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Place of Interview: Granbury, Texas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Raymond D. Reed
(Signature)

Date: March 13, 1979

Oral History Collection

Raymond D. Reed

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Granbury, Texas Date: March 13, 1979

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Raymond Reed for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 13, 1979, in Granbury, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Reed in order to get his reminiscenses and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war during World War II. Mr. Reed was attached to the Medical Detachment of the 131st Field Artillery, better known as the "Lost Battalion." This unit was captured virtually intact on the island of Java and subsequently spent the rest of the war in various POW camps throughout Asia.

Mr. Reed, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Reed: I was born in Amarillo, Texas, on January 11, 1921, and lived in Amarillo, Texas, with my parents through high school. I joined the National Guard in 1938.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the National Guard?

Reed: I think it was a little extra money, and a lot of my friends were in the National Guard, so they encouraged me to do it.

Marcello: Had you graduated from high school at that time?

Reed: No, I had not. I lacked one year before I graduated in '39.

Marcello: So you were about seventeen when you went in the National Guard.

Reed: That is correct, yes.

Marcello: Did the Depression have any influence upon your decision to join the National Guard? You mentioned that it was a chance to pick up a little extra money.

Reed: That's true, because money was a little hard to come by, especially with teenagers at that time. I remember working for a drugstore for a dollar a day--seven days a week--so I made seven dollars a week at the drugstore. That was back in the time when the dollar was worth a great deal more, but it wasn't quite enough, so the National Guard did provide a little bit more.

Marcello: How did the meetings work at that time in the National Guard? Was it a weekly or a monthly sort of operation?

Reed: It was a weekly operation.

Marcello: In other words, you met once a week.

Reed: Once a week, usually on Friday, as I recall--Friday evening. We had a three- or four-hour session at the National Guard

Armory.

Marcello: How much did you make per meeting? Do you recall?

Reed: No, I don't recall. It wasn't very much, but at this time I don't recall that.

Marcello: Now, which particular battery was located in Amarillo?

Reed: The B Battery was located in Amarillo.

Marcello: Was it a firing battery?

Reed: Yes, it was using 75-millimeters.

Marcello: Did you have the 75-millimeter guns in the unit there at Amarillo? In other words were any of those guns attached to the unit while you were taking your training there in Amarillo or going to the meetings there in Amarillo?

Reed: I don't really remember, because I was in the Medical Detachment and not in the B Battery; therefore, I didn't participate in their activities. Since you brought it up, I think the artillery--the guns--were somewhere else.

Marcello: But when you went into the unit in Amarillo, you went directly into the Medical Detachment?

Reed: That is correct.

Marcello: How did this work? In other words, was there a medical detachment with each battery?

Reed: No. There was a medical detachment for the full regiment.

Marcello: And the Medical Detachment happened to be located there in Amarillo with B Battery?

Reed: Right. We were located in Amarillo, but not necessarily with B Battery. We met with and at the same place as B Battery did, but we weren't attached to B Battery itself. We were attached to the full regiment.

Marcello: So, in other words, when you went to your weekly meetings there in Amarillo, the Medical Detachment more or less trained on its own.

Reed: That's correct.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that a lot of your friends had joined the National Guard at that time. Is it not true that many people looked upon the National Guard as kind of a social organization in a way? You made a little extra money, but you had a chance to meet some of the boys at the meeting, so to speak, and you had summer camp and all that sort of thing.

Reed: Right. It was a tool or an outlet for you to get some travel in--going places and meeting other people. It sure was.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs at that time?

Reed: I don't think I was really that interested, to tell you the truth, at that time.

Marcello: As you look back, do you believe that this is probably the attitude that most of your friends had, also?

Reed: I'm sure it was, yes. We didn't suspect anything as far as war was concerned or any kind of confrontation with any

other countries.

Marcello: And the possibility of a future draft really had no part in your decision either.

Reed: No, it really didn't.

Marcello: How seriously were the weekly meetings being taken at that time? Again, I'm referring to that period before actual mobilization.

Reed: Well, I would say the seriousness of them was . . . as far as I personally was concerned, I wasn't too serious about it. There was a great deal of seriousness within the organization as far as the officers were concerned.

Marcello: I assume that when you went to the weekly meetings then, your training consisted of the sort of thing that would be necessary for a corpsman to know.

Reed: Mostly as a corpsman, yes. We'll say more than that would be training as field medical personnel, such as litter bearers and in field first aid and tent emplacements. Usually, we were connected with regimental headquarters.

Marcello: What would you say was about the average age of the people in the unit at that time?

Reed: Probably eighteen to twenty-five, somewhere in that vicinity.

Marcello: Now, the Texas National Guard mobilized on November 25, 1940. How did that mobilization affect B Battery and the Medical Detachment? What process or procedure occurred after

mobilization took place?

Reed: The first thing was, of course, to become ready. This did not mean being combat ready, but getting more supplies, re-issuance of uniforms, equipment, and so forth. Then we were moved out to the fairgrounds as a unit and at that time became the unit itself, and we were now strictly a part of the service. In other words, we didn't go home. We stayed at the fairgrounds, and meals were served at the fairgrounds. I don't recall how long we stayed out at the fairgrounds, maybe a month or two. We were waiting on Camp Bowie to be prepared--that's in Brownwood--so that we could be moved down there.

Marcello: So once mobilization took place, then you really didn't get home except for perhaps on weekends or something like that?

Reed: Yes. Every once in awhile we got to go home on a weekend or one night.

Marcello: What sort of activity took place after you moved out to the fairgrounds?

Reed: Of course, we concentrated more on what we were really supposed to do as a full serviceman.

Marcello: In other words, was there a lot of marching and close order drill and things of that nature?

Reed: There wasn't a lot in the Medical Detachment, because we really weren't . . . you know, our duties didn't take us

to marching.

Marcello: Approximately how many people were in that Medical Detachment? You will probably have to estimate this.

Reed: I'm going to have to estimate it, because I don't recall. It seems to me like there were about twenty-five.

Marcello: Between mid-December of 1940 and early January of 1941, the battery eventually joined other units of the 36th Division at Camp Bowie near Brownwood. Do you recall when your unit went to Brownwood?

Reed: Our unit went to Brownwood sometime in January.

Marcello: It was after Christmas.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: What happened when you got to Brownwood?

Reed: In Brownwood, it had been raining a lot. There was no paving, and it was just a sea of mud.

Marcello: The camp actually wasn't completed yet when you arrived.

Reed: Oh, that's right. It was not completed. It was far from being completed. They had nothing up but pyramidal tents, a few wooden buildings, such as the PX and some headquarters. It was muddy, and it was terrible! Mud everywhere!

Marcello: As you mentioned, you were living in the tents at that time.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: By this time, that is, by the time mobilization has occurred and you get to Brownwood, how seriously are things being

taken by you and your buddies at this point?

Reed: Actually and factually, I'd say that they still were not being taken very seriously. There was a program going on in our medical detachment to equip each individual more with first aid, more with treatment of wounded people in the field--more like a Boy Scout affair, really.

Marcello: At this time, you were definitely in the 131st Field Artillery, 2nd Battalion. Is that correct?

Reed: At that time, we were a medical detachment attached to the 131st Field Artillery, but it wasn't until just prior to leaving Camp Bowie that they split up the division. It was a square division, and they made a triangular division out of it. They then sent a 2nd Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery to San Francisco and a portion of the Medical Detachment then was assigned to the 2nd Battalion.

Marcello: Okay, we'll get back and talk about this in a minute, because this is a pretty important part of the story. In the summer of 1941, the unit went to Louisiana to participate in the 3rd Army maneuvers there. Did you go into Louisiana?

Reed: Yes, I did. I was at that time a T-4 and operating room technician. I had been to school out at William Beaumont General Hospital in El Paso, and I came back from there as the only technician in our medical detachment. I worked with Dr. Lumpkin in the operating room.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had been sent to this school in El Paso. Had this occurred after you arrived in Camp Bowie?

Reed: Yes, that occurred after I arrived in Camp Bowie, because I left Camp Bowie to go to William Beaumont. But I might have made a mistake there. I might have gone after the maneuvers in Louisiana. Darn, I can't recall whether I went before we went to Louisiana or after we went.

Marcello: Sometime during this period at Camp Bowie, you had gone to William Beaumont Hospital for this training.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Were you the only one in the Medical Detachment that went?

Reed: Yes, I was.

Marcello: Do you know why you were singled out?

Reed: No, but I suspect it was because I showed a little more aptitude in that field than the others. I had been working in the infirmary--that was the word I was trying to find awhile ago and couldn't find it--I was working in the infirmary, and there had been some slight emergencies arise while there were no doctors there, and I had taken care of the situation by first aid. If a person had had a cut large enough to have required suturing, I had sewn them up, and the doctors then recognized the fact that I probably had the aptitude to do this, and that's probably why I was sent off.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were working with Dr. Lumpkin. What sort of a man was Dr. Lumpkin? Describe him.

Reed: He was a rather young man for a doctor. I think at that time he was about twenty-five or twenty-six years old. He had been recognized as quite an accomplished surgeon. He was very easy to get along with, quite interesting to work with inasmuch as while we were in an operating room. During an operation, he would explain to me, or to whoever was there, every move that he made and why he made it. He was excellent in instruction, excellent in leadership, and was very proud of his position in the service and always presented himself that way.

Marcello: Was there very much griping over the fact that the unit had been mobilized and that you were now in the regular Army, or was everyone more or less taking it in stride?

Reed: I think we took it in stride. I don't think we recognized the fact that there was any dangers or that we were going anywhere. I don't even know if we stopped and realized just what was taking place in the world.

Marcello: Am I to assume that you didn't think this mobilization would last too long anyway?

Reed: Yes, you can assume that very correctly (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you get any weekend leaves or anything like that so you could come back to Amarillo?

Reed: Yes, we went back to Amarillo quite a bit and had weekend leaves every weekend to go into Brownwood or wherever we wanted to go.

Marcello: After returning from those Louisiana maneuvers, the 131st Field Artillery was detached from the 36th Division. Now, this is when the reorganization from the square divisions to the triangular divisions took place. Do you know why the Army decided to reorganize? Were you ever told why the divisions were being reorganized from the square to the triangular divisions?

Reed: The only thing that I can remember is that the reason for that was to modernize the American Army, because it was obsolete as far as its functioning ability in a square division. The square division was a World War I configuration. To make it more efficient was the reason for changing it over.

Marcello: In making the triangular division, I assume that they were actually decreasing the size of the division.

Reed: Yes, you decreased the size of the division and made it more efficient, easier to handle. It moved faster.

Marcello: I think there's the key. It seems, from everything I've read, that the Army was very impressed with the performance of the German army in Europe and consequently decided to reorganize along the lines of the German army.

Reed: I think that's correct.

Marcello: Why was it that the 131st Field Artillery was detached from the 36th Division as opposed to some other unit?

Reed: I don't really know. I was told that they picked the 2nd Battalion . . . or we'll say they took the 131st Field Artillery, and it was up to the 36th Division commander to determine whether it would be the 1st or 2nd battalion because of their efficiency shown in the Louisiana maneuvers.

Marcello: I've heard this particular reason given, also, but I've never really seen any verification for it.

Reed: (Laughter) You probably won't, either. I don't even recall the general's name that was the 36th Division commander, but I know that during the Louisiana maneuvers we had captured--the 131st Field Artillery--had captured a very important group of the enemy. I don't know if that was just happening to be in the right place at the right time or whether anybody used any great amount of strategy in doing it.

Marcello: The reason I asked the question and then mentioned that there has never been any verification is because it seems to me that if I were the commanding officer who had to make the decision, I would have wanted to have kept the best units for my own particular group. But that's neither here nor there, I suppose.

In being detached, you ultimately became a part of an operation code named PLUM.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Now, we know from the records that PLUM meant that you were on your way to the Philippines, and from everything that I have read, you were to form a new triangular division in the Philippines with other Army units. What were the rumors going around when you heard that your destination was PLUM? Now, you had not been told that PLUM meant the Philippines, but what were the rumors going around at that time?

Reed: I think Florida was mentioned--that we'd go to Florida. The West Coast was mentioned. We really didn't know where we were going, and you were right in the fact that we didn't know what PLUM meant. It wasn't only until a few days before we left that we knew we were going to San Francisco. Am I understanding the question right? I'm not too sure.

Marcello: Yes. I was just wondering what sort of rumors were circulating among the troops as to what PLUM actually meant. Like you just answered, there were all sorts of rumors as to what PLUM meant.

Reed: Well, there were a lot of rumors, and I think this was the first time that we began to realize that we were going to get involved in combat.

Marcello: Was it because married enlisted men and men over twenty-eight had the option of getting out of the unit that you figured you might be getting involved in combat?

Reed: Well, yes, that and also the fact that we were going to be . . . from all the rumors that came about, we were going to be going overseas. I know we talked about that we'd a whole lot rather go to Asia than we would have to Europe.

Marcello: Why was that?

Reed: Well, because the war was taking place in Europe, and there wasn't anything going on in Asia. If we had to go anywhere, we'd rather go where the war wasn't. But little did we know (chuckle)!

Marcello: On November 11, 1941--Armistice Day, by the way--the unit boarded a train bound for San Francisco. Had you ever been this far away from home before?

Reed: No . . . well, I take it back. When I was in high school, I did go to Los Angeles. I went out there and worked for Twentieth Century Fox for about three months, I think. Yes, I'd been that far away.

Marcello: I assume that probably this was as far away from home as almost everybody else in the unit ever had been in their lives.

Reed: I think it had--most everybody.

Marcello: I believe when you arrived in San Francisco, you stayed for about a week at Angel Island, did you not?

Reed: Yes, we did.

Marcello: What did you do while you were there at Angel Island? Did you do anything?

Reed: No, not really. We ate, slept and went to San Francisco on some short leaves. We really didn't train at all.

Marcello: Evidently, they were just waiting for enough people to get there to fill up the transport to take you off Angel Island.

Reed: That's probably true.

Marcello: On November 21, 1941, you boarded a World War I transport, the USS Republic, and you were on your way to Honolulu. Describe the trip from San Francisco to Honolulu aboard the Republic.

Reed: Well, we left out of the docks and went under the Golden Gate Bridge. Everybody was excited about where we were going, and, of course, most of us had never been on a ship before, and we were out all over that ship looking it over. Really, it was more of an entertaining type of thing than it was being transported overseas for combat duty. We were excited beyond words. Right outside San Francisco, we got into the land swells, and everybody got sick.

Marcello: You included?

Reed: No, I didn't. I don't know why. My chemistry in my body doesn't particularly get upset, because there is just something about my particular body. I almost got sick several times, because the other people were getting sick. Seeing them

heave all over the ship, over the sides, down in the toilet areas--everywhere you would go--on the stairwells, there was vomit all over the place. I finally asked permission to get out of there and get up as high as I could get. I was warned that the most susceptible place to get sick was up high, because you've got a lot more rotation there. But I had to get out of that stench. I went up two or three decks up above the main deck and sat up there for hours on end just to get away from all the smell.

Marcello: To make matters worse, isn't it true that the Navy also had boiled cabbage that first day or something like that?

Reed: Of course! And this was done, I'm sure, on purpose. The cook had to cook cabbage that first day out, and just as we hit the land swells, cabbage smells came from all over that ship, and that enhanced everybody. I've talked to sailors since then--not only off the Houston but other sailors--and they say, "That is an old stand-by trick of transport cooks to pull that little trick on everybody."

Marcello: Evidently, the Republic was not a very fast ship, either. It seems to me that its rate of speed was about seven or eight knots.

Reed: Seven or eight knots, I think it was.

Marcello: This is indicated, I think, by the fact that you didn't get to Honolulu until November 28th. You left San Francisco on

on November 21st, and you didn't arrive in Honolulu until November 28th, so it took you approximately a week to go that distance.

Reed: That is correct. One whole week it took us.

Marcello: How long did it take the men to overcome that seasickness?

Reed: Most of them, when we docked in Honolulu, had overcome it by then, but, of course, there still were some--I don't know how many--that really remained sick all the way to Australia.

Marcello: Now, when you docked at Honolulu, I think just about everybody in the unit got a little bit of shore leave at that time, did you not? Not very long, maybe about four hours or something like that.

Reed: Yes. We got on shore for a few hours, walked around for a while, and at that time noticed quite a few gun emplacements, ack-ack gun emplacements, and we noticed that quite a few of the people stationed there were in full war regalia.

Marcello: Full war regalia in what way?

Reed: Well, they were carrying arms, and they had steel helmets on, and they looked like what we should have looked like, I suppose.

Marcello: At the time, however, did you give very much thought to the seriousness of the situation, or were you simply taking things as they came, like most young people would have done?

Reed: We took it as it came. Actually, we didn't have any idea--I didn't, anyhow--of the world situation. We had no idea.

Marcello: I also believe you didn't have very much money to spend in Honolulu at that time,did you?

