had broken, too, by the way, up in the jungle before we ever got on the submarine. They told us that they had enough food . . . now I don't know whether they were kidding us or not, and I could be wrong on the figures, but they told us they had enough food for forty-two days. We were going to be on this submarine four days, and they were afraid they were going to run out before they got us to port. We just . . . the first American food we had, and it was so good. So when we pulled up to this island of Biak, we climbed off the plane, and here were Americans there with Thompson submachine guns. They had heard that they had prisoners-of-war, but they thought they were Jap prisoners-of-war. So they took us into a big tent and deloused us with powder. Then they took us in and gave us physical examinations. And the cigarettes, and the candy, and the gum, and everything--they just gave us all kinds of stuff like this.

Marcello: Did you have your jaw treated again?

Bolitho: There wasn't anything they could do for it there. Besides, my neck was swollen as wide as my jaw. I had come to find out I had osteomyelitis. So they took us into this mess hall. This nurse went in with me, and they served us T-bone steaks. She cut this steak up in just real small pieces, and I was just throwing it down whole. They had garbage cans full of iced down beer. Well, I drank about a half a can of beer and ate about a quarter of that T-bone steak. I couldn't eat any more. We had been eating good. So then they put us on PT boats and took us over to the island of Biak. We were on . . . I take it back. We were on Waigeo, the island of Waigeo which was a Naval base. They put us on PT boats and took us over to the island of Biak. From there, we got on Army transport planes, and we flew south to, oh, Nadzab, New Guinea, and then into Hollandia. Then we sat under the wing of a plane . . . did he tell you about MacArthur?

Marcello: No, he sure didn't.

Bolitho: We sat under a wing of the plane for MacArthur to pin a medal on us in the heat of the day. Then we

got down to . . . we landed at the northern tip of Australia--I can't remember what the name of the town was--and then down to Brisbane. We were in the 42nd General Hospital of Brisbane for a month. They had us confined to one area in the hospital. We were more or less prisoners there till we were interrogated. There, my jaw had to be rebroken and set. They threw a big party for us down there, and we were all drinking pretty heavy. I remember I had this cute little nurse following me around with a pair of wire cutters. In case I got sick, I'd choke to death. So from there, why, we came back on the USS Monterrey, I believe, to Letterman General Hospital. Then from there, we were ordered to Washington, D.C.

Marcello: What was the name of the general hospital?

Bolitho: Letterman General, in San Francisco. From there, we were ordered back to Washington, D.C. We went to Walter Reed in Washington. We were there for a couple of weeks. They took us down to the Pentagon and interrogated us and asked us for identification of any Japs, to see if we could possibly think of any marks that might show up to identify any of them a little easier. We'd say, "Well, he had a big nose."

They'd flash a nose on, "No, a little bigger than that." "Well, that's too big." Then they'd put in the jaw and then the teeth and the hair, and the. . . pretty soon we had a pretty accurate picture of every one of those Japs who had committed any atrocity. Then from there, why, I went back to Spokane, Washington, which was the closest hospital to my hometown of Butte.

Marcello: As you look back on your tenure as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as perhaps being the main factor that pulled you through? I'm sure you've probably been asked this before.

Bolitho: Well, I don't really know. I suppose more than anything it was faith, knowing that we'd get out of there. It had to be. Also, I think it was just the guts of an American soldier, that's all. Just knowing that . . . looking at the stupidity of these people, there was no way where they could keep you down. If you had a possibility of ever getting away, you'd take it. But I think it was just faith, knowing full well that I may not make it through, but knowing full well that the Americans would come back. There was no doubt in the whole world about that!

Marcello: Now what were your feelings toward the Japanese at the time you got out of the service?

Bolitho: Oh, I was pretty bitter. I had a great deal of animosity towards them.

Marcello: Has time mellowed these ideas?

Bolitho: Oh, sure, yes.

Marcello: Were you ever subjected to any psychological tests or anything of that nature after you came back?

Bolitho: Yes, we were for a short period of time in Walter Reed--not for any great length of time like a week or anything like that. One full day. We left two men back there. One's still, as far as I know, in a padded cell. He thought he was running the Pentagon and calling the shots in the whole war. I can't remember his name, either.

