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Bryghte D. Godbold
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ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Brigadier General Bryghte Godbold

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: April 7, 1972

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Brigadier General Bryghte Godbold for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 7, 1972, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing General Godbold in order to get his reminiscences and impressions and experiences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. General Godbold was captured on Wake Island very early in 1941. General Godbold, to begin this interview would you very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education, your occupation, things of that general nature?

Brigadier

General Godbold: I was born in a small town in Alabama, Koy by name, on July 8, 1914. I was educated in elementary and secondary school in Alabama and at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, which is now Auburn

University, graduating there in 1936 in electrical engineering. I continued my education in later years receiving my masters at Stanford University and my doctorate from New York University. I entered the Marine Corps immediately after graduation from Auburn as a 2nd lieutenant, and at the time of the outbreak of World War II, I was a captain. After World War II, I continued in the Marine Corps and retired in 1958 with the rank of brigadier general.

Marcello: I assume that you were in R.O.T.C. while you were at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, and that's the reason that you went into the Marine Corps in 1936.

Godbold: Yes, I was in Army R.O.T.C. and was selected as an honor graduate and offered a regular commission in the Marine Corps and accepted.

Marcello: I assume that in 1936 you had no idea that the country was going to war at that time.

Godbold: Oh, I guess not precisely. It was pretty clear even at that time, though, that even as a young college graduate, that there was the danger of war and that within a few years we might have hostilities of a general nature.

Marcello: When did you go to Wake Island? I assume that was your first overseas duty stop.

Godbold: Oh, no. I'd been in the Marines by then several years and had served on sea duty for about a year and a half

and had seen duty in the Pacific including Alaska and Hawaii. So this was not my first trip overseas, but I went to Hawaii in, I guess, February of 1941 and served on Palmyra Island, about 1,000 miles south of Honolulu for some months. I then came back to Honolulu and went to Wake Island, oh, about ten days before the war started.

Marcello: While you were at Honolulu did you notice any extraordinary precautions being taken for some sort of Japanese attack? Did you see any preparations out of the ordinary taking place at that time?

Godbold: Oh, there were considerable preparations being taken, not so much of a local nature, but there were preparations taken with the prospect that war might occur. Obviously, no one knew precisely if it would occur or when, but there was a general feeling that we were moving towards a state of hostilities with Japan.

Marcello: Now when you got to Wake Island ten days before war actually broke out, what sort of activity was taking place on Wake Island at that time?

Godbold: Oh, there was a great deal of work being done to improve the defenses of the island, and we were working essentially a seven-day week to get this done, and again I would say it was clear that we were moving

towards hostilities with Japan, but nobody knew whether it would come tomorrow, next week, next month, or a year.

Marcello: As a young artilleryman--as I recall, you were on a three-inch gun--what sort of routine did you work into at Wake Island during this ten-day period before the war started?

Godbold: Well, I was a captain commanding one of the two anti-aircraft batteries on the islands. There were three of them there, and I was in command of one of the islands which had on it my own anti-aircraft battery, and then there was a five-inch coast artillery battery on the island, too. I was concerned with the usual duties of getting my battery and essentially the defenses of that island in shape for hostilities. Previous to that time, I'd been at Palmyra Island as I mentioned a few moments ago and had been responsible for putting in the defenses for that island. So this was nothing particularly new nor out of the ordinary. We were moving as swiftly as possible to complete the defenses of the island.

Marcello: Was there still quite a bit to be done by the time December 7th rolled around?

Godbold: Oh, yes, there was a lot to be done. There was some equipment that we still needed, but I guess most

military men would say that there's always equipment still to be needed. I guess the main deficiency as I saw it was that there was insufficient beach defenses in the way of barbed wire and other defense paraphernalia. So I would say the island was considerably deficient in defense capabilities.

Marcello: From what I gather, a good many of the Marines who were on Wake Island were raw recruits or had had very little experience in the Marine Corps, had very little time in the Marine Corps. And I gather that training was also undertaken for these people on Wake.

Godbold: Oh, yes. There was training going on continuously, as really the training part is just as important as the hardware part of getting ready for war, but I would say that the Marines on Wake Island were as well-trained as you could have any group of peacetime Marines trained. I would not agree with the point that there were a lot of people there who were not adequately trained. Obviously, there were some who had not been in the Marine Corps a long time, but by present day standards the troops were exceedingly well trained and prepared for combat.

Marcello: We mentioned awhile ago that you were in command of a three-inch battery on Wilkes Island?

Godbold: Peale.

Marcello: On Peale Island, a three-inch battery on Peale Island, and from what I gather your three-inch battery was the only one to have a full complement of men at the time. I understand the fire control equipment for the three-inch batteries was lacking. Some of them didn't have height finders. Some of them didn't have oil releases, things of this nature. How was your battery? In other words, what was the state of your battery?

Godbold: My battery had all the equipment needed to carry out its job. The other three-inch battery didn't have a height finder, and so we provided altitude readings on the Japanese planes to the other island. But we essentially had what we needed to fight with.

Marcello: What was the morale like on Wake during this ten-day period before hostilities broke out?

Godbold: Excellent.

Marcello: Were you expecting some sort of an attack?

Godbold: Again, as I've mentioned earlier, there was no feeling that we would be attacked tomorrow morning, but there was a general feeling that we were moving towards war with Japan. It was a question really of time, not of whether it would occur. We were entirely aware that we were a forward outpost in the Pacific and that if

war came we would certainly be, in all likelihood, an object of early attack.

Marcello: What was the strategic value of Wake Island?

Godbold: I think it had considerable strategic value. Along with Midway, it provided particularly the Hawaiian Islands an outpost, a base for reconnaissance planes, a base for limited activity of our own submarines. It provided a bearing point for planes going farther west, and I considered it of considerable strategic value to the defense in the Pacific.

Marcello: It was fairly close to the Marshall Islands, too, was it not?

Godbold: Yes, I would guess it was a matter of 1,000 miles, maybe a little farther than this. It was a lot closer to the enemy islands than it was to any other friendly base.

Marcello: I gather that there were quite a few civilians on Wake Island at the time who were engaged in construction projects of various sorts. Did you ever have very much contact with these civilians?

Godbold: Yes. I had some because some of the civilians had volunteered to serve in various, if you will, paramilitary activities in support of the military defenses of the island. I had some contact during the ten days before war began with a relatively small number

of these people who had volunteered to serve with my battery.

Marcello: I gather that the head civilian contractor there was a man by the name of Dan Teters. Did you have very much contact with him? He apparently supposedly played a rather major role in the defense of Wake Island later on.

Godbold: I didn't know him other than I'd met him, but I don't think he played any particularly significant role other than the fact that he was the head of the civilian group. Of course, they had trucks and other logistical equipment that was useful once hostilities began, and, of course, he made the equipment and people to operate them available.

Marcello: Okay, this kind of brings us up, I think, to December 7, 1941. What were you doing and what were your reactions when you heard about the Japanese attack?

Godbold: It was early in the morning there, Sunday morning, and I believe we'd just finished breakfast, and there was a general alarm sounded that Pearl Harbor was being attacked. We did what we were supposed to under the circumstances. We proceeded by truck immediately to our defense installations, got the ammunition out, checked the fire control and other equipment, and set up watches ready to fight.

Marcello: Did you think that it would be a rather short war?

Godbold: No.

Marcello: This is unusual. I think many of the people . . . let's put it this way, many of the enlisted men assumed that, "The Japanese have really done it this time. We're going to clean them up and in no time flat."

Godbold: I don't think this opinion was restricted only to the enlisted men. Many of the officers felt the same way, but it was clear to some of us, at least me, that we were in for a long war. The Japanese certainly had the capabilities to fight it.

Marcello: I think on the very same day a group of Japanese bombers did come over and bomb Wake. Isn't that correct?

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: Actually, the attack took place on December 7th, Pearl Harbor time. This would have been December 8th on Wake Island . . .

Godbold: That's correct.

Marcello: As I recall there were twenty-seven Japanese bombers in this first attack, and their major target was the airfield. Can you describe what you remember about that first attack?

Godbold: Yes. We saw the bombers approaching the island from the direction . . . from the other side of the island

from where we were located across the lagoon. They were approaching at a low altitude and came in over the airfield. They bombed the airfield and we opened fire on them, but they were at such low altitude that it was difficult for the three-inch batteries to be effective. And they crossed the island and did not bomb my position. I doubt if the Japanese lost any planes. I don't recall, but I don't think they lost any planes.

Marcello: Now there was no radar at all on Wake Island, was there?

Godbold: None.

Marcello: In other words, the only way you could fight them would be visually.

Godbold: That's right.

Marcello: As I recall, there weren't too many high points on Wake Island where you could put up plane watchers.

Godbold: No, there weren't, but you really didn't need necessarily high posts for observation. The island's flat, only a few feet above sea level, but you had unlimited visibility, really, in all directions. The weather's generally clear in that part of the Pacific all the time with the exception of some clouds occasionally, and so there was no real problem of spotting the planes, although it would have been nice

to have had radar. But even with the late observation we usually were able to sight the planes.

Marcello: From your vantage point on Peale Island, were you able to observe this air attack quite well?

Godbold: Yes, I saw the planes. The planes were spotted from my batteries several miles before they reached the airfield, and then it was several miles from the airfield as they continued their attack across the island. They didn't go immediately across my battery position, but it was easy to observe the attack.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you had your first taste of combat?

Godbold: Oh, I guess the general reaction was that we were caught with our planes on the ground, and I guess that essentially the only reaction was the concern about the loss of planes on the ground and the fact that we'd not been able to inflict any serious damage on the attacking force. I guess another reaction was that they would be back.

Marcello: And as I recall, they were back the very next day, December 9th. This time, I think you were hit around 11:45 in the morning by twenty-seven Japanese bombers. Do you remember anything from that second attack? As I recall, your battery was quite active in that second attack.