Reed: I had none that I can recall. I don't think I bought anything.

Marcello: You hadn't been paid.

Reed: No, we had not been paid. I had no money. I don't think I spent a dime in Honolulu at all.

Marcello: So, you go back aboard the Republic, and the next day, which would have been Saturday, you leave Honolulu as part of a convoy. From what I've researched, I believe there were about nine ships in the convoy. I won't ask you the names of the ships, but I think there was at least one larger warship, which was the cruiser Pensacola, isn't that correct?

Reed: That's correct.

Marcello: Then I think there were several auxiliary vessels of one sort or another?

Reed: There was one other transport. I don't recall how many ships were in the convoy.

Marcello: Now, by this time do you know you're on your way to the Philippines?

Reed: I don't know that we actually knew it. I know there was a great deal of speculation on the fact that we were going to the Philippines, and it was pretty well taken that that's where we were headed.

Marcello: But you never really received the official word.

Reed: No, not to my knowledge.

Marcello: Now, on December 7th, a time during which you were a short distance east of the Gilbert Islands, you received the news of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. Describe how you received this news and what the reaction was of you and your buddies upon receiving the news.

Reed: We received the news early in the morning. There was what they called a general alert aboard ship--the bells rang--and nobody really knew what it all meant. We were finally told that we had to go to our battle stations, which those battle stations had been pointed out but no drill had taken place prior to this. Consequently, a mass confusion took place as to what battle station and how to get there.

When we finally arrived at our battle stations, we were informed that Pearl Harbor had been attacked and that we were changing course. We had first thought, when the general alert was sounded, that for some reason it was a submarine. Since we weren't in war, I don't know why we thought it was a submarine, but, anyhow, we did.

Marcello: As a part of the Medical Detachment, where was your battle station located? Were you on the main deck, below decks, or where?

Reed: I'm trying to think. My main battle station was at the bridge.

Marcello: How did you receive word of the attack? Was it done over a

P.A. system or did individual officers tell you or how?

Reed: It was done over a P.A. system.

Marcello: You obviously didn't know the amount of damage that was done at Pearl Harbor, so, again, how seriously is the situation being taken now?

Reed: I would say that the situation became quite serious in my mind at that time. I think probably there was an extreme rude awakening to the fact that we were going to get in combat. I had quite a bit of butterflies in my stomach, and I got extremely concerned over the fact that we weren't playing games here. We're really going to get serious about this thing.

Marcello: What sort of a reaction could you detect on the part of the officers, whom, I assume, were somewhat older and more mature than the general run of the enlisted men?

Reed: Well, they were older. I frankly don't recall a reaction of the officers. I know that my immediate officer was Captain Lumpkin, and he was a very cool, calm, and collected person, anyway. His coolness and calmness is probably the reason I didn't get more concerned about it than I did.

Marcello: I've heard it said, and even written, that the unit's 75-millimeters were brought on topside and lashed down for further protection.

Reed: They were. They brought some of those 75's up and put them on deck, strapped them to the deck, and brought ammunition

up for protection. I don't know where the order came from to do that, whether it was aboard our ship or whether it came from somebody else. There was a rumor at the time that it came from the Pensacola.

Marcello: At that time, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind? I am assuming that you are an ol' boy from Amarillo, Texas, that probably had never seen a Japanese before, unless perhaps you'd seen some in San Francisco or Honolulu. Even then you probably couldn't tell the difference between a Japanese and a Chinese. So, in your own mind, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you envision?

Reed: Well, naturally, I had seen them in San Francisco and in Honolulu, and it seems to me I recall envisioning them as very crude and very mean, small people.

Marcello: Did you perhaps get this impression from reading what they had been doing in China and so on?

Reed: This impression had to have come from people aboard ship.

Marcello: How long did you think this war was going to last?

Reed: We really didn't think it was going to last very long. We didn't even think it was going to start. We felt it'd be a matter of a few months.

Marcello: In other words, you felt that you could whip the Japanese

pretty handily.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Did you know Frank Fujita at that time?

Reed: Oh, yes. Frank was part of our group. He was in E Battery, I believe it was.

Marcello: Do you recall whether or not he had to take a great deal of kidding over the fact that the United States was now at war with Japan? After all, he was a Japanese-American.

Reed: Well, I didn't do any kidding, really, with Frank. Frank was a small man, but he was very emphatic about his opinions, and he was very determined. He wasn't about to be kidded too much, really.

Marcello: I understand he was a very, very good soldier, too.

Reed: Excellent soldier.

Marcello: Okay, you changed course, like you mentioned awhile ago, and you were now on your way toward Brisbane, Australia. Along the way, however, you do stop off at the Fiji Islands to take on water and fresh provisions and things like that. I assume you didn't stay there very long, and I also assume that you actually didn't get to go ashore.

Reed: No, I did not get to go ashore. They took off one or two of the personnel because of heat exhaustion or sunstroke. Like you said, we did take on provisions and became equipped again. We were there just for a few hours; it wasn't very

long. I know I stayed up and watched the big fuzzy-wuzzy Fiji Islanders in uniform that walked up and down the docks, and that's about all we saw, except we could oversee Suva. It was the most beautiful sight. It was all green with white houses with red roofs. Nearly every building there was white with red roofs and manicured lawns. It was absolutely a picture.

Marcello: You arrived in Brisbane, Australia, on December 22, 1941. What did the unit do after it got to Brisbane?

Reed: After we came off the ship, we got on Australian trucks, driven by Australians. Those trucks were probably two tons with stake beds, and we got on those trucks and were not told where we were going, and off we went. I happened to be up close to the cab at the front of the bed of the truck, and I kept yelling at the Australian in the cab, "Where are we going?" He'd say, "The 'rice' course." I would stop and look around and say, "What did he say?" They said, "To the 'rice' course." I said, "What's the rice course?"

I bet I asked him six times where we were going, and every time he was getting more aggravated with me. I'd say, "What is a rice course?" He would say,"It's where the horses run, and they 'rice.'" I said, "Oh, a racetrack!" He said, "No, it's a 'rice' course, not a racetrack!"

We went to the "rice" course, and they had tents set

up for us there, and we unloaded off the trucks and put our gear in the tents, completely confused as to what in the devil we were doing there and where we were going.

Marcello: Fairgrounds and racetracks play a very important part in this adventure that we're talking about. You mentioned awhile ago that you were in the fairgrounds in Amarillo; you go to the racetrack in Brisbane; and later on you'd be going to another racetrack near Garoet, would you not, when you get over into the Dutch East Indies? Some of the people in the unit were bivouacked for a short time at a racetrack there after capture.

Reed: No, I wasn't one of those.

Marcello: Did you do anything in a military sense after you got settled in at the Ascot Racecourse?

Reed: I don't recall doing anything, except sitting around and talking.

Marcello: What kind of a reception did you get from the Australians themselves? I'm referring basically to the civilians.

Reed: We had an excellent reception from the Australian civilians. I know on Christmas day, Rayford Harris and I went to town to just look around, because there was nothing going on at camp. We went to town to Brisbane and walked up and down the streets. There was absolutely no traffic, or very little, in Brisbane. One car, while we were walking along

window-shopping--of course, no stores were open--pulled up with a man and his wife and a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old daughter. We talked to them there on the curb for a while, and they asked us if we wanted to go out to their house and have Christmas dinner with them.

We agreed to do that. They lived in a house near the coast,and we went out there and had Christmas dinner with them. Then the young daughter had a couple of girlfriends, and a bunch of us went to the beach, and we had a great time. They showed us a wonderful time that day and on up into the night.

Marcello: Do you recall what you had for Christmas dinner?

Reed: I don't recall (laughter).

Marcello: I understand that this was the first encounter that a lot of the Texans had with mutton.

Reed: Mutton, yes, it might have been. I don't recall what we had that day.

Marcello: I gather that most of the people in the unit weren't exactly impressed with mutton.

Reed: I didn't care very much for mutton. I hate to say mutton had a musty taste, but it did to me.

Marcello: A lot of the men that I've interviewed were also impressed by the fact that there didn't seem to be very many young men in Brisbane. Did you notice that from your own observations?

Reed: Oh, yes! There were very few men, let alone young men. That is true. We hardly ever saw any young men, except those in the service.

Marcello: Evidently, most of them were already off fighting, either in North Africa or Singapore or someplace like that.

Reed: Yes, they had gone to Greece and North Africa and were strewn out clear across to India and down through Singapore and Malaya.

Marcello: On December 28, 1941, you leave Brisbane. Now, you're no longer aboard the Republic. You board a Dutch motor transport at this time, the Bloemfontein. This was a much faster ship, was it not?

Reed: Right, it was a much faster ship--smaller but faster.

Marcello: You were on your way to Java. Describe the trip from Brisbane to Surabaja, Java, which is where you would be going.

Reed: On the Bloemfontein, I know, as far as I was personally concerned, I did have definite duties, daily duties. I think all of us did in the Medical Corps. We had stations that we had to be on, and we had certain duties we had to perform on that ship. This was the first time that we really had any real duties to take care of.

We came up through the Great Barrier Reef and didn't get involved in any activity, or were we concerned about getting involved in any activity, until we reached the lower end of

the Malayan archipelago somewhere around below Lombok Strait. I can't recall all those islands' names, but I know when we got into that area . . . let's see . . . wait a minute. Hold on. We had gone around and put into Darwin first before we got up in the Malayan archipelago. We didn't get off the ship at Darwin, didn't stay very long. We put to sea again. Then we went up into the Malayan archipelago.

One night--I don't recall the time, but it was before midnight--there was a submarine sighted, or a warning had come that a submarine was in the area. I was up in one medical station, and Dr. Lumpkin came over to me, and he said, "Sergeant Brown is down in the hospital." This was two decks below the main deck, which was right at the water level--the hospital was. He said, "Go down there and stay with Brown while this alert is on." I went down there, and I talked to Brown, and I said, "Oh, me! Where is the water level?" He said, "Right out that porthole there." I said, "Oh, if we get hit with a torpedo, it's going to hit right in where we are!" I know I was extremely concerned and very frightened of the fact that we might get contact with this particular submarine. Fortunately, either the submarine went away or we missed contact with it or something, but I do know that I was really concerned about it.

Marcello: Was the 2nd Battalion the only group of military personnel

aboard Bloemfontein, or were there other units on there as well? Do you recall?

Reed: Well, I don't recall, to tell you the truth. Was there any indication of other people?

Marcello: Not really. This is a question that's never really been answered, so far as I can remember.

Reed: I don't recall any other military people on there. There might have been some Dutch civilians.

Marcello: I assume the Bloemfontein was a smaller vessel than the Republic.

Reed: Oh, yes, it was smaller. I know that. I had one station there on the Bloemfontein that was right next to the bakery, and my hours on that particular station involved three o'clock in the morning when the bakers came on duty. They'd bake bread every morning, and they made little bitty loaves about six inches long and about three inches wide. I was across the passageway, and I'd stand there in that door and smell that bread cooking. Every morning they'd give me one loaf of bread, and they'd slice it open and put butter in it for breakfast. That was the worst thing I could eat, but it sure was good (chuckle).

Marcello: Here again, I assume that you were never told why you were being sent to Java.

Reed: I don't think we were actually told. I know that by that time

we were still under the impression that we were on our way to the Philippines, and Java was more or less a temporary stop to get there.

Marcello: Okay, you get to Java, and you debark at Surabaja. You don't stay very long, however, do you?

Reed: In Surabaja, no, we only stayed just a few hours, getting the materials off the ship and boarding a train. Now, there's a date I remember.

Marcello: What date was that?

Reed: That was January 11, 1942. That was on my birthday that we landed in Surabaja, Java. I was twenty-one years old on that day.

Marcello: Did the fact that you were twenty-one take on any special significance there in Surabaja?

Reed: (Laughter) I remember saying to Luther Prunty, "Well, today I am a man. I'll remember this date the rest of my life. We landed in Surabaja the day I am a man." I don't know if it took on any other significance, really.

Marcello: What were your first impressions of the Island of Java upon landing in Surabaja and then boarding a train for a trip up country?

Reed: Well, you realized that Java was completely different from anything we had ever seen--rickshaws, three-wheeled bicycles that were built for taxis, and three-wheeled little

motorcycle-driven taxis.

Marcello: I'll bet you had never seen so many people in your life.

Reed: Oh, there were tremendous amounts of people involved in the streets and around the docks. Wearing apparel . . . we had no idea. We might have seen pictures of them, but seeing them in actuality is completely different. I didn't know what to think of Java; I didn't know what to think of the people. I knew one thing, the Javanese of that area were completely foreign to me, and I consequently had no idea what we were going to be subjected to, as far as our relationship with those people.

Marcello: Could you detect any feelings or attitudes that they had toward the American troops, or did they for the most part seem to go about their business and more or less ignore you?

Reed: No, as I recall . . . I don't know whether it was at that time that they were waving little American flags around or if it was later. I know we were so busy unloading that ship and getting aboard the train that we really didn't pay that much attention to them at that time.

I know when we got outside of Surabaja . . . we boarded the train and went for a distance on the train. I don't know how far. We were still on the outskirts of Surabaja, I know that. There were about six girls bathing in the stream, and the train stopped for some reason which wasn't

apparent. No one particularly cared whether the train stopped, because there were six girls bathing out there in the nude in the stream right where the train stopped. The car I was in was right across from them. Guys started peeling out of those windows like pouring water; everybody came out of the doors and windows. Mass confusion took place.

I never did leave the train, personally, because I would have been about number one hundred to get off the train, and I could see no point in me getting off. A bunch of them ran down to the river edge, but those gals took off and went across the river on the other side and grabbed their clothes, and off they went into the brush.

Marcello: So you go up country, and you go to a Dutch airfield, Singosari, which was located outside the town Malang, right?

Reed: Malang, right.

Marcello: What happens when you get to Singosari? Describe what it looked like from a physical standpoint. What sort of a camp was it, in terms of the buildings and grounds and things of that nature?

Reed: Obviously, it appeared to be an old Dutch camp or Javanese camp--a military camp, I would say. It had stucco buildings with regular roofs on them--substantial-looking buildings. In other words, they were masonry and wood construction.

The camp was, of course, deserted when we arrived there. It appeared to be completely deserted. There was one long row of buildings approximately forty feet wide and 200 feet deep that extended . . . I don't know how many buildings there were. Then there was a short row, and then the airfield lay beyond those buildings, with a few smaller buildings over at the airfield.

Marcello: What were your barracks themselves like, that is, your living quarters?

Reed: At that point my living quarters were fine. We were all put into a more of a dormitory-type living area on cots. I know the Medical Detachment occupied one of the fronts of those buildings, because the medical aid station was in the very front. We lived immediately behind it in a dormitory-type arrangement.

Marcello: Did the units from the 19th Bomb Group arrive after your group got there, or were they already there when you arrived? You seemed to indicate awhile ago that the camp was more or less abandoned when you first arrived, and I just want to make that clear for the record.

Reed: I understand. As I recall, the 19th Bomb Group was already there--some of them. I may be mistaken.

Marcello: Am I to assume that the Dutch were in charge of this camp? They had overall administrative control of the camp?

Reed: They might have, but I don't recall.

Marcello: What particular activities did the Medical Detachment undertake after it became established here at Singosari? You mentioned that you had set up an aid station and so on.

Reed: That's about all we did. We maintained that aid station.

Marcello: On the other hand, I think some of the personnel in the unit served as ground troops for the airplanes, did they not?

Reed: Yes, they came out of the other batteries.

Marcello: I also believe that the artillery pieces themselves were set up around the base to give it additional protection.

Reed: Yes, that's true; they were. Of course, we had some drills, as far as air raid drills were concerned.

Marcello: It's still going to be a short war at this stage, though?

Reed: Oh, yes, definitely a short war! We thought it would be a short war right on through to the second year we were in prison (chuckle). We were still thinking short war.

Marcello: Reality hits on February, 5, 1942. That, of course, was when the first air raid took place. Describe this air raid as best you remember it.

Reed: I can't say it really caught us by surprise, but I suppose it did. The air raid alarm had been sounded quite a few times inasmuch as we were going through air raid drills. I know we had been going out to areas out on the edge of the jungle and digging foxholes, getting ourselves prepared for air raids.

The air raid actually came . . . and as soon as the sirens went off, we could hear the motors.

Marcello: What time of the day was this?

Reed: It was mid-morning. We went on to our relative foxholes, and my foxhole was about two feet in diameter and about three feet deep. I often wondered . . . I got tired of digging and decided that that was deep enough, or I might get to it later and dig it deeper. But when the actual raid came about and I got in that foxhole, it wasn't near large enough, I didn't think. I could hear the bombs coming down, and they came down in a swishing sound. Believe me, I never thought I could get below ground in that foxhole, but I went right down, and I must have been a foot below ground level when I heard those bombs. It was plenty large (laughter)!