Marcello: Just one last question, and I think we could probably close this. Did you have a very hard time adjusting to civilian life after you got back and got out of uniform?

Bolitho: No, because I was in the . . . let's see, I came back in September, almost the first part of . . . the end of September of '44, and I didn't get out of the service until September of '45. I was in that

hospital, in and out of that hospital, all that time. Then I was discharged on a Friday and started back to college on a Monday. So I think had I not gone back to school, I may have had an awful time adjusting.

Marcello: Did you go back to the Montana School of Mines?

Bolitho: Yes, I did. I tried to take too much and tried to rely on what I had had before. I was just way over my head. I couldn't remember anything after having been gone for five years, so I had to go back and audit freshman subjects and sophomore subjects. I was taking metallurgical engineering, and I couldn't remember any of the math. I think simply because of going back and having to get my nose back to the grindstone, it took away a lot of the worries and, let's say, depressive attitude that I might have had. But there were several things I probably could have told you that . . . as I keep talking I remember some of the things that happened.

Marcello: Well, again, this is your chance to get them into the record, if you need to do so. One of the things that we haven't talked about are some of the funny things that happened. Now obviously, most of the life in the prison camp was rather grim. But at the same

time, I'm sure there must have been a little prison camp humor at times.

Bolitho: Well, one of the most stirring things that happened is that one night at Christmas Eve we went over to the chapel. There was a little chapel just outside of the compound. The Japs let us hold a Christmas service.

Marcello: Was this at Davao?

Bolitho: This was at Davao Penal Colony. I almost had the Chaplain's name, but I've forgotten. He was killed, too. He gave the sermon and led us in prayer. After we looked up, there were two officers that were standing behind him, and they were holding a blanket. They let this blanket . . . it was all rolled up. They let the blanket fall, and here was an American flag on there. If you ever wanted to see some pretty hard characters actually cry and snap to attention and salute . . . I guess that stood out in my mind more than anything else. In talking about it, I can just see the whole scene. It was a tattered flag that one of the officers had brought into camp with him.

Marcello: Did you always try to celebrate holidays if possible?

Bolitho: Yes, as much as we could. We were given the Emperor's birthday off. We'd substitute that for a holiday like Thanksgiving. We had to face the east every morning, of course, and salute and bow. We weren't given any of our holidays off. Christmas we were. Why, I can't tell you, but we were. This may have been as a result of our officers dickering with the Japanese officers. But just in talking, there's a lot of things that I do remember that I had completely forgotten about, especially on that submarine. Then also, we were on a plane. We crash landed at Cebu. I don't know whether you ever saw the picture, "American Guerrilla in the Philippines" where Lieutenant Buckley and a PT boat went over to the island of Cebu to pick up the crew of a plane that crashed and lost the PT boat? He picked us up and brought us back.

Marcello: We didn't talk much about that plane crash. That must have been a pretty interesting experience and sort of harrowing.

Bolitho: Not really. We were hit by the Jap Zeroes. I got hit across the shoulder and across the finger here (gesture). The gunner on the other side--I've forgotten his name--was killed. We were just hedge-hopping over

the water, just barely staying up, because it was the only way that we could get back to Mindanao. But we couldn't get that far. We landed in a field on Cebu. We didn't actually crash land. The landing gear wiped out, and we wound up right against a fence. There was no way we could take the plane out. We took the guns off and destroyed the plane. We blew it up. Lieutenant Buckley, John Buckley, came in and picked us up.

Marcello: And got you back to Mindanao?

Bolitho: And got us back to Mindanao, right.

Marcello: I guess by the time this whole thing was over, you had kind of become rather callous so far as death was concerned. You'd seen so much of it?

Bolitho: Yes, actually death meant nothing. And it was self-preservation. We really didn't worry about your neighbor. If he was to die, that's his problem, not yours.

Marcello: As things got tough, especially when you got to the penal colony, it was more or less every man for himself.