Godbold: I don't remember anything specifically about that attack as I could have about the first attack because it was one of many attacks. I can't remember whether we did particularly well or poorly that day, but as attacks proceeded we became more proficient in our shooting, and the Japanese came in at higher altitudes. Over the course of the attacks I believe we shot down some planes.

Marcello: Well, according to what Devereux has to say in his book, in the second attack your battery fired over 100 rounds and five planes were seen to be smoking as they went away. Now whether these were shot down or not and as to who receives credit for them, I suppose nobody perhaps will ever know. So apparently you did do some sort of damage during the second day of that attack.

Godbold: I guess we did. Now that we're talking about it, I believe they came in at a relatively low altitude, maybe 12 or 14,000 feet, which is ideal for the equipment that we had, and I believe that we probably did fairly well that day. The planes on later bombing runs came in at higher altitudes.

Marcello: I gather that the three-inch guns could do quite a bit of damage when those planes were coming in at a low altitude.

Bodbold: Yes. They were an effective anti-aircraft weapon.

Marcello: Apparently these Japanese planes had come in fairly low during the first day, and I assume that since they were so successful that first day, they decided to do the same thing on the second day.

Godbold: Well, the first day they came in at a very low altitude-- I would guess 2 or 3,000 feet--and then the second day they came in at . . . and this from their standpoint was not a particularly ideal bombing altitude. And so the second day I believe they came in at 12 or 14,000 feet which was to some extent their ideal bombing altitude, and, of course, that was an ideal altitude as far as we were concerned with our weapon. This worked out fairly well from our standpoint.

Marcello: Now, the third day, of course, they came back again, and maybe I need to refresh your memory a little bit here, but as I recall, there were nine bombers that specifically hit Peale Island on this third day of the attack. I believe the power plant failed at your battery. Was this during the attack or was this before the attack? Do you recall anything about this?

Godbold: Yes, I remember that. The power plant--it was a portable power plant--providing electricity to these guns and all their equipment failed just about the time

that the planes arrived and persisted throughout the attack, and we had to direct our fire by visual methods which is a poor way of doing it.

Marcello: I gather this power plant was a type of calculating device, was it not?

Godbold: No, this was just mainly a portable generator for providing power to all the fire control equipment. Once it was out, your fire control equipment used for sighting the guns and so on is really useless, so you just have to point them up in the air and then direct them to planes just as you would small arms.

Marcello: You'd been under attack for three days, bombing attacks by relatively large numbers of planes. By this time had it become more or less a routine matter yet, or was it still grating upon one's nerves?

Godbold: Well, I guess it was some of both. At least it appeared obvious that the Japanese were going to continue to attack the island by aircraft until they reduced the defenses--or at least that was their aim--to the point where they could seize the island. So from that standpoint, it looked like it was a routine activity. From the standpoint of being grating on your nerves, you're going to be attacked every day, but that's why we were there.

Marcello: Well, then on December 11th, the first Japanese task force arrived. Can you describe the activities as best as you remember them on December 11?

Godbold: Yes. That morning some lights were seen early in the morning offshore, and then just about daylight one or more ships--I vividly remember one--proceeded towards the island, did some firing.

Marcello: This was a cruiser, as I recall.

Godbold: A cruiser or a destroyer. I expect we thought it was a cruiser, but I guess I would think now that it was probably a destroyer. It began firing and some of the shells hit in our battery area, but their main target was an island across the lagoon. This ship came in towards the island--Wilkes Island--and a five-inch coast artillery battery on that island along with a five-inch battery on my own island fired on this cruiser, and the battery on the other island sank the ship--destroyer or cruiser, whatever it might be.

Marcello: I gather that the orders were to allow that destroyer or cruiser or whatever it was to come in almost as close as was really possible. It came in fairly close, did it not?

Godbold: Yes. The commander of the battery that sank the ship allowed it to come in at almost point-blank range before

he opened fire, and he hit it and sank it with only two or three salvos.

Marcello: I gather that there was some other damage done to the Japanese ships, also. I believe a troop transport may have been sunk and maybe a destroyer or two. I gather you really didn't know how much damage you had done, but there was more than one ship that was hit.

Godbold: Yes. It was clear that we had done enough damage to spoil the landing operation and require the Japanese to avoid it. We knew that one ship had been sunk. We knew that some of the fliers in the three remaining planes that we had had heavily damaged a transport, and we knew that there was damage on other ships, but the extent of it we, of course, didn't know. But we felt we'd done quite well because the Japanese retreated.

Marcello: I assume this did quite a bit to bolster morale, also, did it not?

Godbold: Yes, this was, of course, a good day but I still had the feeling that the Japanese were going to come back again and try to seize the island.

Marcello: Wasn't this a rather stupid move on the part of the Japanese to bring in this task force without a preliminary bombardment of any sort? Why do you think they did that?

Godbold: I think they had overestimated the effectiveness of their own bombing, and this isn't restricted to the Japanese.

Marcello: In other words, I gather that in the reports that the Japanese pilots turned over to their superiors indicated that the island had been reduced to a shambles.

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: Well, I think also that same day, however, after the task force was beat off, Japanese bombers did come in once again, did they not? I think several of them were shot down.

Godbold: Yes, again I think this was a good day for us, and we shot down several of their planes that day.

Marcello: After this attack and after your battery obviously had been quite active in beating off this latest air attack, your battery was moved, was it not? I think Devereux or somebody believed that it perhaps had been pinpointed by the Japanese, and so in order to avoid it getting knocked out, it was moved to another position on the island, a position where you perhaps might be in better shape in case of some sort of a landing attempt.

Godbold: We were moved primarily because it was clear that the Japanese had had a fine opportunity to observe us and know where we were. We had the better equipment and

were more fully ready for war. We were doing the most damage, I expect, of the two anti-aircraft batteries, and so it was felt that since the Japanese had not been successful in their landing attempt, they would try to really knock out the defenses. The best way to do that would be to knock out the anti-aircraft, and then at their leisure they could come in and take care of the coast artillery defenses and the other defenses of the island. So Devereux decided that we should move the battery, and we moved it during one night and which . . .

Marcello: It was a rather full-scale operation, was it not? As I recall, as many as 2000 civilians were involved in moving this battery.

Godbold: Yes. In those days we emplaced the batteries on these atolls. We set them in where they were going to stay, and this was really an operation that required months to get them in. And then we were told to move and to be ready the next morning, so we did it during nighttime, and there were hundreds of civilians that helped us move, and by daylight we were ready to operate from this new position. It was an undertaking that we would have thought would have taken weeks only a few days earlier, but our whole attitudes and capabilities had changed, and we knew we could do it and we did it.

Marcello: From time to time we've talked or have mentioned the activities of these civilian volunteers on Wake Island. Generally speaking, do you think that they conducted themselves in a rather heroic and exemplary manner?

Godbold: As far as I could tell, they did quite well considering that they were civilians, and, of course, my observations were limited to my own island. They helped provide hot food; they provided transportation and so on. I really don't know enough about what happened on the other parts of the island, but as far as I could see, they did very well.

Marcello: Now we're not going in and talk about the bombing attacks on every specific day that they occurred, but did it, after awhile, become kind of discouraging to have these bombers coming over every day, and no matter how many you shot down you knew that the next day probably they would return again in full strength?

Godbold: Well, I guess to some degree that it did get sort of a routine thing, but every day that they came gave us an opportunity to shoot some of them down as well as them an opportunity to shoot at us. As I saw it, it was a two-way street, and every day that we were able to shoot some of them down and that they didn't knock out our

defenses, that gave another day for reinforcements to arrive on the island.

Marcello: And there were only a couple of days when the planes did not come over, isn't that correct? Once in awhile they would give you a free day, I suppose you would say.

Godbold: Yes. As I recall, the day following the night when we moved the battery we had no attacks, and that was fortunate because everybody had been up all night, and so this was fortunate from our standpoint.

Marcello: Just previously you had mentioned reinforcements. I gather you were expecting reinforcements to come.

Godbold: Yes, we were expecting reinforcements to come, but it was clear that there had been heavy damage done at Pearl Harbor and some people, particularly some of the younger Marines, expected reinforcements to arrive in two or three days. But it was clear to some of us who'd been in the service for awhile that it was going to be lucky if we could get reinforcements in a matter of several weeks rather than several days.

Marcello: I assume that the island had become a gigantic rumor mill by this time.

Godbold: I guess so. I don't remember particularly any rumors other than what you heard on the radio and so on, but I imagine there were lots of rumors as there always are

in times of combat, but I don't remember any specific rumors.

Marcello: Did you ever have very much time to think about home and things like this while this action was going on?

Godbold: Oh, I don't recall any particular thoughts of this nature. I was too busy to be concerned about personal things such as that.

Marcello: I gather that after awhile other problems also arose. I'm speaking now about outbreaks of diarrhea, things like that. Do you recall outbreaks of this sort occurring from time to time?

Godbold: No, I don't remember any serious problems of this nature. I imagine there were some, but I don't even recall this. It either was not in my particular area or else, if it was, it was of a nature that wasn't sufficiently important that I recall it.

Marcello: There's something else that I think we need to clear up, also. One got the impression perhaps from the radio commentators at the time that the island was low on food and water, and I gather that this was not really the case. Apparently there was plenty of food and water.

Godbold: Yes. We had no problems with food or water.

Marcello: Was the same thing true of ammunition, things of this nature also?

Godbold: Yes, we had all the ammunition and all the food and water we needed.

Marcello: I understand the maintenance of communications was also a problem from time to time. I assume the Japanese would knock out the communications network on occasions, and this would have to be repaired.

Godbold: Yes, this was a problem. We had telephonic communications throughout the island, and this was often severed during a bombing raid. We also had radio communications, but radio equipment in those days was not nearly as reliable as it is now, and particularly operating in the tropics, that added to the difficulties. So there were often periods when you had communication difficulties.