They hit all around us there, and on the airfield one hit probably within seventy-five feet of me. I knew the ground shook tremendously, and a lot of dust was flying. One of our guys was injured as soon as the first bomber run came over. Dr. Lumpkin told me that we were needed over at one of those gun emplacements where we'd set up those 75-millimeters. When I went over there to treat him, I found that he was a gunnery sergeant. I don't remember his name now, but he was hurt with a back injury. I couldn't hold the syringe to give him a shot of morphine, and Dr. Lumpkin had

to take it out of my hand to give him the shot because my hands were shaking so much. I felt terrible about that, and I explained to Dr. Lumpkin that I was sorry I was so nervous, that that was the first combat I'd been in (chuckle). Naturally, ke knew that; it was the first combat he'd been in. I failed miserably as a medic in my first combat.

Marcello: Is it not true that the bombing itself was then followed up by strafing?

Reed: Strafing by what appeared to be--what we later learned to be--Zeros.

Marcello: Describe the strafing that took place after the bombing.

Reed: Well, they did this several times, you know. They bombed us and strafed us several times. I know that I had been in the gun emplacement where the injured man was during the strafing. They were strafing very low, coming right over the treetops. This, of course, added to all the fear that we had in us, and we became absolutely inoperative at that time, as far as being capable. There was so much going on--and it was all brand new--that it was hard to conceive just what was really happening. I couldn't get it all through my mind. It sounded like bombs and machine guns were going off absolutely constantly, but, of course, they were not.

Marcello: What did you find to be the worst, the bombing or the strafing?

Reed: The worst for me was the bombing, because you could never

know where they were coming from and where they were going to hit. The strafing, you could follow those Zeros around and watch them, and when they started turning in, you could tell where they were going to start strafing from, and you could move out of their way.

Marcello: Am I to assume that the Japanese were able to bomb and strafe with impunity? In other words, the base itself wasn't putting up very much resistance.

Reed: The only thing that we had there were some English ack-ack people, and I don't think they had but one or two guns there.

Marcello: I think they tried to use those 75-millimeters as antiaircraft pieces, didn't they, by digging them into the ground or something like that and then elevating them?

Reed: They did, and very unsuccessfully. They did shoot a few rounds up there. I can't recall if the 75's ever did any good whatsoever.

Marcello: Approximately how many of these air raids were there while you were at Singosari? This first one, of course, took place on February 5, 1942. Then I gather there were several other air raids afterwards.

Reed: There were four or five, as I recall.

Marcello: Did they seem to have a pattern? In other words, did the Japanese seem to bomb at more or less the same time every day?

Reed: Yes, they did. They had a pattern. I know we used to

remark about the fact that they'd come over at approximately the same time. When they came over to bomb, they'd come over at approximately the same time every time.

Marcello: Did they seem to be trying to get the airplanes--the B-17's--more than anything else?

Reed: Definitely! I don't believe that they were after the barracks, although they did hit the barracks and they hit outside the barracks in the jungle and they hit everywhere. They seemed to want to concentrate definitely on the strafing. It's hard to tell on the bombing, because we just considered the fact that they weren't very good bombers or had no good bomb sights and just couldn't hit the target. They did seem to concentrate . . . more bombs were let on the field, and nearly all the strafing was done on the airfield.

Marcello: Did they do a considerable amount of physical damage to the facilities on the base?

Reed: They did a considerable amount in my estimation at that time. We had been torn up pretty bad. The building I was in was not hit, but I know quite a few guys--I don't know how many of them--had to double up and jam up because their barracks had been destroyed.

Marcello: I gather that you really hadn't lost any men through these air raids, had you?

Reed: Fortunately, we had not had but just a few injuries. We had

taken some to Malang to the hospital, but we had very few injuries--very few. There was this gunnery sergeant that I talked about, and there were some others. I know one guy . . . a bomb hit close to where his foxhole was, and he suffered some concussion from the bomb. We didn't realize it at the time, because he came out of his foxhole and walked back into camp after the raid and appeared to be quite rational, but he went off his rocker after that. You're right, there were very few injuries, and I don't recall that there were any deaths at all.

Marcello: Did they tear up quite a few of the B-17's?

Reed: Yes, they did. They tore up quite a few. To me, they looked like they tore up the whole darn 19th Bomb Group, but, of course, they didn't. I didn't get over to the field that often, but when I did get over there, there were bombed-out B-17's all over the place.

Marcello: So, like you mentioned then, there really weren't even too many serious injuries as a result of the air raid.

Reed: No. I don't recall but just a very few. Being in the Medical Detachment, it would be our job to take them or treat them and get them to the hospital if they even had slight injuries, but we didn't even have slight injuries. I think one guy had a few cuts and whatnot which we treated there. A few people were treated--nothing serious. Did anybody mention

the fact that the Flying Tigers came in there?

Marcello: No, but you might want to discuss this particular experience.

Reed: I'm surprised, because the Flying Tigers, Chennault's group . . . there were three planes--three or four--that came in there and set down at Singosari and operated out of Singosari for a week or ten days with their P-40's. They wore no uniforms. They wore sweatshirts, jeans, tennis shoes, and baseball caps. They got just drunker than a fried owl every night, because I was in town with them. As a matter of fact, I rode with them on a couple of occasions into town and back out again. Everyone of them were staggering drunk when they got back out to the camp. They were up before daylight and taking off. How they did it, I couldn't imagine! Fly that airplane in combat and then get drunker than a fried owl the day before!

During one bombing raid, I laid on my back out there in the field and watched one P-40 start on that formation of Jap bombers, and he kept going. He'd go up through them, climb right up through the formation, and then he would turn over and do a power dive and come right back through them. All the time they were coming over and making their run, he was going up through them and back down through them again. Then he came around--I was watching him--and he lost altitude real fast, came around on a very short base and finally set

down on that runway, rolled up there, and took on fuel and ammunition. He didn't get out of the plane. He took right back off and went after that formation of bombers.

That was the first time I'd seen them. We did get to see some dogfights, where the P-40's ran them off. I don't recall if it was one or two planes that were shot down, but they would run them off. They wouldn't hang around very long. They might make one run and couldn't get the target--the bombers. Then those Zeros, they would make one run, or two at the most, and then take right off and skedaddle out of there.

Marcello: That was probably as much fuel as they had, too. I would assume they couldn't stick around too long. Those Flying Tigers evidently were a very colorful group.

Reed: They were something else!

Marcello: You mentioned that you did party with them on a few occasions in Malang. During these occasions, could you detect that the attitude of the natives was beginning to change?

Reed: Oh, yes. You mean as far as their acceptance of the Americans?

Marcello: Yes.

Reed: I became very friendly. As a matter of fact, I learned to speak the language well enough to get along on the streets and order meals and carry on conversation with Javanese girls. They were very susceptible to the Americans. When we finally

left Singosari and headed toward Bandung, they were waving little American flags all over the place and had quite a bit of American patriotism going there.

Marcello: On February 27, 1942, the Japanese landed on the north side of the island, about twenty-five miles west of Surabaja. The B-17's and their crews almost immediately then left for Australia. Of course, the 131st Field Artillery had orders to stay behind. What did this do to the morale of the 131st Field Artillery? In other words, the Japanese had landed, the American bombers had left, and you had to remain on the island. How did this affect the morale?

Reed: There was a lot of anger about this. I know several of our guys, let's say the 131st Field Artillery guys, went over and got aboard those B-17's and took off with them. It made Colonel Tharp extremely mad. As a matter of fact, I heard him say that as far as he was concerned, they were deserters. I know that we thought . . . and this is a big bone of contention that you're talking about right now. Most everybody thought that we should go with Colonel Eubanks and the 19th Bomb Group.

Marcello: How many B-17's were left by this time?

Reed: Not many. I don't recall the number, but there was sufficient without bomb load to carry all of our group.

Marcello: How many people were in the 131st Field Artillery? Do you

know offhand? You might have to take a guess at that.

Reed: To take a guess, I would say it was about 1,200 or 1,500 . . . no, I don't remember.

Marcello: It was probably less than that, I think, was it not?

Reed: I don't recall, really. You must have had this from somebody else. I don't know what the complement was for the 2nd Battalion at that time. Was it 700 or 800?

Marcello: But you did feel that there were sufficient planes to evacuate the unit had the orders been so given.

Reed: I was only told that Colonel Eubanks had assured Colonel Tharp that there was plenty of room. In other words, there were enough airplanes to take our whole group out of there. The bone of contention came about as to whether we had received orders that we were not to leave the island or whether we had not received any orders. It was only the last orders we received that directed us to set up in Java, and we had not received any orders otherwise.

I know several of the officers and most of the men became extremely upset with Tharp about this particular thing. I don't know whether it will ever be found out whether we actually received orders to stay there or whether we didn't receive any orders at all.

Marcello: Nevertheless, very shortly after the bombers leave, the 131st Field Artillery also pulled out. I think most of you headed

for the northwest corner of the island, which is where the Japanese landed. E Battery, however, did not go along. It evidently was sent toward Surabaja to support the Dutch. What happens when you leave Singosari? Describe the activities as they take place upon your evacuation of the base.

Reed: Well, by the time we had left there, some week or two before the battalion left Singosari, I had gone into town. I had taken up residence in Malang.

Marcello: Why was that?

Reed: I'm trying to think (chuckle). I know that a few of us . . . oh, we went into town . . . we had a first aid station out at Singosari, and we had set up a first aid station in Malang. I was one of those that was in the first aid station in Malang and actually took up residence in sort of like a garden apartment. I had a girl that took care of the place and a boy that took care of my clothes and saw that everything was cleaned up. My dwelling was clean, and my clothes were taken care of--pretty good setup.

I know that they came in to get me and told me that we were fixing to leave. We were pulling out. Of course, we traveled on toward Bandung.

Marcello: By truck?

Reed: By truck. Yes, it was by truck, and, of course, I was in a jeep. We had ambulances. Most everybody rode in "six-by-eights."

We had taken on some civilian automobiles at that time, but sometime down the line there . . . I'm getting ahead of myself. We went from there to an area called Buitenzorg. It was somewhat south of Buitenzorg along some river that they set up the 75-millimeter gun emplacements to meet the invasion head-on--where the Japs were coming across from the other side of the river.

Marcello: So from Singosari you moved toward Buitenzorg.

Reed: Right. That's where the first ground action occurred.

Marcello: For the most part is the unit on the move, however? It really doesn't stay too long at any one place.

Reed: No, it moves around quite a bit. Bivouac areas were set up and would be changed quite a bit because of the Japanese patrols.

Marcello: I gather that the Japanese had you vastly outnumbered, and they were continually outflanking you and infiltrating behind you, and this is also one of the reasons that you were on the move quite a bit.

Reed: Yes, we were moving quite a bit. That's why I said that on their patrols they were coming out. They were coming around us, and then the natives, which are very susceptible to doing anything for money, would tell the Japs where our bivouac area was or where our gun emplacements were. Of course, they could tell where our gun emplacements were because they were firing.

We found evidence of where they had marked our bivouac areas for the Japanese.

Marcello: In other words, the loyalty of the natives was now changing. They seemed to sense the Japanese were going to be the winners.

Reed: Well, it's hard to say. We sensed that, probably thought that, at the time or somewhat at that time. This was a little early. Mostly, I would say it was the fact that we recognized that this may not be universal, as far as the natives all over the island, but we recognized the fact that natives could be bought off pretty easily.

Marcello: During this period, that is, after you had evacuated Singosari and right on up to the actual surrender itself, had you seen any Japanese yet?

Reed: No, I hadn't. I heard them, but I didn't see any actually the whole time. I never did see one, but I heard them. They were yelling their banzai yell when we were evacuating Buitenzorg, and I was scared out of my head because I could hear them. They were that close. When I grabbed hold of a tailgate of a "six-by-eight" and swung in and laid down behind that tailgate for protection, I swore they were on us right then. They were right there at us!

Marcello: You gradually fall back then from Buitenzorg toward Bandung.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Of course, this is where the end came. On March 11, 1942,

the Allied forces surrendered to the Japanese.

Reed: The Dutch forces surrendered to the Japanese!

Marcello: Okay, I'll let you pick up the story at this point.

Reed: (Chuckle) As I recall, we were pretty well scattered. We had moved up into other bivouac areas for a very short time, where one of the fellows from Wichita Falls was accidentally shot by another fellow from Wichita Falls out of carelessness. We became scattered to the point where . . . I don't know how many exactly were with the group I was with, but I know Colonel Tharp was one of them. I was driving . . . at that time, I had a Pontiac four-door car. We'd stopped and gathered someplace. I don't recall where we were. We stayed there for a day or two. As I remember, nobody knew where we were going or what we were going to do.

Marcello: Is this after the word had come down about the surrender?

Reed: No, this is just prior to it. It was at that place that Colonel Tharp called everybody together--it seemed to me about mid-day--and informed all of us who were there that the Dutch command of the island had capitulated. Now, I don't know whether the American troops were ordered to capitulate as well. It seems to me like the Dutch command had ordered the Americans to capitulate as well.

Marcello: I would assume that the Dutch were in overall command since Java was their island.

Reed: They were. They were in full command. But Colonel Tharp at that time had expressed the fact that we could have another option, although the island had fallen. We could go to the south coast to a place called Tjilatjap, where the USS Houston and the HMS Perth were to meet us and take us aboard ship and go to Australia. Our purpose in Java had been served, and we could split up in small groups and make our way as best we could.

Marcello: So as far as he was concerned, everybody was on his own at this point.

Reed: That's the way it was put to us.

Marcello: What were your thoughts and emotions and reactions when you heard about the surrender?

Reed: Naturally, I thought my days were numbered, and I'm sure everybody else thought that, too. We had already heard of the Japs coming down through the Malayan Peninsula, and their attacks in China and the "Rape of Nanking." We had heard all this . . . and the tremendous amount of damage and killings that had taken place in Singapore. We felt that our days were numbered unless we could get off the island.

We destroyed our vehicles and destroyed our arms. We took the bolts out of all the rifles, threw away the pistols, dumped them in the river . . . all the ammunition. For the life of me, I've tried many times to think of who the guys

were that I was with. There were about twelve or fourteen of us together.

We finally, after attempting to go to the south coast of Java and being blocked off, decided that the best thing to do was to just go into a little town there--I don't even remember the name of it--and take our chances with the Japs.

Marcello: You mentioned that one of your thoughts was to get to the coast and that you were blocked off. Can you elaborate on that?

Reed: Of course, we were still in radio contact with other guys around our own group. There were people on the coast; some had already reached the coast. We heard that Rogers or Stensland--one--had made an attempt to get a plane off of one of the airfields and was stopped by the Japanese. We were being advised by others, such as natives, some English, that all the roads were blocked off, that you couldn't get through.

We were told that if we could make contact with certain Javanese, they could smuggle us through during the nighttime hours, not on the main roads but through paths and whatnot that they have all over the island, and get us out through there. We never did make contact with any of these natives.

Marcello: Who were some of the people in your group?

Reed: As I said awhile ago, I can't remember who they were. I

really can't remember who those particular ones were at that time. I don't know why. I've got a mental block there for some reason.

Marcello: Awhile ago, you mentioned Lieutenant Stensland. He was kind of a mystery figure, was he not? Isn't he the one that came in from the Philippines?

Reed: He'd come in, I think, from Borneo in a Beechcraft--one of those old stagger-winged Beechcrafts--and he landed somewhere in Java. He didn't land in Malang, but he had found his way into our group and became part of our group there in Singosari.

Marcello: I gather that later on, or maybe at the time, a lot of the men came to have a great deal of respect for Stensland.

Reed: I think he gained his most respect for the fact that he was directing gunfire on the river. One of the tales that was told about him, that I heard about while we were there, was that he would walk on the dikes of the rice paddy with Jap snipers across the river shooting at him. He would walk standing up and just kept walking back and forth using his field glasses and directing fire without ever getting down to protect himself. His gutty reputation, I think, started at about that time.

Marcello: I gather that it carried on through the actual POW experiences, also.

Reed: It carried on quite a bit, because he would stand up to the

Japanese in prison camp and get the devil beat out of him. Anything he felt that was wrong or we felt was wrong, he'd stand up to them, and he caught it physically pretty bad each time he did it.

Marcello: Let us keep Lieutenant Stensland in mind, because I would like to come back to him later on when we get into the actual prisoner experiences. I've also heard it said that a great many of the men were actually ashamed in a way that they did have to surrender and really hadn't put up a whole lot of resistance. Now, that was an immediate reaction, of course.

Reed: I can see where that would come from a combat soldier, but we were non-combat and I didn't feel that way. I was more afraid of the fact that the Japanese were going to shoot me on sight than I was ashamed of the fact that I hadn't done my part. I know when we walked into this town to see what was going to take place, we actually walked down the street, and there were Japanese soldiers walking down the street with rifles, and they didn't pay any attention to us. We even went into a store to buy something to eat, and there were Jap soldiers in the store buying something to eat, and we stood right beside them.

Marcello: Now, is this during that period when you were perhaps attempting to make your way to the coast?