Bolitho: That's correct. Also, I can remember a couple of times when we went on . . . we went on a work detail one time, and coming back it had rained. They had put

more of the contract on our backs than we had expected to do. They had increased the workload, when I say contract. We were upset, the guards were a little nervous, and somebody started singing "God Bless America" on this train. Pretty soon, all . . . and there must have been 250, 300 of us on this train and perhaps twenty guards, thirty guards at the most. These guards were pretty jittery. We sang all the way in, right past the major's house, who was the commanding . . . almost had his name, Major . . . Jap major. His lights came on. They doubled the guard. They didn't bother to search us. They opened the compound gates and rushed us right through, and we were singing. When the fellows in the compound heard us singing, they all came out, and they all started to sing. I remember that vividly because the Jap guards, they were scared to death. They thought sure that . . . after that the contracts for a couple of weeks were exactly what they said they would be.

It's funny--the things you remember. I can also remember when we were going over there, they were talking about not getting off the beaten path because of the snakes, cobras, and the lizards and the coral

snakes. I can remember when a cobra got in the compound. We had these little rice knives that they let us keep, which we harvested the rice with. They were a little curved knife. The blade, if it was stretched out, would probably be about eight inches long. It was the funniest thing in the world seeing these guys running down the company street, swinging at this cobra, and this cobra trying to stop and coil and these fellows taking a swipe at his head (chuckle).

Marcello: Again, it represented food, no matter what the consequences were.

Bolitho: Yes, they got him. They got him, skinned him, and we all had a piece of cobra. Then this iguana lizard came into the compound. This lizard was probably about three feet long, four feet long, I suppose, with its tail. They're very powerful. They're prehistoric monsters. They look very poisonous with a forked tongue and this whole thing and enough to frighten anyone. Here's this fellow on his back, with his arm underneath this jaw--poisonous jaw way up, and this forked tongue going out. This guy's got nothing but a G-string. This lizard is carrying him right down the company street in this compound, and

he's trying to cut this lizard's throat with this rice knife (chuckle). Very funny. But there were a lot of fellows that cracked, a lot of fellows that went completely berserk, went out of their minds.

Marcello: I'm sure there were some, or I've heard instances, where guys would simply rush up to the very edge of the barbed wire fence, just begging the Japanese to virtually kill them.

Bolitho: That's right.

Marcello: And then I guess you saw cases where people simply had given up to the extent that they simply said, "It isn't worth it."

Bolitho: They willed themselves to die.

Marcello: And they sat down and laid down and died.

Bolitho: That's right. Then I've also seen other cases where they'd been so badly beaten up, so badly hurt, that you'd think they could never make it, and in two weeks' time they were back. It's amazing. It's amazing what the human body can stand and how much punishment you can take and still come out of it. To realize that eighty-two of us got out of that boat . . . and everybody had to fight their way, either off that ship, or out in order to get away. There

wasn't a one that was in real good shape. You could look at them standing up, and there was no flesh on their rear end. You could see the bones, the pelvic bones, just as clear as if you were being x-rayed. You could see the shoulder bones and all the ribs. No flesh on the arms, just nothing but bone. No flesh on the legs, just straight bone all up and down. You wondered . . . a human skeleton. You wondered how they could walk, let alone swim three or four miles to the shore. Just amazing.

Marcello: I'm sure that life in prison camp also brought out the very best and the very worst in men.

Bolitho: Yes, and you heard of collaborators that they had in Vietnam. We had them over there. But we took care of them within the camp. By that, I mean we didn't kill them, but they were beat up. They were harassed. But these were individuals who were pretty selfish and only thought of themselves, regardless of what happened to their comrades in there. To benefit themselves, they did almost anything. When I said awhile ago that it was every man for himself, it was. But from that standpoint, you were not going to rat on your friends or anybody . . . any American, let me put it that way.

Marcello: Did you ever see any instances where prisoners were so berserk that they actually struck back at a Japanese guard?

Bolitho: No, I don't believe I did. I don't think so. At least I can't recall. If it were going to happen, it would have happened in the first camp we were in. I say that from a protective standpoint. A man could have done that and gotten away with it and probably lived. In the camps where we were treated as roughly as we were, there's no way where you could get away with it--no way at all.