Marcello: How about rats? I understand that Wake had some of the biggest rats people have ever seen.

Godbold: I don't recall any rats. I guess they were there, but again a part of my lack of knowledge of things like this may be due to the fact I was only on the island ten days before hostilities and hardly knew my way around, and I imagine that Wake did have a lot of rats on it, but I just don't recall seeing any.

Marcello: Do you ever recall hearing any broadcasts from the States relative to the heroic defense that was being put up on Wake Island?

Godbold: Yes, there was mention of it, particularly after we repulsed the first landing attempt on the island. There were almost, I guess, daily broadcasts, and I happened to have a rather good radio, and we listened to the broadcast every evening. There was usually mention of what we were doing on Wake and, sometimes it may have been a little exaggerated.

Marcello: This was what I was going to ask you.

Godbold: I think it depicted what we were doing in a little more glamorous terms and a little more heroic terms than we saw ourselves, and we were just doing what we were trained to do and didn't see it as any particular heroic or valiant effort on our part. Probably at that time there was relatively little good news insofar as our side was concerned, and here was an outpost that was repulsing attacks and inflicting some damage on the enemy. This was played up more out of proportion than it would have been under normal circumstances.

Marcello: I gather by this time your airplanes were reduced to what? Two or three?

Godbold: Two or three, I believe. I guess we must have had twelve or eighteen planes when the Japanese first

attacked, and they destroyed most of them in that one attack, and then as time went on, others were lost and either through enemy action or through mechanical difficulties and so on. I guess we only had two or three planes left.

Marcello: I gather that those pilots were both heroic and reckless, I suppose you could say.

Godbold: Yes. Again, I didn't see anything out of the ordinary. They were fine pilots. They'd been in the Marine Corps, most of them, a long time and this goes back to the same observation I made about your query concerning the raw recruits on the island. I think the aviators were as well-trained as the ground people. They knew what they were supposed to do, and they did it and did it effectively.

Marcello: On December 20th a PBY arrived. Do you recall the arrival of that plane? Maybe you didn't have anything to do with it since you were on Peale Island, but I gather that this was a morale booster because among other things orders were received that the airstrip was to be prepared for the arrival of some planes and preparations were to be made to evacuate the civilians. And so now apparently many people thought that the long-

waited reinforcements were coming. Do you recall that PBY at all coming to Wake?

Godbold: Yes, I remember it arriving and staying maybe overnight and taking off, I believe, early one morning going back to Honolulu. Again from my standpoint, I, of course, was interested that we had had some physical contact with Hawaii, but again I don't recall that it made any particular impression on me simply because I was busy with other things, and I saw no one on the plane. I saw it arrive and saw it leave and heard that it carried some information about reinforcements which I'm not sure that it did.

Marcello: I gather that this was mainly a rumor. The plane had come and it apparently had delivered word that the civilians were to be evacuated, and, therefore, I gather many of the men simply assumed that reinforcements were on the way.

Godbold: Yes. You don't have to send a PBY all the way out to Wake Island to send word about reinforcements, and this was pretty clear to me, but there was obviously no need to comment on this because other people had different viewpoints.

Marcello: And I gather that as long as it kept the men happy, and as long as it kept morale high, it was just as well

perhaps to let them believe that reinforcements were going to be coming.

Godbold: Yes, and it was also pretty clear by that time that we could begin with some reasonable expectancy to think about reinforcements. So I don't think this rise in morale was a false one, but I don't think it was probably based on valid information, but rather on just the thought that maybe this plane had brought some information and that reinforcements by then were probably either on the way or getting ready to be sent.

Marcello: Also, I gather by this time that some additional changes were made so far as your three-inch battery was concerned. For example, Lieutenant Lewis, as I recall, had the only director and you had the only height-finder. So weren't some of your guns turned over to Lieutenant Lewis, and weren't the remainder of your guns put down on the beach for a beach defense? Do you recall this?

Godbold: Yes. The morning after the PBY headed back to Honolulu, in fact just a few hours afterwards, we were attacked for the first time by dive bombers--carrier-based planes.

Marcello: So you knew that the task force was on its way again.

Godbold: Yes. And it was clear then that the second landing attempt would come reasonably soon, and during this

attack we took a direct hit on the director where I was located, and my junior officer was wounded and my senior enlisted man was killed, and several of us were scratched up, and our director was knocked completely out. And so this left me with a height-finder and Lewis, the other battery commander, with a director, and I believe maybe he was short a gun--I'm not sure--so we sent him one gun and sent him our height-finder. And this made my anti-aircraft gun reasonably useless as an anti-aircraft weapon, so we mounted them along the beach as beach defense guns.

Marcello: And I gather you set up a decoy in your original position?

Godbold: Oh, yes. When we left our original position, we camouflaged it and left it to look as if we were still there. A couple of days after we had left the position, when the Japanese came back again, they really plastered this area, and so I guess it was a good thing we had moved.

Marcello: Well, on December 23rd, the Japanese task force did arrive, and they came ashore, as I recall, at four different places. I think there was squally weather. There was no preliminary bombardment once again. And the landings were somewhere between Peacock Point

and Wilkes Island. I think everything was pretty quiet on Peale.

Godbold: Yes. We received no landing attack, and all we did was observe what was going on and set up our defensive installations and prepared ourselves to move if we needed to move because by daylight it was pretty clear that the main fighting was not going to be on our island.

Marcello: Is this when you were shifted or when you were ordered to report to the command post?

Godbold: Yes. I was ordered to move the personnel from the battery to set up a defense line to try to stop the advance of the Japanese because they'd already made considerable progress. So we moved our troops and set up a defense line and began fighting the Japanese as infantry.

Marcello: Were you over close to the command post?

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: I was just wondering about this because in Devereux's book he mentions that you were ordered to go from Peale to the command post, and then nothing is said about your movements, and I was kind of wondering what happened in between.

Godbold: We moved there, and fortunately the several miles movement was made by truck. Fortunately, we were not strafed by Japanese planes during the movement. I reported to Devereux, who told me where to set up my defense line. We did and were immediately engaged in, not heavy, but light activity against the enemy.

Marcello: What happened from that point? Did the Japanese then simply overwhelm your position?

Godbold: No, they didn't overwhelm our position. I guess in time they would have, but we held them off and the island surrendered while we were still engaged in fighting the Japanese. But at the time of the surrender, as far as I could tell from my position, things were going along very well. We were holding the Japanese off with relatively little difficulty.

Marcello: Were you still in good physical condition? In other words, you had not been hit in any way at this time?

Godbold: No, I hadn't been hit. I had not been wounded. When the director in my command post had been destroyed, I'd been scratched up, but I'd really not been wounded. I was in good shape.

Marcello: Well, describe the events then surrounding the surrender. How did you get the order, and what were your reactions when you received the order, things of this nature?

Godbold: I guess I first knew about it when Devereux went through my position towards the Japanese lines carrying a white flag, and so it was obvious that we were going to surrender. My reactions were, from my limited viewpoint, that I saw no reason for surrendering because we were doing very well there. Obviously, I didn't know the situation at other points on the island and to some extent neither did Devereux, but he knew a lot more than I did. And so from my standpoint, I thought at the moment it was a mistake to surrender.

Marcello: Were there rumors going around that the Japanese would not take prisoners, that they would kill all of you?

Godbold: Yes, there was these rumors as I would expect there always are, and people were wondering if the Japanese would shoot all the prisoners. This never occurred to me to be a reasonable view. I didn't expect it.

Marcello: What happened from that point? You saw Devereux going through the lines with the white flag. Obviously, he was going to surrender. What happened from that point?

Godbold: Devereux came back with Japanese soldiers, and we were told by him to cease firing and lay down our arms. We were then told to assemble at the command post, and we

stayed there. Gradually Japanese soldiers came up and disarmed anyone who still hadn't given up their guns.

Marcello: Did they rough you around any at this time yet?

Godbold: None.

Marcello: Now I know that at least among the enlisted men the Japanese stripped them of their clothing and everything. This didn't happen to the officers, did it?

Godbold: I think partially, as I recall. They took some of our clothing, and I can't recall at the moment how much, but there was some of this. I expect the Japanese were just as unsure of themselves as some of our own people because in general we were dealing with the Japanese who had just been engaged in fighting, and there were no senior officers present at this point, and so I wasn't too concerned about the stripping activity, and I think they did take my shirt maybe.

Marcello: Was there any looting at all? In other words, did they take watches, rings, personal effects?

Godbold: Yes, I think there was a considerable amount of this. They made people give up their watches and rings.

Marcello: Did they interrogate you at this time, or did this occur after the senior officers arrived, or were you never interrogated?

Godbold: Never really interrogated as I recall. There might have been . . . I don't think I was ever interrogated while I was on Wake Island.

Marcello: Well, there was really no vital information that you could give them anyhow, was there?

Godbold: No. I'm sure that they probably talked to Devereux and maybe the senior naval officer on the island, but essentially I don't recall any interrogation of any of the officers other than our senior ones.

Marcello: In his book Devereux mentions a Japanese officer by the nickname of "Garters." Do you recall "Garters" in any way or any of his activities? Apparently he was a graduate of Columbia University and could speak rather fluent English.

Godbold: I don't remember him at all. Again, maybe this was because of his senior position. He had a lot more contact with the Japanese than the rest of us.

Marcello: Now the island surrendered on December 23rd.

Godbold: Yes, I believe so.

Marcello: And as I recall you were on Wake until about January 12th before you were finally shipped out. What did you do during that interum there?

Godbold: Well, we were interned in one of the civilian contractors' barracks--one of the barracks where the

civilians who were working on the island lived--and there was a barbed wire fence placed around it, and we lived in this barracks and really very comfortably and with little interference from the Japanese. In fact, they paid practically no attention to us and sent us food reasonably regularly, and I believe we even had a radio in the place. So we just lived in this barracks for a period of whatever it amounted to--two or three weeks maybe.