Reed: No. This is after we had given up the idea of getting to

the coast. We had been told that all avenues had been blocked except for the smuggling, and we did not know that the Houston and the Perth had been sunk, and there wouldn't be any rescue, anyhow. I know Stanbrough was already on the coast, and he was trying to radio back to everybody what was taking place. We had decided . . . the group I was with had decided that this was a futile attempt to even try to get down there.

Marcello: So what happens after you get the word to surrender, you realize that all attempts at escape are futile, and you then proceed to destroy your weapons? What happens at that point? Where does the unit go?

Reed: We split up. Like I said, we split up into small groups, and I don't think there were over twelve or fourteen of us in the group I was in. We walked to this small town.

Marcello: You did this on your own?

Reed: Yes. There was not an officer with us--the group I was with. I don't know where the rest of them were. I had no idea.

Marcello: And what did you do when you got to this small town?

Reed: Like I said, we walked down the street, and there were Jap soldiers in the street there. Actually, there were Jap soldiers directing traffic.

Marcello: These were evidently front-line troops, of course.

Reed: Yes. Those were what the Japanese called their Imperial

Nipponese Force, and they worked--their front-line soldiers.

Marcello: How long did you remain in this town?

Reed: Not very long. We had gone to the store to buy something to eat, and the Jap soldiers were all around us there. We walked out and tried to talk to them, and they wouldn't talk to us. We tried to talk to them--I did--in Malayan, and they couldn't speak Malayan. They couldn't speak English, and we couldn't speak Japanese. We kept walking along and asking, and we finally found a guy that was directing traffic out in the middle of the intersection, and we asked him if he could speak American. He said he could a little bit. So he came over to the curb where we were, and we asked him where the Japanese headquarters were.

Marcello: Were you simply wanting to find someplace to surrender?

Reed: Right. That's what we were trying to do. Consequently, he told us where the head honcho's headquarters were, and we went down there, and there was a Jap lieutenant there. We asked him if he could speak English, which he couldn't. We told him we were Americans and that we wanted to know where we were supposed to go and what we were supposed to do. We finally had to speak to him in Malayan to get him to understand. He left and told us to stay there and don't leave. So he left, and he was gone a couple of hours. Finally, he came back with a stake bed truck and told us to get in

this truck. The two Japs drove us up to a tea plantation way up high in the mountains.

Marcello: This was evidently where you met other members of the unit, too.

Reed: Yes, but we were the first ones there. When we got there, there were just a few of us. We got there and there was a huge home and a guest home, swimming pool, and tennis courts.

Marcello: Had all the civilians left?

Reed: Yes, there was no one there. They told us we were to get out there and take what we had with us and that they would come back and give us some food.

Marcello: What sort of gear did you have with you at this point?

Reed: I had a barracks bag, is all I had.

Marcello: Which had your clothing and toilet articles and a mess kit and things like that?

Reed: Yes. That's all I had with me.

Marcello: You probably couldn't have carried much more than that, anyway.

Reed: No, and we were lucky to carry that, I think. Most everybody lost their stuff in the Battle of Buitenzorg down there. I don't know. They called it that, but whether it is historically going to be the Battle of Buitenzorg, I don't know, but that's what we called it. We thought, "If this is prison life now--if we are prisoners-of-war and this is it--we

should have surrendered a long time ago!"

Marcello: Why do you say that?

Reed: Well, there was a big home, beautifully furnished, swimming pool, tennis courts. We were told we were going to get fed pretty nice, so if we were going to spend all our time there . . . and it turned out that way for months. We stayed up there, and others came up there, and then it got a little crowded.

Marcello: In that initial stage, did you more or less take over the place, so to speak?

Reed: We had it all to ourselves--every bit of it--and we had a lot of fun. We were enjoying the devil out of it!

Marcello: Did you stay in the big house?

Reed: I stayed in the guest house. We stayed everywhere. We were sleeping all over the place.

Marcello: And there were initially about twelve of you who were up there?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Did the Japanese bring food back to you?

Reed: Yes. They came up periodically with a truck and dumped it off there.

Marcello: What sort of food was it?

Reed: Mostly Javanese-type food, or Chinese food, that they had picked up right there probably in that little town.

Marcello: What were your first impressions of these Japanese soldiers?

Were they everything that you imagined the Japanese to be in terms of physical appearance and so on?

Reed: I was completely confused about the Japanese soldiers, because they seemed to ignore us; they seemed to not want anything to do with us at all. Having heard these stories of how murderous and vicious they were, we were really confused as to what type of people they were.

Marcello: What did they look like in terms of their military appearance?

Reed: Sloppy! Very sloppy uniforms! I don't recall them being dirty--they were clean--but they were very sloppy. Their uniforms didn't fit them. They didn't look like they could fight their way out of a paper sack, to tell you the truth. You wondered why in the world they could cover as much ground as they could, because they didn't look like they could hold their own against anybody.

Marcello: Were they short, in terms of stature?

Reed: Yes, they were very short.

Marcello: At this time, did you notice them doing a great deal of shouting and yelling?

Reed: No, they were very quiet at that time.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were at the tea plantation for about a month or so and that in the meantime other members of the unit gradually gathered there, too.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: What did you do during this period while you were at the tea plantation?

Reed: Nothing. Just had fun--went swimming, played tennis, ate, and slept.

Marcello: And you really never saw too many Japanese?

Reed: The only time we'd see them was when two would bring those supplies up there.

Marcello: Were you eating fairly well during this period?

Reed: Eating fairly well. I mean, as far as that condition, we weren't having big luxurious meals, but we were eating pretty good.

Marcello: But you were not going hungry.

Reed: No, no.

Marcello: You were there about a month. So what happens at that point?

Reed: Well, they came up there in the truck and picked us up. They told us that we were moving, to get all our stuff, and we did. We got in the truck, and we went down to this town. We came along outside the town itself, and they dumped us off at a place where the rest of our guys were. They were already there--along the railroad tracks. Quite a few had been set up. Dr. Lumpkin was there, and some more of our guys were there. They dumped us off there. They told us to just get off the truck and join the others, and that's what we did.

Then we learned from the guys that were there that we

were supposed to build us a place to live in ourselves, and we were supposed to stay there. There was no information as to where we were going, or when we were going. I think the rumor was that we were going to stay there about a week. We were supposed to build us something to get in out of the weather, so we proceeded right then to build us a lean-to or a little hut type of thing and something to sleep on.

We went on about our regular duties just like we were still a part of the American Army, and the officers were still in charge. As far as we were concerned, the medics, we set up a first aid station, a medical aid station, that is, and treated people and doled out supplies of medicine and whatnot.

Marcello: And the Japanese are still not harassing you at all?

Reed: They would come around once in awhile, but not enough to where we would even consider that we were interned.

Marcello: How long did you stay there altogether?

Reed: You know, I can't recall. It seems like to me it was two or three weeks, maybe three weeks, that we stayed there. Maybe somebody else could remember the length of time. I know one guy that would remember--Jack Rogers. He'd remember. It seemed to me like it just went on. Every week it was, like, "Well, we're going to be leaving in a few days," but we just stayed on and on.

During that time, I remember one incidence that stuck in my mind. There was a Javanese man that brought a very, very small two- or three-year-old girl up there. She had been severely burned, and I got out of the man that it was his daughter and that she had walked up to a wood-burning stove and put her arm up on the wood-burning stove and burnt herself all under her arm, all down her chest in third-degree burns.

He wanted us to treat her, so Dr. Lumpkin turned to me and told me to go treat the girl. So I went out there, and I looked at her, and I thought, "Oh, boy, just a little bitty baby," and that horrible burn that she had. I told him that I would treat the girl, but not to expect much because she was very severely burned. We gave her a very small shot of morphine to relieve the pain somewhat. Then I put tannic acid ointment all over the burns and wrapped her completely and told him to come back in three or four days, and I would look at it. I rather expected that we would be gone by then, and I wouldn't have to look at it anymore. I was afraid that she was going to die in those three or four days, and if she hadn't she was going to be so very near death.

He came back, and we were still there; they came just about dark. I gave her another shot of morphine, a small one, and I went to take those bandages off, and they were

stuck--stuck just like they were on there with glue. I took a scalpel and cut that bandage off of there a little bit at a time to try to keep from disturbing the burns. Mosquitos were eating me up, but I finally got it off. He and somebody else were helping me . . . I've forgotten who now. I decided not to use any more tannic acid ointment. I used tannic acid jelly, because it wouldn't stick. I put it all over her and wrapped her up again and said, "Come back in three or four days, and I'll take another look at her." Again, I expected her to be gone by then, and I expected us to be gone if she wasn't.

They came back. I took the bandage off, and it was just as pink . . . she was in full color. I did it again--wrapped her up--and told him that she was okay then, and everything was lovely. She had survived, and how I have no idea.

Marcello: I guess it made you feel pretty good.

Reed: Yes, it did. Then just a couple of days after that he came back, and he had a great big wicker basket full of fruit. He hollered for me--for Reed: "Where is Reed? Where is Reed?" I could hear him hollering. I stepped out of my little place there, and I looked down there and saw this guy with his fruit, and he came up and presented it to me. I didn't get a whole lot of the fruit--it was distributed

pretty well--but I was thankful that he could think that much of me to bring it back. I often wondered whatever happened to that little girl. Of course, she'd be quite grown now.

Marcello: Generally speaking, I assume that most of the men were in pretty good health at this time.

Reed: Yes. Everybody seemed to be in good health at that time.

Marcello: Where do you move from this spot?

Reed: We boarded a train for Batavia. We didn't know we were going to Batavia, but we boarded a train to go to Batavia. When we got to Batavia, that was the first bashings that we got.

Marcello: Describe this particular incident.

Reed: Well, still, like you asked awhile ago about if there had been any yelling or screaming, the Japs on the train were comparatively quiet. They didn't have much to say except to keep everybody seated and not milling around. Then when we got to the railroad station in Batavia, we were told to get off of the train and line up in single file, which we did. No, it wasn't single file. It was in regular marching formation. This damn Jap officer with these others, swinging those Samurai swords and dragging the ground with them, waltzing up and down, looking at everybody and hollering and screaming, stopping and slapping and kicking. This all took place right there at the railroad station when we got off.

Marcello: Were you personally subjected to any bashings at this point?

Reed: No, I was missed at that time. I didn't get any at that time--fortunately. I don't know how I got missed. He wasn't bashing everybody, but he'd go about every tenth guy and give them a good whack.

Marcello: When you had been back at that bivouac area before you moved into Batavia, were you there just with members of the 131st Field Artillery?

Reed: That's all I remember being there. There may have been some others there.

Marcello: Were there very many of you there?

Reed: No.

Marcello: In other words, were you there with the whole unit?

Reed: No. There were quite a few more there than there were up in the tea plantation, but I don't think the full complement was there yet.

Marcello: You were not with any other nationalities--British, Australians, or anybody of that nature there?

Reed: They may have been there. It seems to me like some were there, but I really don't recall exactly whether they were there or not. Did you have indications that some of them were there?

Marcello: Well, I think in at least one of the temporary bivouac areas for the prisoners, there were some groups of mixed nationalities, and I'm not sure if it was here or not. For example, some

of them were located at Tanjong Priok, were they not? You personally were not there.

Reed: Yes. I did eventually go there. That was when we left the railroad station and went directly to Tanjong Priok--at Batavia.

Marcello: What happens then when you get to Tanjong Priok?

Reed: Well, we set up just like it was one of our military bases. Now, there were all nationalities there. Indians--Sikhs--and Gurkhas were there, as well as Australians, English, Dutch, and Americans.

Marcello: So the compound there at Tanjong Priok was a relatively large one.

Reed: It was a large camp.

Marcello: Describe what it looked like from a physical standpoint.

Reed: Oh, it looked like a picture of a typical Malayan or Asiatic military base. It had little low huts with little verandas. It was dark. I remember that the buildings were dark, as far as being painted dark. It was a large area, and we set up just like we were in our old military base.

Marcello: Had it been a former Dutch army camp or something?

Reed: I think it had, yes. I think it had been a Malayan army camp, that is, a Dutch army, which are mostly Malayans.

Marcello: It must have been a pretty big base if it had all these nationalities there.

Reed: It was a large base. I don't recall how many were there. I think nearly all the Americans were there at that time.

Marcello: Describe what your barracks area was like.

Reed: It was very much like the barracks out at Singosari, except they had more wood in them and an awful lot of concrete used in that area.

Marcello: Were you staying in cubicles, or was there one huge barracks area where a lot of the men were sleeping?

Reed: They were individual rooms, which there were several in each room. It was still dormitory-style all the way.

Marcello: Did you have a bed, as such, or a cot?

Reed: I had a cot.

Marcello: About how large would each of these areas be?

Reed: Ten-by-ten.

Marcello: And how many men would be staying in each one of these areas?

Reed: Six, I believe, were in each one.

Marcello: How long did you stay here at Tanjong Priok altogether?

Reed: We stayed there quite awhile, because I was put in charge of the hospital section that had all the venereal patients in it.

Marcello: Would you have had very many cases of venereal disease there at Tanjong Priok?

Reed: Quite a few were there, which was related back to the period of time before we were taken prisoners. In other words, some

of these guys that had gonorrhea and syphilis quite awhile by the time we got to Tanjong Priok, and some of them were pretty far gone. As a matter of fact, we had fellows that were dying of venereal disease at the time I got there--both Australian, English, and American.

Marcello: Of the three groups, that is, the three nationalities, among whom did the venereal diseases seem to be most prevalent?

Reed: I think it was a toss-up between the Australians and the Americans.

Marcello: There were quite a few Americans who had come down with venereal disease at one time or another?

Reed: Yes, quite a few there, yes.

Marcello: How many? You will have to estimate this number, of course.

Reed: I think there were about fifty in the section that I was in charge of.

Marcello: What did you do for people who had come down with venereal disease? Penicillin and so on was not available at that time.

Reed: The only thing we had to treat them with was sulfanilamide, and we did have some bismuth to treat the syphilitics with. We didn't have very much, but we had some to treat the very worst people with.

Marcello: I would assume that this was not the most pleasant duty that a corpsman could have.

Reed: No. It was very rough trying to treat these particular

syphilitics and the ones with gonorrhea because the facilities there at the hospital were not as good as the ones that we were living in, that the healthy guys were living in. They were having to lay on the ground on little bitty decks that we built up off the ground, or on the ground or on concrete slabs. It was very dirty; it was a dirt floor. They had sores, called chancres, on their penises, and some had developed sores on the rest of their bodies, and we had to treat those, mostly with sulfanilamide tablets ground up into powder. We had no oral medicines to give them at all for pain. They were demoralized very much, those venereal patients were.

Marcello: What seemed to be the attitude of the other people toward the ones who had contracted venereal disease? In other words, was the attitude one of pity? Contempt? In looking back, how would you describe the attitude that people had toward the syphilitics and so on?

Reed: I'm sure I can describe that. The attitude was that it was sort of a combination between complete separation and disgust. They should have had better sense than to get venereal disease in the first place. If they got it, it was their own damn fault; they should have had better sense. They didn't want them to come around; they didn't want them around. As a matter of fact, they had fenced off the hospital area where we kept them and wouldn't let them out of there. They didn't

want anything to do with them.

I had enough knowledge that it didn't perturb me particularly, because I knew they couldn't transmit the disease. I worked right there with them all the time, and I had about four or five English corpsmen that worked with me over there. I was the only American over there.

Marcello: I assume, just from what you've said and from the tone of your voice, that you actually didn't have too much sympathy for these people, either.

Reed: I really didn't. I can't really say I didn't have pity for them or sympathy for them. Some I did. Some of the guys were very pitiful. I think I worked pretty hard to try to make them as comfortable as possible and cure their disease. I didn't feel like it was ever going to be cured, because we didn't have the medicines or the facilities to cure them.

Marcello: Did you lose any of them?

Reed: Yes. Some of them died there.

Marcello: And they died from syphilis and related venereal disease?

Reed: Yes. They were that far advanced to have died from it. You know, you have to be pretty well-advanced in venereal disease to die from it.

Marcello: Describe the food and chow that you received here at Tanjong Priok. How did the commissary system work?

Reed: Of course, we had the main kitchen, which everybody fed from.

The food at that time, I don't recall it being very bad. It was relatively okay under the circumstances. It wasn't as good as what we had received up in the tea plantation; it deteriorated from that. It was not bad enough, however, that I was particularly concerned. I remember that it was not really as bad like it was after we left Tanjong Priok. It wasn't until, that I recall, that we got to Bicycle Camp that the food really was bad.

Marcello: What kind of food were you receiving here in Tanjong Priok?

Reed: We were having the usual rice for every meal, stew, a little fruit. We had a little more . . . whereas we didn't have any fruit at all after that, and you didn't have any type of vegetable after that. Well, I say any type--any variety of vegetable or any bread or anything of that nature. We did have it in Tanjong Priok.

Marcello: Describe what the quality of the rice was like and how it was prepared.

Reed: In Tanjong Priok it was a higher quality rice. I don't recall the low quality rice in the diet until we got to Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: How was the rice being prepared here in Tanjong Priok?

Reed: It was steamed rice.

Marcello: Did the American cooks have some difficulty in learning how to prepare that rice at first?

Reed: No. I don't recall anybody having any difficulty. I think

the Dutch that were there and the Javanese who happened to be there and some Australians were already aware of how to prepare this. They had been there longer than we had.

Marcello: You mentioned that you also would usually receive a stew. What would be the content of the stew?

Reed: Oh, gee, I don't recall. It was some meat and a vegetable. I don't recall what type of vegetable. It was not really bad. It was pretty good, in fact.

Marcello: It was a lot more vegetable than meat, of course.

Reed: Oh, yes. It didn't have much meat.

Marcello: And normally was the purpose of this stew, as you call it, to give the rice a better flavor, make it tastier, so to speak?

Reed: This was farther down the line. At this point, in Tanjong Priok, we weren't really stunned yet by the absence of food or the deterioration of the quality of the food.

Marcello: You mentioned that all this food would be prepared at a central kitchen.

Reed: As well as I remember it was, but I may be all wet. I think it was in compounds, though, come to think of it. I believe Tanjong Priok was divided up into separate compounds, and they had . . .

Marcello: Probably each nationality had its own central kitchen.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Then would you go to the central kitchen to get the food, or

would somebody be assigned to bring the food in large containers from the central kitchen back to you?

Reed: We were going to the kitchen to get the food at that time.

Marcello: You would simply line up and go through the line?

Reed: Just like a chow line, yes.

Marcello: How much food did you get?

Reed: A mess gear full. We still had our own mess gear--American mess gear. We would get our mess gear full. Not full, but we'd get a fairly decent portion.

Marcello: How often would you be fed?

Reed: At Tanjong Priok, I don't believe it was three meals. I believe it was two meals a day.

Marcello: Did you go away from the meals hungry, or were you fairly well-satisfied in terms of appetite?

Reed: I don't believe there was a sufficient amount of food at each serving, because I remember being somewhat hungry after I'd eaten, or a little while after I'd eaten. We did have . . . I can't recall what we called it now. It was a brown sugar-type candy. They called it a candy. No, it wasn't a candy. I take that back. It was like brown sugar . . . an old brown box of brown sugar that had hardened, is what it tasted like. I can't think of the name of it. Have you heard anybody call the name of it?

Marcello: No, I sure haven't.

Reed: It was . . . doggone it, we put it on the rice, and we ate it. It was rationed, and this was sweet, which was something that we didn't get very much of unless we bought it out of the canteen from there on.

Marcello: Did you have anything to drink other than water?

Reed: Tea, I believe. We had tea.

Marcello: Of course, all the water had to be boiled, I'm sure.

Reed: I don't recall whether in Tanjong Priok we did boil the water or not, but I'm sure we did. I didn't work in the kitchen, so I don't recall.

Marcello: Where did you get your water? Was there a central tap or something?

Reed: Yes. They were all around the camp.

Marcello: What was the attitude of the Japanese in this camp?

Reed: They were very curious in Tanjong Priok. They didn't get real upset with anybody, or maybe with a few. They did make it rather difficult for some, especially officers. They got very mad at the Gurkhas, because the Gurkhas wouldn't give up their knives. They put the Gurkhas over in a fenced-in compound of their own, because the Gurkhas wouldn't give up their knives. They tried to take the knives away from them, and the Gurkhas killed them, so they decided that wasn't a good idea to try to take the knives away. They put them over in another compound.

They would come over to our area and talk and give us cigarettes and candy. They would talk about what it was like in America and what it was like to be an American soldier and so forth. They weren't really tough. It seemed to be that they were trying to be more friendly than captors.

Marcello: So there was no real harassment here at Tanjong Priok then?

Reed: Well, there was harassment, but it was only for the officers who they felt were not giving out the information they wanted, or if it was somebody who decided they wanted to go from compound to compound without permission. They got slapped around some. They gave us the rules, and if we didn't follow the rules we got repercussions, bashings.

Marcello: You mentioned that they gave you rules. What were the rules and regulations that the Japanese laid down for prisoners?

Reed: Mostly, it was just like you would have in a base, such as, lights out at a certain time, working parties will be prompt, there will be no going from one compound to the other, no talking between prisoners of one compound to the other, no passing of notes. Such things as that.

Marcello: Am I safe in assuming that most of the bashings came because people didn't follow the rules? I'm sure you're going to have examples where the Japanese would go out of their way to bash somebody, but in most cases did the bashings result from misunderstandings or a deliberate flaunting of the rules?

Reed: As far as I can remember, any bashings that took place, or any type of punishment, was because somebody broke a rule or talked back to a guard that came over to visit or said something dirty about him. I don't recall anybody that really went out of their way to beat up on Americans just to get a kick out of it like they did later on.

Marcello: You still have Japanese guards at this time?

Reed: We have the front-line Japanese guards at this point.

Marcello: Are you rapidly learning the advantages to having some knowledge of Japanese at this point?

Reed: No, I'm not.

Marcello: In other words, nobody is making any effort to learn any of the Japanese language?

Reed: Oh, I'm not, but some of them did. Not Americans. Now, I think there were one or two Americans that tried to learn Japanese. Mostly, I believe they were English that were getting the Japanese language done.

Marcello: What were the Japanese rules concerning saluting and bowing?

Reed: Well, this is a "must" with them. I'll have to remember. If they came to you in your barracks, you bowed.

Marcello: Because you didn't have a hat on, I suppose.

Reed: Well, I suppose. I don't recall.

Marcello: Or you were indoors or something of that nature.

Reed: Yes. If you went to their headquarters to ask permission to

go to another compound, you saluted when you went up to the guards and the officer that you were going to confront. In passing one of the guards or one of the Jap officers out in the open area, you saluted.

Marcello: And you had to salute or bow to every Japanese, regardless of rank.

Reed: That's true. Every one.

Marcello: Did that apply to the American officers, too? In other words, did the American officers have to salute and bow to Japanese privates?

Reed: At that time,I don't recall if they did or not. I know they did later.

Marcello: Is military discipline still being maintained among the American troops? In other words, are you still respecting and obeying your officers?

Reed: Oh, yes! You bet! We sure are!

Marcello: I do gather, however, that some of the formalities had been done away with. In other words, you weren't having to salute your officers and so on under these circumstances, were you?

Reed: Oh, yes. There are still military courtesies going on. I think the laxness or deterioration of military courtesies was not evident in the Americans, especially in the American officers. It was prevalent in the American enlisted men, and any deterioration was strictly on the part of the enlisted

man, and there wasn't a whole lot the American officer could do about it. The only thing was, that particular officer wasn't happy about the fact that there was a deterioration in the military courtesies at Tanjong Priok. Like I said earlier, the base took on and was functioning just like it was a regular military base.

Marcello: Are you saying, in other words, that the dropping of the standard military courtesies really didn't occur until you get up into the jungle?

Reed: It really started occurring there at Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: But other than the dropping of the military courtesies, discipline was still being maintained fairly closely.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: It was going to be one of the keys to your survival, was it not? Discipline was necessary--some sort of discipline.

Reed: Of course, this was true, but that wasn't in the minds of the enlisted man, that we should maintain military courtesy for survival. I don't know whether it was in the minds of the officers or not. I think it was still to the point where the American officers felt that although we were prisoners-of-war, we were still a military unit and should act as such. It wasn't until we got to Bicycle Camp that that broke down completely.

Marcello: What were your toilet and bathing facilities like here at

Tanjong Priok?

Reed: We had regular toilet facilities in Tanjong Priok.

Marcello: The Dutch toilets?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Which are somewhat different from the American toilets.

Reed: (Laughter) Yes, they're different. You have to squat down and wash instead of sitting on a stool. It was new, but actually, if you stop and think about it, it was about the most sanitary thing you could do.

Marcello: And there is running water through these toilets?

Reed: Running water, yes. It runs all the time, and you bathe yourself after you've gone. It was a pretty good arrangement, actually, under the circumstances.

Marcello: What did you do in terms of bathing facilities?

Reed: If I can recall right, I think we went turns. They had so many that could go bathing to the shower area--so many on certain days.

Marcello: About how many baths might you get a week?

Reed: It seems to me like about one.

Marcello: Was there sufficient soap and so on available?

Reed: I don't recall. I don't recall there not being soap.

Marcello: Was everybody conscious--were most people conscious--of the importance of personal hygiene and cleanliness under these circumstances?

Reed: At that time they were. We were very conscious of hygiene.

Like,the hospital section that I was in where the venereal patients were, I was forever trying to get things cleaned up there and to get some sanitary conditions established, because we had people with open sores and open wounds.

As far as our bodies were concerned, we were very conscious of the fact that we needed to keep clean. Actually, the Americans never, in the whole time, deteriorated like the English to where they became extremely dirty and filthy and died from the result of it.

Marcello: We'll probably talk more about this later on, also. But I guess this lack of personal cleanliness and personal hygiene was one of the things that caused the Americans to dislike the British so much. Isn't that true, among other things?

Reed: Yes, among other things, this is true. The English were not clean; they were not clean people.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the Japanese guards, and you were mentioning that from time to time here in Tanjong Priok that they would be coming around and engaging in conversation with prisoners. Somewhere along the line, don't you learn, however, that it is best to try and stay away from the guards as much as possible?

Reed: At that time in Tanjong Priok, we were somewhat happy to have the guards come over and talk to us, because they brought

cigarettes and candy with them.

You have to realize that it was like having the light on and turning it off. This was the difference between Tanjong Priok and Bicycle Camp. The situation changed absolutely 180 degrees. There was not enough food, not enough medicine. The living conditions weren't nearly up to what we considered standard in Tanjong Priok. We didn't know how really bad the situation could get until we got to Bicycle Camp.

As far as I can remember . . . now, there may be other guys who had different opinions--and I'm sure there were--but I wasn't all that unhappy in Tanjong Priok. I knew we had deteriorated quite a bit, but we were still in full uniform. Every morning we had to wash and iron and press your uniform the best way you could and get it as military as possible.

Marcello: I would assume that, given your functions here in the hospital, you would not have been going out on any work details? Your detail was right there in the hospital area or whatever you called it.

Reed: Right. Most of the other people did go out on work details in Tanjong Priok.

Marcello: Work wasn't too hard here, was it?

Reed: As best I can gather, from the guys and what I can remember--the talks that I had with the fellows at that time--the work wasn't particularly hard. There seemed to be quite a bit of

scavenging going on while they were out on a working party, and they were getting stuff from one source or another.

Marcello: In terms of feeding, did the people in the hospital get any sort of priority, that is, the patients in the hospital?

Reed: No, they didn't. This was one of our complaints to the Japanese. Why couldn't we get better rations for the hospital people to combat these diseases? Of course, the Japanese took a dim view of anybody that was sick.

Marcello: Did you notice the type of discipline among the Japanese soldiers themselves, that is, the relationship of a sergeant to a corporal and a corporal to a private and so on and so forth? Maybe I'm not making myself clear.

Reed: Their discipline?

Marcello: Yes. What was their discipline like among themselves?

Reed: It was extremely strict. As a matter of fact, their discipline was so rigid and so strict that we were somewhat aghast to the fact that they went to the extent that they did in their discipline. Even the English, their discipline was a great deal more severe than the Americans'. I can't say the Australians were, but the English were. Then the Japanese . . . it was uncanny that you could, for example, take a corporal in the Japanese Army, and the private would bow and scrape to him just like an American private would to a full colonel in the American Army. It was something else just to be a

corporal. Then the sergeants were really something high up! Then the officers, I guess, were absolutely untouchable as far as the enlisted men went.

Marcello: Did you see them bash each other?

Reed: Yes, several times. A number of times. Many times, I should say (chuckle).

Marcello: And what forms would their bashings usually take, that is, among themselves?

Reed: I can't say that this is normal, but I can say that I have seen them beat the other one until he dropped to the ground. That's pretty severe as far as one nationality to his own nationality.

Marcello: I've also heard it said that there was a certain hierarchy, I guess you could say, in terms of punishment. In other words, if one Japanese officer gave another Japanese officer hell or punished him or something like that, by the end of the day it would get all the way back to the prisoners, because everybody had to save face. Did you ever notice that?

Reed: Yes, right. It seemed that if the officer . . . I don't recall officers bashing enlisted men, or, say, sergeants, for example. There was an awful lot of bashing by the sergeants of all the other enlisted men. That would filter down. If a private caught a good bashing, he would take it out on the prisoners almost every time.

Marcello: Earlier in our conversation, you also mentioned that the

American officer would normally come in for more bashings perhaps than the enlisted men. Was this because they acted as go-betweens for the Japanese and the prisoners?

Reed: At the very beginning, yes. I would say that was true. This was before most everybody got out and started bringing stuff in and getting caught, and they would get bashed then. Of course, I'm farther down the line now. If we're still in Tanjong Priok . . .

Marcello: Yes, all my questions at this stage are at Tanjong Priok.

Reed: Yes, the bashings . . . there weren't very many in Tanjong Priok. There were some occasional bashings but not very many at all. They were so rare that they were quite a topic of conversation amongst everybody else if somebody got a bashing. If somebody got a bashing over in Bicycle Camp, it was just another bashing.

Marcello: It is interesting that you speak of Bicycle Camp in a rather negative way. I say it is interesting, because most of the other prisoners didn't seem to think that Bicycle Camp was really that bad.

Reed: This may be because I was in the hospital over there, and being in charge of the venereal ward of the hospital, I didn't fare too bad. I didn't realize that I was really getting the raw deal in Tanjong Priok. Over in Bicycle Camp, although I was still active as a medic there, there

were so darn many medics in Bicycle Camp and doctors and guys with more rank than I had that I didn't work much in the hospital or aid stations in Bicycle Camp. I was mostly going out on working parties.

Marcello: In May of 1942, you were transferred to Bicycle Camp. Now, I assume that Bicycle Camp wasn't too far from Tanjong Priok.

Reed: I'm guessing it was about twenty or twenty-five miles.

Marcello: Tanjong Priok, I gather, is the port city for Batavia, which is where Bicycle Camp is located.

Reed: Yes, that's where all the docks were.

Marcello: How did you get from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp?

Reed: By truck.

Marcello: During your transfer, let's say from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp, did the Japanese ever try to humiliate you in any way before the local population or anything of that nature? Or was it basically a routine trip from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp?

Reed: Actually, I don't recall much about the trip. I know what you're talking about as far as embarrassing us in front of the Dutch population. That, I don't recall at that time. I don't recall a whole lot about that particular move.

Marcello: Describe what Bicycle Camp looked like from a physical standpoint.

Reed: Realizing, of course, that most of these camps in that area are . . . all the way from Java on up to Singapore and Moulmein, the buildings were white masonry with mission tile roofs. Bicycle Camp appeared not like an American garrison, because it had the white buildings with the tile roofs and a big fence around it, masonry-type fence. I can't associate it with anything in America, because I can't think of anything to associate it with.

Marcello: It was a fairly large camp, was it not?

Reed: It was pretty good-sized. I don't think it was nearly as large as Tanjong Priok, though.

Marcello: What were the insides of your barracks like there at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: To start off with, they were pretty well rundown. In other words, they had not been kept in good order. They had concrete floors, and the walls had chips out of them and needed painting--pretty well rundown conditions. They were very bare, very cold-type of interior.

Marcello: Were you in one large common sleeping area, or, again, was the inside of the barracks divided into rooms?

Reed: I think some of them were divided. The one I was in was just a big hall, dormitory, where everybody slept with the bunk buddied up to the wall, right down the wall from one end to the other.

Marcello: Were your bathing and shower facilities located right in the barracks, or was there a separate area for that?

Reed: There was a separate area.

Marcello: What were they like?

Reed: About as rundown as the barracks themselves. The floors, of course, had water rot appearing all over. They were not too sanitary or susceptible to sanitary conditions.

Marcello: When you say that, are you in a sense implying that there were lots of flies and that sort of thing around the bathing and the sanitary facilities?

Reed: There were a lot of flies, and this was the first place that we had to have our heads shaved and the hair off from under our arms and across our chest and stomach and groin because of lice. It was rather dirty at Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Was this shaving required by the Japanese, or was it simply decided upon by the American officers as being a necessary sanitary precaution?

Reed: I don't really recall where that came from. Before you said that, I would have answered that it was more on a voluntary basis. I don't recall, although there may very well have been an order that everybody had to shave their hair. It seems to me in the back of my mind that there was an order that everybody had to shave their hair, although it seems, also, that some of us had already done it before this order came in.

Marcello: What opportunities were there for bathing here at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: For bathing your body?

Marcello: Yes.

Reed: Just that dumpy shower area there.

Marcello: Could you perhaps take a daily bath, or was it a weekly bath, or how did the procedure work?