Marcello: I gather it was a period of inactivity. You really did nothing.

Godbold: Essentially that.

Marcello: Then on January 12th, you were all removed from the island. As I recall they moved you on a, on a ship called the Nitta Maru. Is that correct?

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: Describe that trip. The Japanese had a whole list of rules, did they not, when you were getting ready to board that ship? As I recall, you were not allowed to take certain articles along with you, and you were not allowed to do any unnecessary talking. There was a whole list of rules, and if you broke any of these rules there was always the threat of execution or death hanging over you.

Godbold: Yes. Now that you mention it, I do recall there was a set of rather stringent rules, and the punishment to be execution if they broke any of these, and I don't remember specifically what they were. I think the examples you indicated were included among the set of rules. And when we boarded the ship, we were placed in what I gather was the mail room where the ship handled its mail for the passengers.

Marcello: It was a steel-walled compartment, as I recall.

Godbold: Yes. It was reasonably good-sized, and we didn't have any extra room, but we were not too crowded. There were a few bunks in here and some of the older officers occupied those, and the rest of us had mats on the floor and we traveled in this ship to Japan, were fed a couple of times a day, not very well, maybe three times a day.

Marcello: I assume it consisted mainly of rice?

Godbold: Rice, soup, and pickles, maybe some tea. It was a monotonous trip of several days.

Marcello: I think it was five days altogether.

Godbold: I think so. And there was always the thought in your mind you might be torpedoed by your own submarine, but the trip was uneventful.

Marcello: The Japanese also disinfected you, I believe, did they not? Didn't they spray you or something when you came aboard the ship? But apparently they didn't strip you of your clothing or anything. They disinfected you with your clothing on.

Godbold: I think I recall that now. They just sprayed you essentially as they do nowadays when you are coming back in an airplane from some overseas locations.

Marcello: And on the trip I gather there was no talking allowed. There was a guard on duty all the time, and I believe a light was burning constantly. Do you recall that?

Godbold: There was a light in the room where the officers were kept, and there was a guard outside the door. I do not recall any restriction on talking. There may have been a restriction on loud talking, but as I recall, we could confer with each other.

Marcello: Generally speaking then, I suppose it would be safe to say that there really wasn't too much undue hardship during this five-day trip to Japan.

Godbold: No, I don't recall any particular hardship. It was obviously not pleasant, but there was no brutality shown. The food was adequate even though not very palatable. The accommodations were about what you would expect for prisoners-of-war.

Marcello: Well, after five days then the ship reached Yokohama.
Did you leave the ship?

Godbold: No, I don't recall leaving the ship. Some people were taken off the ship and left in Japan and spent the rest of their imprisonment in Japan, and others of us remained with the ship, and then I believe we proceeded to Shanghai.

Marcello: Right. This was on January 19, 1942, that the ship left Yokohama. I gather also that while at Yokohama, some of the prisoners were questioned by the so-called "thought police." Did you experience any contact with these people?

Godbold: No, I wasn't questioned and I doubt if the people were "thought police." I would expect they were members of the Japanese military intelligence looking for intelligence and information from the military officers. For example, there were a couple of young Navy intelligence officers, I believe, in our group, a couple of young Navy officers who were on the island, and I think they were questioned rather thoroughly by the Japanese, but I don't think anyone called them "thought police." They were just seeking military information.

Marcello: Well, anyhow, from Yokohama you proceeded to Shanghai,

and Devereux mentions that there was a submarine scare or a rumored submarine scare on this trip across. Do you remember that?

Godbold: I remember a submarine scare or what we thought was a submarine scare on the way from Wake Island to Yokohama. I don't remember any from Yokohama to Shanghai, and I do recall that on the way to Yokohama that the ship was obviously zig-zagging, and there was some unusual commotion around the ship, and I expect there was some kind of submarine scare.

Marcello: Well, on January 23rd, the ship reached . . . you were still on the Nitta Maru, and the ship reached Shanghai. I gather that the Japanese brought aboard both Chinese and Japanese news reporters, and they were using you for some sort of propaganda purposes. Do you recall this?

Godbold: Yes, I remember some reporters coming aboard, and we were taken up on deck to talk with these reporters and to be photographed and to give us a chance to look at Shanghai.

Marcello: What sort of questions were they asking you?

Godbold: I really don't recall any of the particular questions now. There was more interest in some of the officers who had served in Shanghai before and some indeed who

probably knew some of these Chinese newspaper people and Chinese officials. I don't believe that I was interviewed at all.

Marcello: From there you were taken off the ship, and according to Devereux's account, you were marched to a place called Woosung, which is a few miles from Shanghai. Did the Japanese try and humiliate the prisoners in any way during this march? In other words, did they try and display you before the local population with the thought being, "Well, look what we as Orientals have done to the so-called invincible white man," or anything of that nature?

Godbold: There might have been some of this in their minds although I doubt if there was much of this. They marched us, as I recall, in what seemed to me to be a reasonably direct route to the camp, and I guess that probably the interviews with the Chinese and Japanese newspaper people might be characterized as showing the supremacy of the Asiatics over the Westerners more so than might have been on this march.

Marcello: This was January of 1942. I gather the weather was rather cold in China at that time of the year. You had just come from Midway with your tropical gear and so on.

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: I assume it was rather uncomfortable.

Godbold: Yes, it was uncomfortable. It was cold and you're talking about a temperature of somewhat comparable to Washington, D.C., in the winter, and it was unpleasant, but I don't remember that it was a punishing type of march. But it certainly was not a pleasant march.

Marcello: Well, you arrived at Woosung. Describe it as best you can from the physical standpoint.

Godbold: Oh, this was a compound probably having been occupied by the Japanese Army at one time. It was comprised of maybe eight or ten barracks or buildings--low, one-story buildings--built right on the ground with no understructure to them. They were constructed of wood and divided into either large rooms with raised sleeping platforms in them, and then in each of the barracks or in at least one or two of the barracks there were a good many individual rooms which had obviously been rooms for the Japanese officers. And they placed the American officers in the officers' rooms. The buildings were essentially dirty. They'd not been occupied for some time. There was no heating arrangement in the buildings themselves, as I recall. It was a rather depressing type of compound.

Marcello: Did they issue you any blankets or winter clothing or anything of that nature at this point?

Godbold: As I recall, and I may be incorrect in this, they issued us some kind of blankets. I don't recall at the moment any issue of clothing, and frankly I don't recall when this occurred. It might have occurred then, but I believe it was probably somewhat later.

Marcello: Also as I recall, there was an electric fence around this camp, was there not? An electric barbed wire fence of some sort.

Godbold: Yes, there was an electric fence around the compound, and it was supposed to be electric, and I presume it was.

Marcello: Nobody ever called their bluff on it, I guess.

Godbold: (Chuckle) No, as far as I know, they didn't.

Marcello: Later on, I think they constructed another fence inside this electric fence.

Godbold: They later constructed an inside electric fence.

Marcello: Were the North China Marines at this camp while you were there, or did they come in after you had arrived?

Godbold: As I recall they came in shortly after we arrived. It was a matter of days, I believe.

Marcello: I gather there was quite a contrast between your outfit and the North China Marines. By that I mean they came

in with overcoats, fur caps, gloves, things of that nature. They were a little bit more comfortable, shall we say, than what you were.

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: Did this cause any resentment?

Godbold: Yes. They were allowed to bring with them all of their personal gear. They had trunks and they had all their clothing essentially, and there was some question at the time about whether they were going to be repatriated as part of the embassy guard, and I think there were provisions for them to be repatriated. They never were but there was some thought among the Japanese officials locally that maybe they were going to be repatriated, and so they were treated, at least at the outset, with a little more courtesy than were those of us who had been fighting them. We, of course, came with tropical clothing and very little of that, and so there was a difference in our creature comforts, and this, of course, created some concern among some people that it was bad that we didn't have what the others had.

Marcello: How were the prisoners organized? By that I mean did the Japanese commandant give the American senior officer orders, and did he in turn issue these orders

to the enlisted men? What exactly was the chain of command in the prison camp?

Godbold: Essentially there was a chain of command in the prison camp with the Japanese dealing through the senior American officers, although this sometimes broke down, and there were direct relationships between some of the subordinate Japanese with some of the lower ranking Americans in regard to issuing orders and so on. But essentially the Japanese respected the chain of command. Of course, with the civilians you had a different situation; however, they did respect the position of the head man from Wake Island, Mr. Teters, in regard to the civilians. So I think all in all the Japanese from this standpoint generally honored the military and civilian hierarchy and I think wisely so. It made their system of control of prisoners a lot easier rather than dealing with each prisoner as an individual.

Marcello: Devereux mentions that the Japanese guards were sometimes brutal, sometimes stupid. Would you corroborate this opinion, or do you think otherwise?

Godbold: I think they were sometimes brutal, sometimes stupid, sometimes kindly, sometimes thoughtful. Mostly they

were indifferent in that they did their job, and I thought they handled themselves reasonably well.

Marcello: Was there very much petty harassment?

Godbold: Occasionally, we ran into harassment, but again, in retrospect there really wasn't a great deal of this. Occasionally, something would be stolen from the Japanese--food or something--and then they would say, "No meals for anybody until the food is returned." There was this kind of thing--mass punishment--but this didn't happen very often.

Marcello: Was there very much slapping, hitting with gun butts, or things of this nature?

Godbold: Some, but relatively little again in retrospect. I think it was relatively mild.

Marcello: Again, I just want to keep in mind that I'm asking questions that are directly concerned with what you saw, not with what you heard.

Godbold: That's right. Yes, that's right.

Marcello: I want that clear for the record.

Godbold: I'm trying to report, you see, because my viewpoint may be somewhat different from somebody else's, but essentially in the things that I saw the Japanese handled themselves in our camp in a reasonable, responsible fashion.

Marcello: In other words, they generally treated the officers in the manner prescribed by the Geneva Convention and what have you, even though they were not a signatory to that Geneva Convention.

Godbold: Yes. And from what I saw--and I saw a lot of it-- the treatment of the enlisted Marines was essentially in accord with it, keeping in mind that their standards and their customs are different from ours. Part of their military culture, in effect, includes the slapping and the beating of their own troops. I've seen them do it, and if they occasionally do this to prisoners who have broken their rules, you can understand it a little more than if we did this because that isn't part of the way we operate our military activities.

Marcello: Now one of the Japanese who stands out in the minds of many prisoners here at Woosung in a rather infamous way was the interpreter, Ishihara. Do you recall Ishihara?

Godbold: Oh, yes. I recall Ishihara. He was an interpreter, I gather a civilian interpreter who had been probably drafted into the Japanese Army. He spoke fairly good English and did the interpreting for the commanding

officer of the camp, and I suspect he took some liberties in his interpretations. He was, I think, somewhat of a sadistic individual.

Marcello: In what ways did he show his sadism?

Godbold: Oh, often he made ranting speeches when reporting the commanding officer's talks and you were not sure that what he said was what the commanding officer had said. And he tried to make the prisoners feel that they were inferior to the Japanese in many smaller ways. Some that I don't recall, but I certainly remember Ishihara. I couldn't have recalled his name, but now that you mention it, I do remember who he was.

Marcello: I gather that of all the Japanese who were at Woosung, he was the one that most of the prisoners would have liked to have gotten their hands on.

Godbold: (Chuckle) I would expect this is correct.

Marcello: Another Japanese that stands out here was Colonel Otera. He apparently was the one that was called "Handle-bar Hank." Do you recall him?

Godbold: Yes, I recall him. He was one of the commanding officers at the camp.

Marcello: The first one died, I believe. Colonel Yuse died very early in the fall of '42, I think.

Godbold: Yes. I don't remember much about Yuse. I remember Otera. He had a handle-bar moustache. He was obviously an old-line professional soldier who was probably too old for active combat or else had not distinguished himself in combat and had been shunted off to be commanding officer of a little prisoner-of-war camp.

Marcello: Well, Devereux describes him as a chronic drunk.

Godbold: I expect he had a drinking problem, although I don't recall this specifically, but now that you mention it, I do remember there was talk about him being quite a drinker.

Marcello: I gather also that he did not pay too much attention to the prisoners-of-war. In other words, you didn't see Otera too much.

Godbold: No, you didn't see him. He liked softball. We played a great deal of softball, and he always came to the games. I was, I expect, the most proficient softball player among the Marines. I think he always sort of liked me because he liked baseball, and we had some really topnotch softball leagues in operation, and he just got a big kick out of this. Although I got no dispensations of any kind, but from my standpoint,

he enjoyed softball and allowed us to play a lot, and I thought he was a pretty good commandant.

Marcello: This brings up an interesting question. What did the officers do to pass away the time? Now according to the Geneva Convention, officers were not required to work or could not be required to work. What did you do to pass away your time in this enforced idleness?

Godbold: Well, early in the game, I was asked by the senior American officer to be the athletic officer for the camp--the recreation officer. We were given a considerable amount of athletic gear from the Shanghai foreign community, primarily through the Red Cross. We had a lot of athletic equipment. We had books. I set up a library and set up an athletic program, organized softball leagues and touch football leagues and so on. And so I spent most of my time working with athletics for many months, and other officers had relatively little to do. Of course, I sought this. I was glad to have this occupation.

Marcello: I gather that idleness is one of the worst things that can happen to a prisoner.

Godbold: Some of the people just didn't seek to occupy themselves. We eventually had a relatively good library of several thousand volumes, and with all of the sports

and recreational activities we had available, there were plenty of opportunities for people to occupy themselves. Not that it was not boring, but still there were things to be done to keep your mind and your body active. The Japanese did not "require the officers to work," but they brought sufficient pressure to bear, and I think it was decided by the senior American officer that the best thing to do was for the officers to do some work, and so they did gardening work which I think was a good thing, personally. I ceased to be recreation officer for awhile and worked in the gardens and found it not bad at all.

Marcello: Did the Japanese allow you to keep all of the vegetables and other things that you grew?

Godbold: Oh, yes. They were all used in the galley. As far as I know, there was never any theft of any of it. The Japanese officers and enlisted men may have taken some of the vegetables for their own mess, and I would have, too, if I'd been in their position. But I don't think I recall any taking of the food and taking it out and selling it.

Marcello: Were the officers getting more food than the enlisted men, or were you getting about the same as the enlisted men were?

Godbold: Essentially you got the same food. We were fed out of the same galley. Some of the North China people had brought some food with them. They had some American money, and occasionally they were able, through the guards and so on, to buy additional food, but the food was, as far as I recall, the same. Later after we began to be paid and were able to buy, through legal, approved Japanese channels, some food, the officers were able to supplement their food that they ate. Essentially, there was very little difference as I recall. In fact, three-quarters of the time it was exactly the same, but during some short period the Japanese thought it was time to pay a little more attention to the officers, so they began to pay them in Japanese currency, allow them to buy from some merchants who would come in, and so they were able to supplement their diet some, but this was more a demonstration rather than something that had any real effect.

Marcello: Devereux mentions that the rice sometimes would have little pebbles in with it. Do you recall that?

Godbold: Oh, yes, there would be pebbles in it, more so than you find in our own rice, but I've found pebbles in the American rice, too. (Chuckle). And, occasionally,

you would find a worm in your stew, but I found a worm in spinach in an American restaurant. (Chuckle). It was not as nice as our own food by any means, but it wasn't too bad.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that you received books, athletic equipment, and this sort of thing from the foreign community in Shanghai. How much contact did you have with that foreign community?

Godbold: Very, very little. Some people knew people in Shanghai, and they got letters occasionally from them. They would send packages in occasionally, and, in fact, an individual in Shanghai whom I didn't know got my name and occasionally sent me a package of food.

Marcello: What was the nationality of the people mainly?

Godbold: Oh, you had several varied nationalities. You had some British still in Shanghai, and they were interned in one degree or another. You had some Russians, in fact a good many White Russians, in Shanghai. Then there were French and some Italians, a few Germans, I guess, but mostly British, some Americans interned and Italians and Russians.

Marcello: I assume that the internment for these people wasn't exactly too harsh.

Godbold: I gather it was not. I don't know but I presumed they were reasonably well taken care of, had adequate food. Probably, towards the end of the war, this became a little more stringent, but I think they were fairly comfortable.

Marcello: Devereux also mentions another food concoction, I guess you would call it, a type of stew that he refers to as "Tojo water." Do you ever recall that?

Godbold: Oh, I guess he was alluding to the stew that really constituted along with the rice your primary food. In fact, for breakfast you usually had some kind of cereal such as oatmeal or some kind of oats and maybe some rice and bread and tea. Lunch was a stew and to call it a stew would be, I think, a little presumptuous because it was a thin soup usually with vegetables, and very few of them, and occasionally with a little piece of meat in it, but they were very small. Your dinner meal, the evening meal, was rice and a stew and often this was a stew that had a little more substance in it than the lunch soup, and tea came along with every meal. But we got a pound of bread a day, a small loaf of bread and was baked right in camp, and it was baked by Americans and it was essentially pretty good bread! And with this, I guess we fared pretty well.

Marcello: I gather that the tea was made from willow leaves.
It wasn't the tea as we think of or was it?

Godbold: The tea was made out of tea leaves. Occasionally they might have run short, but essentially we had tea, and sometimes I think these stories of willow leaves and so on is made up by people to give their families and friends some feeling about how difficult it was, or what a hard time they had.

Marcello: Well, you see this is one of the values of oral history, and this is why we want to get this sort of thing into the record.

Godbold: It wasn't the finest tea in the world, but it was hot tea and it was made out of tea leaves.

Marcello: Another individual that stands out among the prisoners there is Colonel Otera's chauffeur who, I assume, was one of the best sources for receiving contraband. Do you recall any of the activities of this chauffeur at all?

Godbold: No, as an individual I do not. Now that you mention it, I remember he had a chauffeur. I remember he was involved in selling and trading with the prisoners, but this is about as far as my memory goes.

Marcello: Hot plates, I understand, were one of the more valuable pieces of contraband with which this chauffeur provided for the prisoners.

Godbold: Yes. I don't remember whether he was the one, but this was a very desirable item to have, and I remember I procured one by trading off cigarettes for one. I obtained one and kept it hidden away and used it for cooking for several years.

Marcello: At Woosung did you receive very many Red Cross packages?

Godbold: I don't recall how many, if we received any. There weren't too many, but during the time we were in Shanghai, counting Woosung and one other camp, we did receive two shipments, I believe, of Red Cross packages, and there was several packages in each one of these shipments for each of the prisoners, and so we did receive some Red Cross food.

Marcello: I assume that these were rather a welcome thing.

Godbold: Oh, absolutely! This was really a banner occasion when the Red Cross packages were passed out because they had in them food such as powdered milk and butter and coffee and so on, and by using them in a reasonably careful way you could supplement your diet over a period of a month or two from just one package.

Marcello: Had the Japanese ever gone through any of these packages, or were they received intact by the prisoners?

Godbold: There were rumors that the Japanese took some of the packages and I expect they did, but I don't believe

this was on any particular large scale. I would guess that the Japanese took 10 per cent, and this figure's off the top of my head, and I would expect that this was not to be unexpected really. A group of people who did not have this type of food saw it come in to their own prisoners, and then the temptation to take it, I would think, would be almost overwhelming. I would expect that if we'd been in the same position, some of our people might have done the same thing. But as far as wholesale pilfering, I heard about it, but I saw no real evidence of it.

Marcello: Another one of the individual Japanese who stands out among the prisoners is a guard by the name of "Tiny Tim," whose favorite preoccupation supposedly was running the prisoners through all sorts of drills and inspections and things of this sort. Do you recall "Tiny Tim" at all?