Reed: I think there was rationing. I don't recall bathing any time I wanted to. It seems to me . . . I don't know whether it was water rationing that resulted in a regulatory-type bathing procedure, or whether it was the amount of people involved with the meager amount of bathing facilities. Something regulated it.

Marcello: I assume that your toilet facilities were the usual Dutch-type once again?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Now, when you arrived in Bicycle Camp, the survivors off the USS Houston were already there.

Reed: I believe that's correct.

Marcello: Describe their condition as best you can remember.

Reed: They were much worse off than we were, I thought. Quite a few of them were in the hospital. They did have a hospital area there at Bicycle Camp. They appeared to be much thinner and suffering more from the lack of food than we were. As

I recall now, that was my impression when we first saw them.

Marcello: I understand that a lot of them didn't have any clothing or anything.

Reed: That's correct. They didn't have any. We had full uniforms yet, and shoes, and they didn't have anything. We divided up with them so that they did have some clothes. I don't know whether all of them got something or not, but I know I divided up what I had with them, and I think most everybody did.

Marcello: I was going to ask whether or not the sharing was a rather spontaneous thing.

Reed: I think it probably was spontaneous, because you have a guy who just didn't have anything, and you had two or three sets of khakis. It seemed ridiculous that you would sit there with a brand-new pair of khakis and they're naked and you not giving it to them.

Marcello: I gather that, generally speaking, the Americans shared among themselves almost throughout this experience--not only here in Bicycle Camp, but in other camps as well.

Reed: That's true. All the way through we shared. Oh, there were some occasions that people got to where they became misers and wouldn't, but this was more a mental condition than anything.

At the same time, I noticed that the English didn't have the same feelings as we did about sharing, because they would

have a naked guy standing next to a fully dressed guy. I think we were about the only ones who really joined and tried to help each other. The English were pitiful in that respect.

Marcello: I gather that some of the people off the Houston still have the oil and so on and so forth on them, also. They hadn't gotten all that cleaned off yet.

Reed: Right. Like I said, they were pitiful-looking people when I first saw them, and they had some very miserable tales to tell us about what had happened to them. I know that it impressed me a great deal. They told me about being locked in a little jail in some small village, and the Japs had gone off and left them without any food and water. The conditions of those particular individuals when they came back to get them out . . . they were absolutely almost on the verge of cannibalism.

Marcello: You mentioned the hospital facilities awhile ago. Describe what they were like in a little bit more detail, since I gather you would have probably been working over there off and on.

Reed: Well, I didn't work there as much as I did over in Tanjong Priok, but I did work there some. They had regular iron-type hospital beds with the legs longer than the regular cots. They had facilities there for surgery, and several operations were done. Quite a few operations were done there.

Marcello: Normally what type of operations are you talking about?

Reed: We're talking about an appendectomy or a hemorroidectomy. That was pretty much what it was.

Marcello: In other words, these were the types of operations that we would consider more or less routine back in this country.

Reed: Yes. They're not considered major operations in this country.

Marcello: Would they have been considered major operations over there, however, given the equipment and the conditions?

Reed: Definitely they were major operations there because of the operating room, although they did have an area they called the operating room. It wasn't anything to compare with an operating room in an American hospital. The sanitation or clinical situation wasn't anything near what it was in America. Anybody who had an abdomen opened or an incision in his body of any kind was susceptible to infection. It happened.

Actually, Dr. Lumpkin had a hemorroidectomy in that place. He told me then, "If any female ever tells me again that men don't know what it's like to have a baby, by God, you have a hemorroidectomy and then try to take a shit. That is worse than any damn birth of a baby there ever was!"

Marcello: What sorts of medicines were available here at Bicycle Camp? Did you have only what had been brought into camp with you, or were the Japanese supplying anything to you?

Reed: I don't recall the Japs supplying us. They may have supplied us with some medicine. It seems to me like we hauled around

most of what we had. I'm pretty sure we did--medicines, bandages, surgical instruments.

Marcello: Describe what your routine was like here at Bicycle Camp from the time you woke up in the morning until lights out at night. What exactly did you do here at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: I remember some work I did in the hospital. Most of the time I was out on working parties there. But I remember that more than I do working in the hospital. I don't know whether I did more of it or not. It may have been because I didn't like it at all, so I went out on working parties. I was taken mostly to oil refineries in the area, which there were quite a few of because of the American oil interests in that area. Getting up in the morning, it was pretty much routine every day.

Marcello: What time was reveille?

Reed: Daybreak.

Marcello: Did the Japanese come around and get you up?

Reed: Yes. Oh, yes! They had an absolute, sure way of getting you up, which they carried out the whole time that we were in prison. They would walk through with mounted bayonets and holler, and they would keep hollering. If you didn't hit the deck right quick, they would come over and hit you with that thing. That was the best alarm clock anybody ever invented, I'll tell you, because everybody got up.

Marcello: Okay. What happened then after reveille?

Reed: Well, you brushed your teeth with your finger and a little bit of water you could get, and you tried to wash your face. I don't recall any soap at that time. There might have been some soap that was permitted in by the Japanese, but I think it was mostly bought out of the canteen. Then you went to the rice and stew breakfast.

Marcello: Was there ever a roll call or anything of that nature?

Reed: Oh, yes.

Marcello: When did it begin?

Reed: Yes, that's by the Japanese. The roll call wasn't actually called until after breakfast. It wasn't breakfast; it was the first meal. They would get everybody together. There might have been a reveille, and you might have had to get up. Yes, I think there was, now that you mentioned it. They did call everybody out to the main road that went down through the barracks there. Then they called the working parties after breakfast. That's right.

Marcello: How did they take roll call? Was it done by name, or did you simply count off?

Reed: At Bicycle Camp, if I remember right, I think they had one guy in charge of each barracks that was supposed to count off all of the ones in that barrack and then report to the Jap if all were present. Sometimes they'd double-check;

sometimes they took the guy's word for it. Later on, which we will get to, we counted off in Japanese.

Marcello: Did that occur up in the jungle?

Reed: This occurred in the jungle. I don't think we were counting off in Japanese at that time?

Marcello: You mentioned that once you were lined up after reveille and after you had had breakfast, then the work parties were assigned. Were they assigned or were they voluntary? How did the work details operate?

Reed: As I recall, there were some voluntary ones. How long that lasted or how many were involved in the voluntary part, I don't recall; but there were voluntary work parties. Mostly, if you got on a work party and you got out of the camp, that meant that you had the opportunity to deal with the native food vendor or somebody to get a little extra food. If you didn't get on a work party, you didn't have a chance to get anything extra. Consequently, volunteers pretty well made up the work parties.

Marcello: Usually, how many people would there be in each one of the work parties that went out, or would this vary according to the type of work you were doing?

Reed: They went to different places. We wouldn't all go to the same place. Some would go to work on the docks. I worked on the docks a couple of times; I worked in the refinery most

of the time. That's the only two places I have ever gone to. I understand that some of them went out and worked on the roads or something. There'd be about one or two truckloads, which I guess had about thirty to a load, thirty or forty, maybe not that many, to go to each place. That meant fifty or sixty people going off on each individual work party. Maybe four or five truckloads would go to one dock area there to unload ships or work in the docks.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that going on the working parties gave you an opportunity to trade with the native vendors. How did this procedure work? Let me be a little bit more specific. First, did you have money, or was this strictly a barter-type operation?

Reed: Well, there wasn't much bartering, because we were sort of behind the eight ball as far as bartering. They named their price, and we either had to pay it, or we didn't get anything and somebody else got it.

The procedure usually, as I recall, involved a vendor who would come up in the area. He would go to the Jap guard who was in charge, who was a corporal or a sergeant, maybe. Not normally a sergeant, but mostly a corporal or a first class private or something. He would get permission from that guard to sell his wares to the prisoners. Then the prisoners were so informed, if the guard decided it was okay, and they

would come over one at a time, and we'd buy what they had.

As far as having money, yes, we had money. A lot of guys had money stashed away, hidden in different spots. I think I had about $200 when I was captured. It wasn't until we had been in Bicycle Camp for a while that I ran out of money and had to sell my watch to get some more money. Most everybody had money at that time, or some money. We weren't getting paid like we were later on in the jungle.

Marcello: I gather that the natives would take any kind of money. You were using American money, of course.

Reed: That's what we had, was American money. The exchange then was four to one.

Marcello: What do you mean when you say the exchange was four to one?

Reed: I take it back. It was ten to one. Ten cents American money made one tiko in Javanese. Yes, it was ten cents--ten to one. After you were out for a while, they would take American money quick. It wasn't long until we were doing business with tikos.

Marcello: What would you normally purchase from the natives?

Reed: Tobacco, sugar, coffee when we could get it, tea.

Marcello: Didn't they have anything that would be more useful to you in terms of food? You know, it is nice to have coffee and tea and sugar and things like that,but wasn't there any other kind of food available that you could get from them?

Reed: Yes, there was. They had particular vegetables, fish, but it wasn't something that you could buy with any assurance that you weren't going to get poisoned when you ate it. There was a little fear in the respect that if you bought some of that fish or something that it was bad . . . and the vegetables.

Marcello: Wasn't sweet and condensed milk a big item?

Reed: It was a big popular item, yes. Eagle Brand condensed milk. Yes, we used to make candy out of that by putting a can of condensed milk in the fire and letting it cook without opening the can. Then when you opened it, it was like eating caramel--very good.

One thing you asked: "Why did you buy coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco?" We were being furnished with a little watery stew and a little rice, and there was no sugar, no coffee, no tea. Well, we had a tea of sorts. It tasted like the dickens. These things we didn't have, and the only way you could get them was to buy them. You'd be surprised that after you're there for a while . . . for instance, eating. In your first meal you get in your mess gear some rice and then in your canteen cup a little watery stew, and you get back to your place that you sleep and you eat it.

The rice is full of worms and weevils; the stew has weevils and worms in it. You sit there with that very first

of the meal, and you pick out all the worms and all the weevils. The weevils are floating on top, so they're easy to pick out of the stew, but in the rice you have to dig down. The worms are white and about as long as a grain of rice, so it is hard to see them. The only way you could recognize them was the little head on them. You would have to pick those worms out . . . well, not have to.

This is where I was telling you . . . from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp the food deteriorated. We looked at this rice and said, "This is wormy and there's weevils in this rice!" I picked them out. I would sit there and pick every one out, and by the time I got through picking them out, the food was ice cold and tasted like hell. It didn't taste very good to start with, but when it was ice cold it was really bad--but I ate it.

Finally it wasn't a matter of picking out anything. You just looked that old worm in the eye and chewed him up and swallowed him. The weevils floating around on your stew, you would just drink them on down and could care less. It was a matter of getting adjusted to that, so when you get that condition as to your food, you're past that picky stage, as far as the food is concerned, and so the food is pretty good. I mean, it wasn't good--it was lousy--but you didn't think about it. You knew that food was waiting for you when you

got back, with all the worms and everything in it, but at least it was food.

Consequently, your thoughts turned to sugar, sweets, because you didn't have any, and you desired them quite a bit. Tobacco, if you were a smoker. Sometimes it was more important to smoke a cigarette than it was to eat a meal. It gets ridiculous, yes, but, hell, that's human beings. You get established today on something, and if you're deprived of that particular item, you get madder than the dickens about it and upset, and you really want it more.

I remember I went to work for a company, when I was in business, that did not permit smoking in the offices or in their plant anywhere. I didn't smoke a whole lot, but when they told me that I couldn't smoke in my office--I had my own private office, and I couldn't even smoke in my own office--it really upset me. I wanted a cigarette <u>every</u> minute of <u>every</u> day. If they'd have said,"You can smoke any time you want to," I probably wouldn't have wanted a cigarette nearly as bad.

This is what happened in prison. Once we were deprived of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, then we wanted it more and more.

Of course, sex. Everybody was going around, and you couldn't carry on a conversation where there wasn't a female involved. There'd be reminiscing about the girls you'd

screwed back home and tales. Some guys would lay it on real thick. They'd had every gal in the hometown where they'd come from.

This was my first realization where I really became conscious of the fact that I was really just a dirty old prisoner-of-war, and I wasn't going to get nothing. It was really bad. The food, the conditions,the bashings, the beatings, the tortures, and everything that was taking place became a lot more prevalent.

Marcello: While we're on the subject of food, in terms of quantity were you receiving about the same amount here as you had in Tanjong Priok?

Reed: Yes. Quantity was about the same, but the quality deteriorated.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, after awhile you simply refused to pick out any of those worms and weevils. I've heard some people say that they used to wait until nighttime to eat the evening meal, and that way you couldn't see them.

Reed: I used to wait until nighttime,but that was about as ridiculous as picking them out, because the food was cold as crap then, and it wasn't very good. Rather than wasting your time picking out the worms, you would just wait until you couldn't see them, but that didn't make sense, and that didn't last very long.

I think there were more concoctions, more cooks, created

in that Bicycle Camp than any other place I could ever think of. The guys would come up with grinding the rice grains up in the flour, and they could make more different things out of that damn rice flour that they ground up and a little bit of sugar. Any pastry baker would have been absolutely flabbergasted as to the amount of concoctions that we came up with.

Marcello: I gather that as time goes on,food does become the major topic of conversation.

Reed: As time goes on, yes. The first thing was sex. There wasn't hardly an hour that went by during the day or night that sex wasn't into the conversation. You're right, later on sex began to dwindle out. It lost priority (chuckle), and food became the most important.

Marcello: From what I understand, there were always fires going in these various camps where somebody was cooking something, that is, individual fires and so on. I'm not sure this took place in Bicycle Camp, but this was certainly true when you get up into the jungle.

Reed: It took place in Bicycle Camp. That's what I was saying a while ago. There were so many cooks made there, because we were allowed to have our own little fires and our own little cooking area, and everybody used to have their own concoction. We used to make apple turnovers, if you can

imagine. Without any apples and flour, we made apple turnovers. They made things like peach cobbler without any peaches or cobbler (chuckle). It seems uncanny to sit and talk about it, and it seems ridiculous that you would call something like that apple turnovers or peach cobbler when there weren't any ingredients in there at all. It is camouflaged to the point of where by exerting your imagination just a tiny bit you could really make a good peach cobbler out of it.

Marcello: Where did you get such things as matches and fuel for these fires?

Reed: Some guys still had their cigarette lighters--Zippos--and their cans of fluid. We hadn't really been stripped of all our belongings at that time, and we were still smuggling in stuff quite a bit. I hadn't even thought about where we got our matches to build a fire. We must have had them, though, because they were built all the time.

Marcello: When you first entered Bicycle Camp, and maybe even when you were back in Tanjong Priok, company funds were also being used to purchase food, were they not?

Reed: Now that you brought it up, I remember, yes. Company funds were being used. I'd forgotten that.

Marcello: How did that process work? Do you recall? I've heard it said that if somebody was going on a work detail, he could draw company funds up to a certain amount, and then he could

use that money to buy food and so on on the outside. Then that would be brought back to a common point and shared by everybody. Do you recall the procedure working something like that?

Reed: I really don't recall the procedure. I know that as far as the Medical Detachment was concerned, we didn't have any company funds, so that's probably why I don't remember. We didn't participate in any of that. It was strictly company funds. Like, D, E, and F Batteries and Service Battery and Headquarters Battery, they participated in things like that. We didn't have anything like that at all.

Marcello: You mentioned E Battery here. Was E Battery with you here in Bicycle Camp?

Reed: Well, no. No, I mentioned E Battery, because I'd forgotten about E Battery going to the other end of the island.

Marcello: I've also heard it said that there was a rumor floating around that the officers were using a great deal of this company money for their own commissary, and they were not sharing with the enlisted men. Had you ever heard that?

Reed: Yes, I'd heard it, and I believed it, too. Although I can't say that I was ever close enough to the situation to verify it or factualize that. I know that the officers had a great deal more than we did. I don't think they should have worked it that way, but there again that's the old standard that was

in the service, you know. The officers got more and deserved more than the enlisted men.

Marcello: What sort of effect did a rumor like this have among the enlisted men? Did it affect the relationship between the enlisted men and the officers? Do you recall?

Reed: As I recall, I'm sure it had a great deal of effect. After Bicycle Camp and as we started up into Singapore, an awful lot of respect for the officers was lost, and a lot of tension increased between the officers and the enlisted men, and some pretty bad arguments came up. It seems to me like there was a fight or two between the officers and the enlisted men.

Marcello: Did this situation begin with this business concerning the use of company funds to buy food?

Reed: I don't know if that's exactly where it begins. I can say that that contributed a great deal to the situation where the officers and men were growing apart from each other. I think another reason was that the officers did nothing, except Dr. Lumpkin or the other doctors that were there. The other officers didn't do a darn thing. They just sat around and read books and lounged around.