Godbold: I remember the name and I remember that he was a guard who was essentially sadistic and that he had a bad reputation among the prisoners. I remember he would take any occasion he could to harass the prisoners, but I don't even remember at the moment what he looked like.

Marcello: Another guard who stands out was one by the name of "Popeye," who apparently treated the prisoners quite humanely. Do you recall "Popeye?"

Godbold: Again, I recall him about in the same vein as the "Tiny Tim." I remember that there was a guard with this name. I remember also that he was highly regarded among the prisoners. He gave them information about the war. Whether he ever dealt in selling things for the prisoners, I don't know. As I recall, maybe he was a Taiwanese. I'm not sure.

Marcello: He was. I think he was one who was from Formosa.

Godbold: He just had a good reputation among the prisoners, evidently was humane in his treatment, and was very favorably regarded among the prisoners.

Marcello: I gather that at Woosung there wasn't a whole lot of work to be done by any of the prisoners, even the enlisted men. I think there was some road repair work that was done, and I think there was a big camp garden or something of that nature, but there really wasn't a whole lot of work specifically at Woosung. Is this correct?

Godbold: I think this is right. They had a big garden there, and there were enlisted Marines who did a lot of work in the garden, but it was not onerous work, and it was

really in many respects "make work." I think again that this was desirable in that it kept us somewhat busy.

Marcello: Well, the reason I bring this up is that you mentioned awhile ago that there was softball and other sorts of recreational activities. Obviously the prisoners were not being overworked because everybody, enlisted men as well as officers, participated in these things.

Godbold: Yes, we were not overworked. There was plenty of time. We were allowed to play, for example, softball. The Japanese, as you know, loved baseball and insofar as baseball's concerned, we had crews of several merchant ships join the camp and from one of the merchant ships was one of the premier softball pitchers in the world. And he and some others of us who had some experience in athletics helped organize the softball leagues and really played topnotch softball. The whole camp came out to watch the games in the evening along with all the Japanese, and there was a great deal of enthusiasm for it and betting and a lot of animation about it, and it took the minds of the prisoners off of their own plight by having these very heated and really wonderfully played games. And this went on every night during the spring, the summer, and the fall.

Marcello: Was there competition between the Americans and the Japanese? Did the Japanese get in there and mix it up with the Americans?

Godbold: There was occasionally a Japanese guard who would come out and want to play with us, but while the Japanese were coming out and watching and enjoying it tremendously, there was little fraternization insofar as playing against the Japanese because obviously we were so much better than the Japanese.

Marcello: I gather that one occasion the Japanese tried to force the officers, at least, to learn some of the Japanese language, and I gather this only lasted for about two sessions and they finally gave up.

Godbold: Oh, yes. There was always some interest on the part of the Japanese for the officers to learn Japanese, and I wasn't interested in learning the language. Very few people were. One or two were and really became quite proficient in the language. In retrospect now, I wish I had but it was an abortive attempt.

Marcello: What other sort of recreational activities did the officers or the prisoners organize for themselves?

Godbold: Well, I mentioned the outdoor activities, primarily the softball and some baseball, but mostly softball because of restrictions on the size of the area that

we had and the equipment we had. I've already mentioned the library which was widely used. We organized bridge tournaments, chess tournaments. We organized classes in various languages such as Spanish and so on. These are the main types of recreational activities that I recall. The Japanese really allowed us great latitude in organizing these and conducting them. There was relatively little interference with such activities. Obviously they had to be performed at certain times, but within those limitations we had considerable latitude in running our own lives.

Marcello: Getting back to the foreign civilians living in Shanghai, one name that stands out which I've heard mentioned from time to time is a lady by the name of Mrs. Percy Shelley Widdup. Do you remember her as being especially kind and considerate towards the prisoners?

Godbold: I don't remember her.

Marcello: This is the lady who was referred to as Aunt Bee on occasion.

Godbold: I remember Aunt Bee. I didn't recall her full name, but I do recall that she was responsible for sending in a considerable amount of parcels and so on to the prisoners.

Marcello: I gather that the Japanese protested after awhile when she was sending in so many parcels, and at one time or

another she told the Japanese that actually that she had fourteen nephews that lived in the camp or that were prisoners, and that seemed to satisfy them, and they allowed her to continue to send the parcels into the prisoners.

Godbold: I never heard that story.

Marcello: Did you find that in the prison camp the Japanese still tried to continue in certain ways to humiliate the prisoners? In other words, did you have to salute every Japanese regardless of rank? This was sort of a cyclical type of thing. At times with the changes of administration in the camp, a turnover of personnel, this would rise and fall and sometimes they would go on an unreasonable extent to require military courtesies and so on. And then, at other times they were very lax and didn't care.

Marcello: Well, I gather again that this was kind of like that language business. They required the officers to salute all the Japanese military personnel, but apparently after awhile the officers simply ignored it, and the Japanese didn't do anything about it.

Godbold: Yes, and I think this is essentially correct, but occasionally, as I mentioned a moment ago, there would be a . . . an upsurge in "Well, we've got to have more

respect from these Americans," and so they would come around and harangue us about the need for respecting the Emperor's soldiers. But this was really just a minor irritation.

Marcello: During your stay at Woosung were you able to send any letters home, or were you able to receive any letters?

Godbold: I remember writing maybe one or two letters, and I may have received a letter or two there. I really can't recall.

Marcello: I assume that the Japanese censored what letters were received and sent.

Godbold: I would assume so.

Marcello: How did you maintain discipline among the prisoners? I'm speaking now of the enlisted men. Obviously, it was still the duty of the officers to maintain some sort of semblance of discipline among the prisoners.

Godbold: Yes. Well, discipline was maintained essentially just as you would maintain it if you had not been in prison. We worked through the non-commissioned officers, and if there were grave infringements of discipline, while we had no power to inflict punishment as such, there was a hearing held and records made with the understanding that this would be considered after the war insofar as the individual is concerned. And

generally this worked pretty well. There were obviously some minor problems. Some individuals felt that they were subject to Japanese discipline alone and took advantage of this or tried to, but generally this was taken care of by the views of their own contemporaries, and such individuals would soon come into line and say, "Well, really I will respect the decisions of my own people rather than the Japanese." At times there were problems, but essentially this was handled in a generally satisfactory way.

Marcello: How did you receive news from the outside world? I know you did receive some news.

Godbold: Well, we received news from a variety of sources such as from guards. We've mentioned one guard here earlier, "Popeye," I believe, who brought in news. Then there were Japanese newspapers brought in. Some of them were English newspapers. Others were Japanese and there were some people who could read Japanese. Then our main source, though, were radios, the parts of which were smuggled in, and radios were built.

Marcello: I think Lieutenant Kinney had a part in this, did he not, in constructing the radio?

Godbold: Yes, and a lieutenant named McAlister actually operated the radio. It was operated in my room most

of the time, although I could not operate it. It was a crystal set and a very primitive type of set, and after the lights went out at night, it would be operated with headphones, and it could get the Russian radio station in Shanghai which broadcast in English most of the time. So you got a lot of coverage of the Russian war and relatively little coverage of the war in the Far East.

Marcello: Now I gather that the Japanese did allow one radio per barracks, but it was set up as such that it could only receive broadcasts from Shanghai. Is this correct?

Godbold: Right. And I guess that one of these was fixed so that you could get broadcasts from long range.

Marcello: Right. I think this is what Kinney did.

Godbold: Kinney fixed this set and it was used . . . for example, we heard the news of the Battle of Midway from the United States and knew that the Japanese had suffered a defeat there.

Marcello: I assume that you also heard about Doolittle's raid and the Battle of the Coral Sea?

Godbold: Yes, we heard these, too, and at some point I guess the Japanese took the radios away. I can't remember when this was, but then we had to rely primarily on the crystal set.

Marcello: I gather that the news about Midway and Coral Sea and Doolittle's raid did wonders for the morale of the troops.

Godbold: Yes. Some people felt like the war would be over in a few weeks.

Marcello: Well, you remained at Woosung for about a year from January to December of 1942, as I recall, and then in December of 1942, you were moved to a place called Kiang Wang, which wasn't too far from Woosung, just a matter of a couple of miles.

Godbold: I'd say it was five miles away.

Marcello: That's exactly what it was--five miles. And this was perhaps one of the worst camps during the prisoners' captivity. As I recall, this is where the enlisted men, at least, were engaged in the so-called "Mount Fuji Project."

Godbold: Right. Yes. The camp facilities there were comparable to, and indeed somewhat better than, the facilities at Woosung; however, the enlisted men were put to work.

Marcello: In other words, fun and games are over at this camp.

Godbold: No, not exactly. They had to work every day. They had to work hard, and our athletic program continued but not at the same pace because we really didn't have the stamina. Also at this camp they encouraged

the officers to work to the point that finally the senior American officer decided that they should do gardening work and not so much to please the Japanese but for the health of the officers, and they went out and spent several hours each day in gardening activities none of which was very strenuous. But the enlisted Marines did have to work and worked extremely hard.

Marcello: This Mount Fuji Project that we talked about was actually a rifle range, was it not? But as I recall, they told the prisoners that it was to be a park of some sort.

Godbold: This was my understanding. I never saw the area, but I understand that this was the situation.

Marcello: Well, the construction of the rifle range would have been a violation of the Geneva Convention, would it not?

Godbold: Yes, but I don't think the Japanese were very particular about this.

Marcello: Well, I'm sure they weren't, and I guess this is one of the reasons why they said it was a park . . .

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: . . . rather than a rifle range. Now apparently at this camp you were paid. You'd mentioned this earlier. I think you received so much per day according to rank.

Godbold: Yes, we were paid at this camp.

Marcello: I gather also that there was some black market activities at this camp, and in some way or another Ishihara was involved in these black market activities for a portion of the take, of course.

Godbold: There was a lot of black market activity at this camp, the extent I don't know, but I know it was widespread. The extent to which Ishihara participated in it, I don't know.

Marcello: Well, I gather that he did look the other way in some of the dealings with the Chinese coolies and what have you, and then apparently he demanded a larger take or a larger percentage, and the prisoners cut him off. And he in turn then spilled the beans to the camp commandant, and apparently that's when things really got worse to a great extent. Do you recall anything about that crackdown? What I'm referring to is that Ishihara apparently did squeal, and there was an investigation conducted, and several of the officers were hauled in. Some of them were beaten quite severely. For example, a Lieutenant Foley--I think this is a Navy lieutenant--was brought in, and there's quite a bit of talk about torture or at least some rather nasty punishments being dealt out here.

Godbold: Foley was a young Navy doctor, and I recall vaguely something about a crackdown here on black market activities, but frankly I don't remember any beatings of officers. It may have occurred, but it must not have been very severe, or I would have recalled it because obviously we were very close-knit as a group. But I expect some of this was exaggerated.

Marcello: How about escape attempts? Did that ever cross your mind?

Godbold: Oh, yes. When we were at Woosung, several people attempted to escape, and did so.

Marcello: I think Teters was in on this in act . . .

Godbold: Teters, Cunningham . . .

Marcello: Cunningham . . .

Godbold: . . . Cunningham, who was the senior naval officer at Wake, and a lieutenant commander named Smith, who was captain of a small Navy gunboat that was interned-- U. S. gunboat--that was interned at Shanghai. These three people--there may have been another one--escaped and got away from the camp but were caught in two or three days and then interned somewhere else. Then there were one or two other attempts at Kiang Wang to escape. None of them, I believe, were successful, but we obviously were always thinking about escape but

were discouraged by the senior American colonel named Ashurst, who was from North China, saying that if you did escape, the Chinese would kill you for your shoes which none of us believed. We were always planning an escape, and later some of us in the group did escape. I wasn't one of them, but I was one of the perpetrators of it, and these people did escape.

Marcello: Why was it that Ashurst was discouraging people from escaping? Did he simply think that they didn't have a chance on the outside?

Godbold: Oh, I expect not. I expect he knew pretty well that if they got well away from camp that the chances of escape were extremely good. He just felt, I believe, that from the well-being of the prisoners that the good that would be accrued to our country's cause by two or three people escaping and coming back to America would rebound to the balance sheet between what that would do for our country and what it would do to the prisoners who were still there. It was not really worth the effort, and I just think that he felt that for all things concerned the best thing to do was to stay there and wait the war out, but that, of course, none of the young officers agreed with that.

Marcello: What sort of threats did the Japanese make concerning escape?

Godbold: Oh, essentially, I think they said if you escaped, you would be tried and probably executed.

Marcello: Did you believe them?

Godbold: No.

Marcello: Was there any sort of enclosure or fence or anything around this camp where the Mount Fuji Project was being undertaken? In other words, were the security arrangements as good or as efficient there as they had been at Woosung?

Godbold: Oh, they were better there. They had a big brick wall around the camp that was probably ten feet high, and on top of this was barbed wire--electrified barbed wire fence. And then there was an inner fence inside of that, and in the evenings, late afternoon, everybody had to be inside the inside fence after the athletics were over, and before dark everybody had to be in the inside fence and stay there until the next morning.

Marcello: Had this place been an old army camp, too, of some sort?

Godbold: I think so. I presume that it had been an old Japanese camp.

Marcello: You were there at least two years? Is that safe to say? You were there fairly a long time at this second camp, were you not?

Godbold: I would say at least two years, yes, maybe longer even.

Marcello: I recall that in the winter of 1944, you saw your first B-29's or were able to see your first B-29's bombing Shanghai. What did this do for your morale?

Godbold: Oh, that helped the morale as you would guess. To see our own planes coming over made people begin to feel that the war was really getting to the Japanese.

Marcello: What was the Japanese' reaction when these planes came over? What would they do?

Godbold: Insofar as the camp was concerned, they would require you to go inside the camp and inside the barracks and stay most of the time, but I remember some of us stood out and watched the raids, and their reaction was not particularly excitable insofar as the prisoners were concerned.

Marcello: I gather on one occasion--this was the spring of 1945--a flight of P-51's came over rather low, and you were even able to wave at the pilots perhaps. Do you remember this?

Godbold: Yes. I remember the occasion. P-51's bombed the airfield which was only two or three miles away from the camp, and we saw them shoot down one bomber coming in for a landing. We could see the fires that were set at the airfield by the bombing. The planes flew over the area, and we waved at them, but after the war I did

some investigation, and the Americans didn't even know the camp was there and could well have attacked it as a Japanese barracks area. We thought they knew where we were.

Marcello: Well, in May of 1945 you were moved from this prison camp to a place called Fengtai near Peking. That was the first leg of a rather long journey. As I recall, you were loaded on freight cars, and this was a 700-mile trip from Shanghai to Peking. What was the trip like on these boxcars.

Godbold: The trip was really not too uncomfortable on the boxcars. This was the occasion when a group of we officers planned an escape. We'd been planning this for some time. We'd heard word that we were going to be moved and knew the route we were going to be moved. We got information through various ways, through pilots that were brought into camp, where the best place along the railroad to escape would be. It was north of Nanking about 100 miles.

Marcello: Why was that considered to be the best area for an escape?

Godbold: This was an area where the Japanese had very little control of anything but the railroad line. Either side of the railroad line was under the control of the Communist Chinese. And so we planned an escape. We

planned to escape from the boxcars, and there were seven of us, I believe. Unfortunately, two of us were put in the boxcar with the senior . . . we were sufficiently senior that we were put in a different boxcar, and the junior officers were put in the other boxcar. The Japanese required us to rig the barbed wire across the windows in the boxcars, and in rigging the barbed wire across the windows in both cars, we rigged it very lightly. In the car where the junior officers were to be, we had a portable head, and we placed that right under the window and placed a blanket around it, hung a blanket around it--two blankets for privacy. And, of course, when anybody went into the head, they were right by the window. Well, unfortunately, the two of us--another young captain and myself--who had done all the planning for this were at the last minute put in the car with the American colonel and Devereux and all the other senior officers. We had not told anybody about the escape attempt, and so the other captain and I decided that we should not try to escape because we knew the colonel would order us not to escape so as not to endanger the plight of the others. We all had chocolate bars that we had traded for. We had matches in little

rubber bags that we had bartered for--made out of inner tubes--and fortunately for the ones who were able to go in the other car, the train proceeded through the area where we had selected as the area to get out at night, and one by one . . .

Marcello: At a slow rate of speed . . .

Godbold: . . . at a reasonably slow rate of speed and one by one these young officers went to the head, climbed out the window, and dropped off the train--six of them. They all escaped. They all were collected together in a matter of two days by the Communist Chinese and flown back to the United States. Of course, the escape of these young officers during the period of one night caused a great commotion among the Japanese, and there were threats of repercussions, but nothing really ever happened. And we proceeded on to Peking and were placed in this camp temporarily.

Marcello: I believe the trip took five days, and as I recall, the facilities at this temporary stop in Peking were even worse than those at Woosung or Kiang Wang.

Godbold: Yes. Going back to the length of the trip, I don't know whether it took five days. I would have guessed three days. You are probably correct in that it was five days. The facilities at this camp were

in some ways were superior and in some ways inferior. There were tremendous buildings in which we were kept. They were modern buildings, sort of like gymnasiums with concrete floor, but this was about all that was there, and there was nothing to do really, and it was just sort of a boring and frustrating and temporary period.

Marcello: Then, like you say, very shortly you were moved from Peking to Korea. This was on June 19, 1945--another boxcar trip--and I think it took approximately four days. Did anything eventful happen on this particular trip that you recall?

Godbold: I can't think of anything particularly eventful. It was not an unpleasant trip, as I recall. The weather was reasonably nice. We went through part of Manchuria, saw the Great Wall, and came down all the way through Korea, and it was nice looking country and was a reasonably pleasant interlude.

Marcello: Were you being fed reasonably well on this trip?

Godbold: Yes. We were fed essentially the same rations that the Japanese got, which was cold rice with a little fish, usually some pickled turnips or something with it, and tea. It was maybe not quite as good as in camp, but it was adequate, I thought.

Marcello: Incidentally, how much did you weigh when you went in the service?

Godbold: Oh, I guess I weighed 135 or 140 pounds.

Marcello: And by this time which is during the last year of the war, how much would you estimate you weighed?

Godbold: 120 maybe or 115.

Marcello: In other words, you hadn't lost a whole lot of weight during this period.

Godbold: No. I'd lost some, but I never was very heavy, and so the loss of fifteen or twenty pounds looked like it was a lot, but I'd really not suffered any great weight loss. I'd suffered as most of us did at one time or another from diarrhea and once rather severely and really didn't know whether I was going to recover from it.

Marcello: Was it during this period? I gather that when you landed in Pusan, you had to march for about three miles to your quarters, ankle-deep in mud in a cloudburst, as I recall. And at this temporary stay in Pusan, there was a rather severe outbreak of dysentery. Do you recall if this is where you got it?

Godbold: No, I had dysentery when we were in Woosung when we were first there, and this was when I think that if it been . . . had been able to have been arrested

in a matter of three or four more days, that in a weakened condition I couldn't have survived, but insofar as the march at Pusan was concerned, it wasn't through mud. It was through paved streets in Pusan. It was a three or four mile march. It was raining torrents. The place where we were kept was a miserable place and it was, I guess, one of the worst places we were in, and we were crowded. It was filthy and a fire trap.

Marcello: Was this the warehouse?