When you're in a situation like that, you know, a person's mind begins to turn quickly: "This guy over here isn't a damn bit better than I am. We're all in this

together, and this old officer-enlisted man relationship crap is blown out the window at this point in time when all of us, in the eyes of the Japanese, are just another human body going by, and we're not anything particularly special." To maintain this, sure, there were a lot of ill feelings about it. As a matter of fact, I think those feelings still exist a great deal at our convention.

Marcello: I was going to more or less bring this situation up to date. Do you get very many officers attending your annual convention?

Reed: We get about six or eight at a convention. Now, there are some officers that have always been to a convention, and they have pretty well just been one of the guys. Even today, most of them are not invited to some private functions within the convention that somebody's having, such as they are having a little party down at so-and-so's room. They are not invited down there, and they're not included in on some of the things. There are one or two--I know I can think of two, but I can't remember any more right now--that I don't even think of as having been an officer. They have associated with us for so long and proved themselves to be one of us--I'm talking about enlisted men--that I don't even think of them as officers. I see officers today at a convention, and I am glad to see them, and I say hello to them. That is the end of it, and I don't have anything to do with them from there on.

Marcello: What were the Japanese guards like here in Bicycle Camp?

Reed: This is the first place that we came in contact with the Koreans, who served as the occupational servicemen for the Japanese Army. The Koreans, we found out almost immediately, are sadists. They are mean, and they had a tremendous inferiority complex. They loved to use overbearing, forceful tactics on us to overcome their inferiority complex. That is my psychoanalysis for those particular individuals. Like I said, on top of it, they were sadists.

Marcello: I guess, to begin with, the Japanese perhaps considered them almost on the same level as the prisoners. The Japanese more or less held them in contempt, too,did they not?

Reed: They held them in contempt. I don't know whether they put them on the same level as the prisoners. They didn't like each other. That was for sure. The Japanese felt that the Korean was a real peon. In other words, he was down the scale as far as importance was concerned--about as far as you could go. They treated them pretty rough, too. Some of the Koreans fought back, and when they did they really got into it.

The one thing that was extremely noticeable was that a Korean, when he became in a situation where he could be in charge of a group of prisoners, it went to his head. Like you said, if a Jap beat him up, he would probably beat up

half of the prisoners that he was in charge with just to show that he could do it and that he wasn't as inferior as that Jap made him look like he was when everybody was watching him get beat up.

Marcello: What form would the physical harassment by the Koreans take? In other words, how would they go about punishing the prisoners?

Reed: Well, verbal abuse, although we didn't really know what they were calling them or saying to them. They would slap them.

Marcello: Let me rephrase my question, because I think you're describing the treatment of the Japanese toward the Koreans. What I want to know is, how did the Koreans treat the Americans. What form did the Korean's punishment toward the Americans take?

Reed: Oh, this was the whole ball of wax. In Bicycle Camp this was the first experience that we had that the Koreans started in on the torture, such as putting a two- or three-inch bamboo pole behind a man's knees and having him kneeling down, and then kneel on down over that pole for hours; or stand at attention with his arms straight out for hours, not being able to put his arms down; standing in the sun without any clothes on for hours; going without food.

Marcello: Now, would these forms of punishment take place for just very, very small infractions of the rules?

Reed: Yes, I'd say that they did. Of course, some of them came from a guy trying to bring something in from through the gate and getting caught. When I say something, I don't mean a weapon of any kind, but I mean something to eat or drink. In other words, they collected everything a person had, such as pocketknives and radios--anything of value. If they ever caught you with that particular item, they would bash you pretty bad or torture you. This torture was the first time that we'd run across the "hot box."

Marcello: What was the "hot box?"

Reed: If you saw the "Bridge Over the River Kwai," you saw that old guy that was acting as the colonel there. He got put in the "hot box," which is a metal box. It wasn't large enough but to sit up in, and that was all; you couldn't lie down or stand up. You stayed there for several days.

This Australian brigadier was put in that "hot box" until he gave the order for everyone to sign this pledge that the Japanese had issued that we would not escape. It was a pledge that said that we would not escape, and we had to sign our name. Well, the Australian brigadier who was in charge there at Bicycle Camp refused and told everybody in the camp to refuse. So they put him in the "hot box," which was futile, because as far as I was concerned, and many others were, to sign a pledge as a prisoner-of-war

was absolutely null and void the minute you signed it, because it didn't mean anything.

Marcello: Okay, we'll come back and talk about that in a minute, but let's continue on with the various forms of physical punishment here. I'm still kind of curious about this "hot box." Again, what infraction would one have to commit in order to be put in the "hot box?"

Reed: Disobeying the Japanese orders, stealing from the Japanese, hitting one of the Japanese or Koreans. I can't think of any more right offhand.

Marcello: What infractions would one have to commit in order to have to lean on the bamboo pole for an extended length of time, or kneel on the pole?

Reed: That was usually done if they were caught with something when they were caught with something when they were searched coming through the gate after a working party. That was the way they'd do it. That was the torture that they would use for that particular infraction, trying to smuggle something in through the gate.

They had another one where you knelt down . . . I'm trying to think . . . I can't recall it. I'll think of it after awhile, maybe.

They used another one later on down the line, up in Burma, where a Korean would cover your face with a towel

and pour water on that towel. You either had to breathe the water or swallow it, because after it was wet it clung to your face, and you couldn't get any air. The only way you could get any air was to swallow the water fast enough to permit air to get in there so you could breathe. After quite a few pitchers of water, you had swallowed so much water that your stomach was beginning to swell up to a pretty good size. Then they'd get up on a stool or something a little higher, about the height of a regular chair, and jump off with both feet on your stomach and make the water gush back out your mouth. I don't recall them using that at Bicycle Camp, but that was one of the tortures that was done down the line.

Marcello: I assume that the prisoners had names for all of the Korean guards--nicknames.

Reed: Oh, yes, all of them were named.

Marcello: Can you remember any of the nicknames?

Reed: "Nigger Lips" was one of them. Oh, gosh, I can't recall right now, but I wish I could.

Marcello: Did you have the "Brown Bomber" here?

Reed: The "Brown Bomber" was in Bicycle Camp. There was a time when I could have told you all those damn nicknames. Have you gotten very many nicknames from other prisoners?

Marcello: Yes. Generally speaking, did most of the physical punishment

take the form of hitting with fists and slapping?

Reed: Yes, quite a bit. They usually carried a club with them to do the bashing with. They used their fists or open hands. I was hit with a Samurai sword while it was still in the scabbard. I wasn't hit with the sword itself, but I was hit several times about the head with the sword and scabbard.

Marcello: Was this done at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: It was done most everyplace. They used that sword quite a bit. They used rifle butts, and, as I told you earlier, they used bayonets quite a bit.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were hit with the scabbard from the sword. Did this particular incident occur at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: No, this occurred later on.

Marcello: Were you ever beat around here at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: I was bashed once, slapped around. I wasn't bashed, just slapped around.

Marcello: Describe this incident.

Reed: Well, I don't know whether it was the "Brown Bomber" or one of the other bastards that came in there, but he was looking for some individual. He walked up to me and asked me where that individual was, and I said I did not know. He hauled off and started slapping me around. I didn't even know where the guy was. I had no idea.

He finished with me and he went to the next guy and asked

him the same question. If he didn't tell him, then he bashed him around.

Marcello: I understand that, if possible, it was best not to fall down when they were hitting you.

Reed: Yes. It seems to me like that was a real "no-no," was to go to your knees or fall down. If you stood up straight and took it, they were apt to quit sooner.

Marcello: Is it not true that from time to time, as a form of punishment, they would have the prisoners slap each other?

Reed: (Chuckle) Yes. I'd forgotten about that. You had to hit hard, and if you didn't hit hard, they would really whop you a good one with a rifle butt or a stick or something. You really had to lower the boom on the next guy.

Marcello: Awhile ago in our conversation, you were talking about the non-escape pledge that the Japanese attempted to have all the prisoners sign. Describe this incident.

Reed: The only thing that I can recall is that the Japanese came through all the barracks, and they had this piece of paper, which they handed out one to everybody in there. They were Koreans; I keep calling them Japanese. They evidently had gone to the Australian commander and told him that they wanted all the prisoners to sign this pledge. He told them, as I understand--I wasn't there--that he would not and he would not order his men to do it, that anyone that signed it

had to sign it out of his own prerogative or ingenuity or whatever. So the word was sent down from the brigadier through our officers that we would not sign it. It seems to me like we were given until the next morning, and that's when they threw him in the "hot box."

Marcello: Did they ever threaten any of your officers if they didn't order their men to sign it?

Reed: I believe they did, yes.

Marcello: Do you remember having signed a document eventually?

Reed: I did.

Marcello: And what was the rationale? In other words, why did it not make any difference if you signed the document?

Reed: Well, in my own mind, after a brigadier had been in the "hot box" for three or four days . . . and there were quite a few bashings going on amongst the other prisoners. They didn't come in and confront me directly, but they did several, and they bashed them. They picked on the officers mainly. I reasoned out at that time that this was extremely foolish to refuse to sign this thing, because I didn't feel that my signature meant a darn thing while I was a prisoner-of-war. Or anything that I pledged to meant absolutely nothing. I could sign a dozen pledges that I wouldn't escape, or I wouldn't do this or that, and that didn't mean I wasn't going to do it. The first chance I got I would darn sure do it! If I didn't

have the opportunity, I wouldn't; but if I did have the opportunity, I would. That's the way I felt about it. I could sign them all day long. What would they do to me over and above what they wouldn't do to me if I did or didn't sign it?

Marcello: In other words, you would have been signing this under duress?

Reed: Under duress, you know. If you escaped, they automatically shot you. That was the foregoing conclusion. If you escaped, they caught you, they brought you back, and they shot you. That was done many, many times.

Marcello: Was it done many times?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Among the Americans?

Reed: No. It was done to other prisoners-of-war, though. They made no bones about it. If you escaped, you were caught, and you were shot. If I signed a pledge or I didn't sign a pledge and I escaped, and I was brought back and shot, what was the difference whether I did or I didn't sign the pledge? You know, you're going to get the same treatment no matter what.

Marcello: Was there much talk among the Americans about possibly attempting an escape?

Reed: Oh, yes, there was talk.

Marcello: Talk's cheap.

Reed: Talk's cheap, yes. It never got to the point where anybody

came up with a real concrete plan on how to do it. Actually, it wasn't even attempted until we got up in the jungle.

Marcello: Escape was rather futile, because obviously you couldn't blend in with the native population. You had virtually no chance once you got outside the prison camp, anyway.

Reed: No, you couldn't. You couldn't hide. You couldn't get out in the open, and you couldn't travel. Like I said earlier, the natives could be bought off with very little money. Consequently, you had no chance. What's the old saying? "Little and none" or something like that.

Marcello: Your chances were slim to none.

Reed: Actually, ours was none to none, really. We had no chance to get out of there. You would have had to get into what was created over in France and Germany when they had the underground operation going on to get people out. Getting natives to that level of intelligence was impossible.

Marcello: What sort of news were you hearing from the outside world?

Reed: We had a radio. We heard about the Coral Sea Battle. I don't remember where we were at the time. Somebody . . . I think Cates had the radio.

Marcello: This is Captain Cates?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Of course, the radio would have had to have been kept secretly, would it not?

Reed: Oh, yes. It was taken apart and smuggled every time we changed camps.

Marcello: How was the news passed around?

Reed: By word-of-mouth.

Marcello: I assume that you never actually saw the radio yourself. You only knew it existed.

Reed: No, I never saw it. I knew it existed, but I never saw it.

Marcello: I guess you really didn't want to know where it was.

Reed: No, I really didn't. Do you know that a radio was still being smuggled as long as to the very last camp that we were in? That's really getting away with it, I'll tell you.

Marcello: And, also, I would assume that in a camp this large, there are people with all kinds of skills who can put together something such as a radio or who can find or make substitute parts for a radio and things of that nature. There are a lot of skills in this camp, are there not?

Reed: Yes. A lot of people carried a lot of parts. I say a lot of parts, there were people carrying parts of all kinds. In other words, I don't know how many radios actually started out. Quite a few, I guess. They were taken apart piece by piece and smuggled. The parts were distributed amongst quite a few different people. Like, I'd carry a radio tube with me, and that's the only thing that I would have. But when it was called upon to be used, then I cough it up.

Marcello: What was the punishment if one were caught with a radio?

Reed: Well, I don't recall anybody getting caught with a radio, but I suspect that the punishment would have probably been the "hot box" at the very least, and possible death.

Marcello: Why take a chance then?

Reed: Well, that's the nature of Americans.

Marcello: In other words, would you take these risks just because it might perhaps give you the opportunity to put something over on your captors, so to speak? This was something that you could get away with?

Reed: No, I don't think so. I know, in my own mind, the reason I thought it was so important to carry a radio and to keep smuggling it from one camp to another, and taking the chances of turning it on and listening to the broadcast . . . in other words, if the situation ever came up where the Allies were so close, the American forces were so close, that we might be in jeopardy to be where we were due to bombardment, bombings, etc., any type of gunfire from the Americans, from our own Allies, if we knew that the circumstance was there, we could overpower the guards real quick and make a break for it--if we knew the forces were close enough to where we could get to them. It was a futile idea to overpower the guards, which we could have done any time, because we knew we couldn't go anywhere after we overpowered them, because there wasn't anyplace

to go. But that possible situation, I felt, warranted a radio, and I thought most everybody felt that same way.

Marcello: How long were you going to be a prisoner-of-war at this stage?

Reed: Just a couple of months. A couple of more months. We'd hear about the Coral Sea Battle--I brought that up awhile ago--so, "The Americans are on their way! They'll be here in a matter of just a month or so!" We didn't even know the Americans weren't even thinking about coming over there. It sounded good at the time.

Marcello: I assume the camps were always one big rumor mill.

Reed: Oh, yes! Oh, yes!

Marcello: Somebody always had the "inside word."

Reed: And you're inclined to believe every rumor, whether you knew . . . most of the time they proved false, and you knew they proved false, but you'd still believe every darn one.

Marcello: What did you do for recreation here at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: Nothing. I can't recall any recreation . . . wait a minute. There might have been a volleyball squad there. Yes, I think there was, and we played some chess. The Dutch command was in the camp right next to us. Well, it was the same camp, but there was a fence there. Actually, we played chess with the Dutchmen. They had the chess sets; we didn't have any.

Marcello: Were there ever any theatrical performances or anything of that nature?

Reed: I don't recall any at Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Did you have free movement from one nationality's compound to another one?

Reed: No. Like, the Dutch were across that fence. We could talk to them through the fence, but we couldn't go over there.

Marcello: Was this also the same with the Australians and English or anybody like that?

Reed: That's true, yes.

Marcello: I gather that the longer one stays in these prison camps, one has a tendency to become a scavenger. In other words, any object lying around, no matter how inconsequential at the time, will be picked up by the prisoner and saved because it might be of some use later on as some sort of an implement or as a trading article or something like that.

Reed: Yes, I would say that was very true, except it was extremely rare that you ever ran across anything that you felt that you could use at a later time.

Marcello: One of the things that I keep thinking of is the car that was parked there in Bicycle Camp when you first went in. I understand it didn't take too long until virtually every part of that car had been stripped or cut out and used by one person or another.

Reed: Right. Gosh, I don't recall all the things they were used for.

Marcello: Well, the hubcaps were used for plates and pots and so on.

Reed: They were used for mess gear, yes. I know they stripped that car.

Marcello: Evidently, the people off the Houston were good at making things.

Reed: Yes. You see, they had nothing, so they had to make do. That's one thing I didn't give up. I had my mess gear and my canteen, and I didn't share that. I had that all the way through. Then I threw it away in Bangkok just before I came home. Why, I'll never know. Anyhow, they had to make something to eat with and eat out of--any kind of metal or anything that they could use to make them something.

Marcello: Generally speaking, how is the health of the prisoners holding up here in Bicycle Camp? Is everybody still in fairly good shape yet?

Reed: I would say yes. At what time we were working in the hospital, there was some sickness. There didn't seem to be any pronounced malnutrition or vitamin deficiencies showing up at this time.

Marcello: Nobody is working too hard yet, either.

Reed: No, it wasn't really hard labor. I would say that generally the health was still pretty good.

Marcello: The doctors, I would assume, still had enough medicine that they could still handle some of the minor or routine cases.

Reed: Right. Actually, like I said, in Bicycle Camp there were quite a few operations done.

Marcello: What did you use for anesthetics in these operations?

Reed: They still had . . . I can't recall . . . I think they still had a little ether left. Mostly, they were giving spinal blocks at that time. I know that I was in on one appendectomy, and there was a spinal block, with Dr. Lumpkin.

Marcello: In October of 1942, the first contingents begin to leave Bicycle Camp. According to my records the first group leaves around October 2nd. When did you leave? And do you recall the circumstances surrounding your departure?

Reed: I don't really remember.

Marcello: Did you leave with some of the first groups?

Reed: I think I was with the first group, but I'm not too sure of that.

Marcello: The first group was called the "Fitzsimmons Bunch." Were you with them?