Godbold: I guess it was a warehouse in Pusan. It was close to the dock area there, and I remember that I went out once or twice into Pusan with a Japanese officer on some kind of mission and can't recall what it had to do with now, but maybe it was to look at our baggage or something to see where it was and to help make arrangements to get it aboard ship. I remember we went in a truck and traveled around in Pusan quite a bit. I must have been in charge of the baggage or something for the entire trip, and it had been stored somewhere, and the Japanese, I believe, wanted some officer to go check and to be sure that we had all of it or something, and I believe I was asked to do that.

Marcello: I gather that you weren't at Pusan too long either. This was kind of a stopping-off point.

Godbold: It was clear that we were waiting for a ship to go to Japan. We weren't there but a few days.

Marcello: After being at Pusan for a couple days, you went aboard a ferry steamer, as I recall, and you embarked on a twelve-hour trip to Honshu, which, of course, is one of the main islands in Japan. This apparently was a rather nasty trip. Do you recall any of the details of it?

Godbold: Not too specifically. I do recall that it was nice weather, that we were on deck part of the time and were able to see out, but I imagine we had some concern about submarines operating in this area.

Marcello: Well, obviously, you did have some concern about submarines because this trip took twelve days, and there is no way that under normal circumstances it would take twelve days to go from Pusan to Honshu. That is not a very long distance. I assume that this ferry was following the coast as much as possible.

Godbold: How long did it take?

Marcello: Devereux says that it was . . . pardon me! I'm wrong! A twelve-hour trip.

Godbold: It wasn't a very long trip. It wasn't a very long trip. I can't remember anything particularly bad about it. I would guess we were crowded, and it was

hot because it was in the summer, but part of the time we were on deck. I just recall it as being somewhat uncomfortable.

Marcello: Well, you landed on the island of Honshu, and then you were put aboard a train, and all that you knew was that you were heading north. Is this correct?

Godbold: Yes. We landed at a relatively small port, as I remember it, in a picturesque part of Japan, put on a train and headed north and assumed we were going towards the Tokyo area.

Marcello: Incidentally, by this time the American air attacks on the Japanese home islands had already begun, and in marching from the boat docks to the train station, were you able to observe any of the damage the bombs had done at this particular port?

Godbold: No, I don't recall any particular damage at this port.

Marcello: Then I gather there was no civilian hostility.

Godbold: I don't recall any at all at this port.

Marcello: The trains that you were put on for your trip north were apparently rather comfortable trains.

Godbold: They were regular day coaches and were comfortable.

Marcello: The guards required that the blinds be drawn all the time so that, I gather, you weren't able to see what damage had been done by the American bombing raids.

Godbold: Yes, that's correct. I believe they kept the blinds down all the time. I was sitting by a window and could peek out, and when we went through Tokyo, we went through mile after mile of devastated area, and the guards did not want us looking out. We were able to look out, and they didn't really insist that we not look out too much.

Marcello: This train trip went a little bit farther north than Tokyo. In fact, you went all the way up to the northernmost island, did you not, of Hokkaido?

Godbold: Yes. As I recall, we changed trains in . . . it must have been Tokyo, and at the main station in Tokyo while we were there, there was an air raid alert, and then we proceeded on north, crossed into Hokkaido at Sapporo, I guess, and . . . we crossed to Hokkaido . . .

Marcello: Was it at Takagawa? Was that the name of the port in Hokkaido?

Godbold: I don't recall right now. I don't remember that.

Marcello: This was in July of 1945.

Godbold: Yes. It was warm weather then. Then we proceeded on from there to a campsite well up into Hokkaido.

Marcello: I am going to say that this is the point where the officers and the men were separated. The officers went one way and the men went another way. I think the men went to Hakodate. . .

Godbold: Yes.

Marcello: . . . or some place close to Hakodate, and the officers proceeded on to a place called Nishiashibetsu or something of that nature (chuckle).

Godbold: That sounds about right.

Marcello: Was there much to be done in this camp? I gather there were some Australians here before you arrived . . .

Godbold: Yes . . .

Marcello: . . . and they were in pretty sad shape.

Godbold: . . . there were a few Australians in this camp. It was a very small camp comprised of one barracks-type building that probably would hold sixty or so people, and there were a few Australians there. They were suffering from, I would gather, malnutrition which didn't make us feel very good about our prospects. There was little to do there, but I think we requested that we be allowed to do some gardening.

Marcello: As I recall if you wanted extra rations you had to do the gardening.

Godbold: I guess this is right. And every day one or two or three of us went up into the mountains on a little railroad to gather some kind of greenery from the forest which they used for making a soup, and then others of us . . . occasionally, you were just lucky

to be given the opportunity to go on this trip because it was beautiful country right up into the mountains, and you would cut some of this vegetation and bring it back. Then the others of us would work in various garden spots around there. And there were Japanese farms all around, and we augmented our food by pilfering from the Japanese farms, and I still had my hot plate with me, and every night we would cook boiled potatoes and beans or whatever else we'd picked during the day. This helped tremendously insofar as our diet was concerned.

Marcello: Were you still being guarded by the army or military personnel, or were you under civilian supervision?

Godbold: As well as I remember, it was still military supervision. I don't think it was civilians.

Marcello: As the war took a turn in favor of the Americans or the Allied side, did you notice any appreciable change in the attitude of the guards?

Godbold: Not particularly. Maybe there was a little more lackadaisical attitude. Just as I mentioned, when we were doing this gardening activity, they would not look too closely at us when we would walk over into a potato field and dig some potatoes and put them in our pockets. But there was no great change in

friendliness insofar as the Japanese were concerned until the atomic bomb had struck.

Marcello: Do you remember very clearly the day the Japanese did surrender? Can you recall when they gathered around the radio in one of their barracks and their having heard the news?

Godbold: Yes, I recall that the Japanese all sort of disappeared. There weren't a lot of them in this little camp, and they went off to some kind of meeting, and I presume they gathered around the radio, and then they came back. It was obvious there was some momentous decision, but frankly I didn't think that it was the end of the war, and we were not told that it was the end of the war either.

Marcello: Well, what happened from that point then?

Godbold: Well, there was a rather substantial and gradual, but rapid, change in their attitude. They began to bring in more food, even including butter and beef. Then I remember a Japanese officer came and talked about when the war was over, we would be friends again and brought beer in and so on. So it was obvious that the war was either in a matter of a day or two over or very soon would be over. Then, I guess, there was some announcement made, but I don't even remember

the time the announcement was made because it gradually became apparent, and one day--there was still the guards around--another captain friend of mine and I decided we would test this, so we just walked out of the camp and walked downtown in this little town and went in a rather nice-looking restaurant and ordered a meal, and they brought it to us, and we ordered beer and they brought it to us. When we finished--we'd been paid--we offered to pay for it, and they wouldn't take any money, and so we went back to the camp, and we knew then for sure that the war was over.

Marcello: I gather that it was relatively safe to travel into town on Hokkaido because that island really was untouched by the war.

Godbold: Yes, it was untouched. These people were not hostile, and so for the next few days while we were there . . . I've forgotten how long the period was from the time the war was over until we were moved out of camp. I know we went into town and had dinner every night. We were essentially free to do what we wanted to do, although we were asked by the senior American officer not to stray very far away.

Marcello: Do you recall the party the Japanese gave for the officers one night? It seems to me they had some wine and a few other things that were . . . relatively good food and wine. Do you remember that party?

Godbold: Yes. I think that this party was given by maybe the Japanese civilians in this town at this same club or restaurant that I mentioned a moment ago. This was rather a lavish affair, and I don't remember too much about it except the food was good and it was a pleasant evening. But to my mind it was a waste of time, but we at least got a good meal out of it.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you got the official word that the war was over?

Godbold: Oh, well, there wasn't any particular great feeling of elation because we'd just gradually begun to realize this. So this was almost anticlimatic when the announcement came. So there wasn't any sudden thing that the war was over. Boom! It was slow realization, and so there wasn't any moment of any particular great happiness. It was just a gradual feeling of relief that this thing was finally over.

Marcello: Did you ever have the fear that if the Japanese did lose the war that they would execute the prisoners? Had this threat ever been made?

Godbold: I don't think the threat had ever been made, but obviously this was a possibility. You had the possibility of them deciding to shoot the prisoners all tomorrow morning, but this is not a matter of particular concern. The main concern insofar as I felt was that this is going to be a heck of a long war, and I wasn't fortunate enough to be so idealistic that I thought the Americans were going to win the war in a year. I saw it as a three-year war. It turned out I was optimistic, too. Most people thought it was going to be over in a year. My concern was that this may be a heck of a long war.

Marcello: I gather that during your entire captivity you really didn't lose too many prisoners. In other words, not too many died. You may have lost a couple there when they were working on that rifle range. I think tuberculosis became a problem among some of the prisoners, but I gather that generally speaking you didn't lose too many people.

Godbold: That's right. In fact, the mortality rate among this group of people was probably less than it would have been in a civilian situation (chuckle). I'm not talking about a war situation, but just a civilian situation. Automobiles, any other dangers of civilian life,

probably were more acute than they were in that situation.

Marcello: Apparently when your liberators entered the camp, they were kind of disappointed that you weren't in worse shape.

Godbold: Well, I think there was some surprise that we were not all emaciated. We had lost weight, all of us. Outwardly we were thin and gaunt-looking but obviously in reasonably good health. They were surprised at this.

Marcello: Did you ever see any evidence of any collaboration during your entire captivity?

Godbold: There were some suspicions about one or two people during this approximately four years, but there was no concrete evidence that this occurred. And I doubt if it did. I would expect there was maybe some minor squealing that went on by some short-sighted people that thought this would gain them some favor, but insofar as any substantial collaboration, I saw no evidence. There may have been some, and I was just not smart enough to see it.

Marcello: At the time of your release were you bitter toward the Japanese either as individuals or as a nationality?

Godbold: No. In fact, I was really never bitter against the Japanese. Probably part of it was because I was a

professional. If I had been a draftee and put in this **situation,** I might have been bitter both against the **Japanese** and against the American government, but this **is what** you're paid to do.