Reed: No, I was with the next group.

Marcello: I think it was the larger group, then, that you were with.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Did they prepare you for this move? In other words, did you know some days or weeks in advance that you would be leaving Bicycle Camp?

Reed: We knew in advance that we were going to leave, but how many days before, I can't recall. I know that we were informed that we were going to be moved. We left Bicycle Camp and went back out to Tanjong Priok.

Marcello: Were you given any instructions before your move, that is, in terms of what you could take with you and that sort of thing?

Reed: Yes, that's true. We were informed--although we didn't have very much--that only certain items would be permissible. In other words, I think it dwindled down to one blanket, one pair of shoes, one shirt, one pair of pants, one mess gear--things like that.

Marcello: Was it upsetting to leave Bicycle Camp? In other words, you had been there from May until October. Had you been getting into some sort of a routine that you didn't necessarily want to give up? Did it make any difference to you whether you left or remained at Bicycle Camp?

Reed: I don't recall it making any difference to me whether I was there or whether I'd moved on. It was a bad, bad camp in my estimation, although it wasn't nearly as bad as we were going to get into later, but I had no way of knowing that.

Marcello: In other words, what you're saying is that, based upon your experiences in Bicycle Camp, wherever they sent you, it couldn't be any worse?

Reed: At that time,that's what I believed. I felt like we could better ourselves. I didn't see how they could get any worse. Of course, I didn't know very much, either.

Marcello: In summary, what made Bicycle Camp so bad for you?

Reed: Well, it was the first camp, as I had stated earlier, where our food deteriorated tremendously. Our living conditions deteriorated; our medicines were running out. There were bashings and tortures everyday, every hour of the day and night. The living conditions were much worse than what we had experienced prior.

For instance, the tea plantation was no big deal. Tanjong Priok resembled, I think, more what we had in our minds of being a prisoner-of-war camp. Bicycle Camp became, in my mind, a house for all kinds of torture and starvation--a really, really bad situation.

Marcello: Up until this point, had the Japanese ever processed you at all? In other words, were they keeping any records on the individual prisoners? Did they assign you a number, if nothing else? Did they take names and serial numbers?

Reed: They did take names and serial numbers.

Marcello: Was that done back in Bicycle Camp or back in Tanjong Priok?

Reed: I think it was in . . . since I'm a little confused there, it must have been both places.

Marcello: How did you get from Bicycle Camp to Tanjong Priok? Did you go in trucks again, or did you march?

Reed: No, we went in trucks that time.

Marcello: Describe the ship that you were about to board.

Reed: It was an old, beat-up freighter.

Marcello: Do you remember the name of it?

Reed: Dai Nichi Maru. Paint peeling off of it, rusted pretty bad, It was a black bottom with white above the water line . . . no, no. It only had about a five- or six-foot white stripe around it. I'm not a sailor, but whatever the rail is that goes around the ship. It had white upper structures and a black stack, as I recall. It was really a pitiful-looking ship.

Marcello: Where did they put you aboard the ship?

Reed: I was about on the third . . . I'm sure you've had this described before. They built in the hold of the ship . . . it was a freighter, so most of the ship was for cargo carrying. In these cargo carriers, which you call the hold areas, they had built tiers out of wood, starting at the bottom; and every three feet they built another platform or tier on up to the very top of the hold. Then they had ladders going down these tiers, which you climbed down. The very first ones on the ship climbed down in the hold, both fore and aft. I think there were four holds on the ship. You climb down in the hold, and, like I said, if you were the first one on, you went to the bottom, and you filled up that tier on both sides. The opening was in the center of the ship. Then you kept filling up these tiers, and they considered that you had filled one up when everybody that could get in there in a

sitting-down position with their knees up. That's as many as they could get in this position. Then they started filling up the next tier, and they kept going on up. I was about the third or fourth tier from the top, about mid-way between the center and the side of the ship.

Marcello: In other words, when you were down in that hold, you did not have enough room either to stand up or lay down in a normal position.

Reed: That's correct. You had to lay across each other to lay down.

Marcello: If you laid down, arms and legs were intermingled and tangled, so to speak.

Reed: Yes. We had to figure it out to where we could put our legs across somebody else's body and put our arms over or down to our sides, with our head resting on the next guy's back or abdomen or shoulders or hip or legs or whatever. We got it all rigged up to where we all could lay down, but we were laying down across each other and on each other.

Marcello: This is where, I'm sure, discipline became kind of important. Otherwise, things could degenerate to mob activity here.

Reed: Oh, yes. It was to the point of where I don't know how long we could have stayed in the hold of that ship. We had no access to go up on top, except with special permission to go to the head, which were nothing but outhouses built out over the side of the ship. When you sat on the damn plank up there

with the hole in it to go take a crap or whatever, you were out over the ship, and it was straight down to the water from there. You had to either hold it until you got the opportunity to go up, or you would go right there where you're sitting. A lot of guys did go right there where they were sitting. One thing you were always mindful of, you were only sitting on planks. To urinate would mean that the guys down below, on the tiers below, were going to get it, which happened.

Mindful of that fact--and you mentioned discipline--you really had to discipline yourself to hold it as long as you possibly could or just pop! You didn't want anybody above you doing the same thing, and you wouldn't want to do it to the guys below. To take a crap right in your britches there was no big thing. Of course, some guys were sick, and they couldn't help themselves.

Marcello: I guess you were fortunate in that more of you did not have dysentery at this stage.

Reed: Yes, extremely fortunate, or I'm afraid the situation would have gotten completely out of hand. As far as discipline, yes, everybody worked right together. We worked and planned it all and helped each other.

Marcello: The stench must have been something else, considering the sweaty bodies and people urinating and everything else that

went on.

Reed: Well, it was very much like all the rest of it. You got used to it. It was bad and then pretty soon it wasn't so bad anymore.

Marcello: What was the temperature like down there?

Reed: Very, very hot. You were perspiring constantly.

Marcello: I would assume that the air was foul and stale. The farther down you went or the farther back on that tier you got, the harder it was to breathe, literally.

Reed: Fortunately, like I said, I was on the third to fourth tier from the top. I was extremely fortunate to be the one that ended up there, because for the ones way down in the bottom of the hold, ventilation down there was almost nil, and they suffered tremendously down there. The stench was much greater.

Marcello: Did you witness anybody actually going berserk in those conditions, where they couldn't control themselves?

Reed: It seems to me like there was one guy, and I can't think who he was now. They had to get him out and get him up on top. There was more than one. I don't recall the incident too well now. At that time, you were so damned uncomfortable and so concerned and so cramped and hurting from sitting in one position for so long that what was happening all around didn't register that great. Not to me, anyhow, and I was being selfish, I suppose. All I could think about was, "Goddamn,

I wish my time would come around so I could get up on top!" You know, you were only up there for five minutes, and then they'd make you come right back down again, but that five minutes was sheer delight, something else!

Marcello: What provisions did the Japanese make for feeding the prisoners while they were down in the hold of this ship?

Reed: Well, we did not eat on the bottom, I don't believe. Then again, I remember having some meals down in the spot where we ate, but we had to go up on top to get it. No! Damn, I don't remember. You know, I don't remember that.

Marcello: I had heard that the food was lowered down into the hold, and then it was distributed down in the hold.

Reed: I swear I don't recall how in the devil we got fed. I do recall sitting and eating down in the hold.

Marcello: How about water? Did they supply any water, or did you have just what you had carried aboard with you?

Reed: They supplied water one time on the voyage, I think.

Marcello: How long were you on board the Dai Nichi Maru altogether?

Reed: Three days, I believe.

Marcello: Fortunately, you were not on that ship too long.

Reed: Fortunately! Like I said, I don't know how long we could have lasted if we'd have stayed on there any longer. I'm sure we would have lasted but just a matter of days.

Marcello: Now, from Tanjong Priok you go aboard the Dai Nichi Maru,

which takes you to Changi Village, which is really on Singapore.

Reed: Singapore Island. Yes, we went through Singapore.

Marcello: Describe what Changi Village looked like from a physical standpoint.

Reed: It was very much like the other camps--something like Bicycle Camp, as far as the types of buildings used. It is still the white with the red tile roofs. Actually, as you entered Changi Village and looked around, it was a very large English camp at one time.

Marcello: I guess even at this time there were 50,000 or 60,000 prisoners there altogether, weren't there?

Reed: I don't really know how many were there, but it was a big, huge camp with a tremendous amount of fortifications for that time. The buildings looked great. We thought, "Man, this is going to be some kind of place to be in," because looking at it from afar, it looked very much like, as I described to to you, Suva in the Fiji Islands. It was very picturesque and had good-looking buildings, and it looked like it had quite a few facilities. It didn't turn out that way. It wasn't anything like that after we got to living there.

Marcello: Describe what the barracks were like on the inside.

Reed: Like those in Bicycle Camp--very bare, cold,concrete masonry all the way.

Marcello: Did you have beds as such?

Reed: No. We just slept on the concrete or rigged a hammock. You did whatever you could. There were some materials you could build you a bed out of if you wanted to. I think there were some old scrubby cots that were available to those that wanted them, which everybody made a mad rush for to get. The ones of us that were successful in getting them didn't keep them but one night, and we threw them away right quick because they were just ridden with bedbugs. They were old wooden cots, and they were made out of the size lumber like four-by-fours. They were in those joints where the railings joined the headboard and the footboard; they were just crammed full of bedbugs. They would come out at night and just eat you alive! What we came to find out was that there were bedbugs all over those barracks! They were in those buildings; they were all in the walls and the floors, everywhere. It finally resorted to most everybody rigging them up a hammock to get away from the bedbugs. You couldn't sleep; they were biting on you all night long.

Marcello: What kind of work did you do here at Changi? Of course, we have to remember that you were not really here too long.

Reed: We were in Changi four . . .

Marcello: A couple or three months?

Reed: It seems to me like we were there . . . I was thinking four

but maybe not that long, I was still working as a medic sometimes. Yes, I was working as a medic there in Changi.

Marcello: What was the so-called hospital like here at Changi?

Reed: I never did see one. There was one there, but I never did see it. I never did get over to it. I was working with Dr. Lumpkin there in what you could loosely call an aid station.

Marcello: Again, were most of your cases here rather routine?

Reed: This was the first point that we really started getting evidence of pellagra, symptoms of malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies, which is pellagra. So that was beginning to show up and causing concern. Malaria hadn't hit us at that time.

Marcello: Was there anything you could do for the vitamin deficiencies?

Reed: Yes. We talked the Koreans out of the polishings off of rice. Most of the vitamin deficiencies came from the B-complex, and the rice polishings did have the B-complex vitamins in them. Did you ever see rice polishings? It is powder, just brown powder. You take a spoon of it and put it in your mouth, and you try to swallow it. Did you ever try to swallow powder? It is very difficult to swallow until your saliva gets mixed up with it enough to where you can make a ball out of it and have some constringence about it to where you can swallow it. Otherwise, it is nothing. You try to swallow it and nothing goes down. It was a matter of that or taking it and mixing

it with water and drinking it. Most of us either took just a spoonful of it each day, or we sprinkled it on our rice and ate it like that.

Marcello: What else were you getting here to eat besides rice?

Reed: Well, they did have some vegetable farms there, and we got a few vegetables, not many. Then, of course, we got some mutton there. It seems like the British had stocked up a tremendous amount of mutton on Singapore Island in their fortifications. We did get some mutton and the inevitable rice. We got a few vegetables out of those vegetable gardens that we were farming. Some of the guys went down and worked in the vegetable gardens. As a matter of fact, most of them did.

Marcello: It was at Changi where relations between the Americans and the British really began to deteriorate, isn't that correct?

Reed: I think that's where we actually came in with the bulk of the British. We didn't know very many of them up until that time.

Marcello: Describe what caused the antagonism between the Americans and the British here at Changi.

Reed: Well, as best as I can remember, the British are prone to have a superiority complex over anybody and everybody. This doesn't set too well with Americans. An American doesn't believe there is any superiority anywhere. You couple that with the personal hygiene of the British, and I guess most of it

developed out of the fact that they felt that they were the supreme command of the island, and everybody should do exactly what the British thought they should do.

Marcello: Can you elaborate on this a little bit? In other words, is it not true that the Japanese virtually allowed the British to run this camp?

Reed: Yes, that's true.

Marcello: Obviously, the Japanese were in overall control, but as long as things went okay within the camp, the Japanese didn't interfere too much, and the British were running things within the camp.

Reed: That's true. You know, with Singapore Island surrounded by water, they consequently didn't have a whole lot of fear of anybody escaping.

Marcello: The British let you know very, very quickly who was running the camp.

Reed: Yes. You hit real close to the problem that I was trying to explain awhile ago. The British had been given this authority by the Japanese, and we thought they took advantage of it. I don't know whether they did this in their regular army or not, but they were the supreme power, and they wanted you and everybody to look up to them as the supreme power. Here we are and here is this whole thing coming up again--we're all prisoners-of-war. Sure, it's only good sense to have

certain people who are leaders, but not as a dictatorial-type leadership. They ran Changi Village as a dictatorship.

Marcello: I've heard some Americans say that the British were not very fair in their distribution of food, either.

Reed: No, that's true. Of course, the Americans were "Johnny come lately's," so consequently they didn't get much of the rations.

Marcello: Do you remember the incident involving the "King's coconuts?"

Reed: No, I don't.

Marcello: Had you heard about it?

Reed: I don't recall hearing about it.

Marcello: This was when the Americans were actually climbing the coconut trees and taking the coconuts, and the British soldiers tried to stop them.

Reed: Right. I remember it. I don't remember what happened, but I remember the incident.

Marcello: Awhile ago,we were talking about the unsanitary conditions in the British camp. In what way were the British less sanitary than the Americans?

Reed: Well, I have already mentioned their personal hygiene. They didn't seem to want to take care of their own bodies. Also, they were not too concerned about how the food was. In other words, their food was dirty; their area was dirty; their buildings were dirty. You can imagine . . . and I've heard all my life that nothing draws bedbugs like filth. All those

buildings were absolutely just ridden with bedbugs. That can give you an idea of how filthy the damn buildings were and their facilities. They didn't take care of the toilet facilities; they were always dirty. You take a person who you can look at and be around and he's dirty, he has dirty thoughts, filthy thoughts, and he's overlording you with his superiority. I suppose that sums it up as to the attitude of the British and the conflicts that developed between the Americans and the British.

Marcello: Battery E passed through here on their way to Japan, did they not?

Reed: I don't really know. I didn't know they did. I thought they went right up through the Celebes and Borneo and went on in that way. I didn't know they went on up this way.

Marcello: On January 9, 1943, you leave Singapore, and, of course, you are now on your way ultimately to Moulmein, Burma. You leave Singapore by train, go up the coast to Penang, which is sometimes called George Town, also. Describe this train trip from Singapore to Penang.

Reed: I don't remember a whole lot about it.

Marcello: Were you crowded on the boxcars or anything of that nature?

Reed: Yes. We were crowded on the boxcars, but that wasn't the real problem. I don't recall it being real bad crowded conditions that we had experienced later on. It seems to me like we were

hauled on boxcars from the old World War I days. I know we remarked when we were getting on them . . . they're small boxcars, and they have forty men . . . so many horses and forty men. I've forgotten when they called them. Do you recall?

Marcello: No, I sure don't.

Reed: They were small.

Marcello: Were these enclosed boxcars?

Reed: You know, I don't recall. I know we had ridden in cattle cars, and we rode in enclosed cars, but I don't remember if these were enclosed or the cattle cars.

Marcello: This was approximately a 500-mile trip. Do you remember how long it took?

Reed: No, I don't. I don't remember. I don't know much about that trip. I hadn't even thought about that trip.

Marcello: Okay, you get to Penang, and you board another ship there for the next leg of your journey to Moulmein. I believe at this stage the name of the ship is the Dai Moji Maru.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Describe what conditions were like aboard the Dai Moji Maru.

Reed: As I recall, it was a little cleaner ship than the Dai Nichi Maru. I don't think it was as large.

Marcello: Were you still down in the hold in tiers?

Reed: Yes, we were down in the hold, but not in tiers. We were

down in the hold of the ship. We were down in the bottom, and everybody was on the bottom. Now, it wasn't as large a ship, so the hold wasn't as deep. There were no tiers. Everybody just spread out on the floor on the steel deck underneath there. You had to stay in the hold; you couldn't get up on top at all.

Marcello: Not even to go to the head?

Reed: No. You went right there in the hold. You couldn't even go up on top or anything.

Marcello: Did very much air circulate?

Reed: Yes. They had the hold cover off, and it was better ventilated than the Dai Nichi Maru.

Marcello: How did you get fed aboard the Dai Moji Maru?

Reed: It was let down in the hold where we were.

Marcello: Then would it be distributed down in the hold?

Reed: Yes. You went by and got it like in the old chow lines.

Marcello: Basically, what kind of food were you getting here?

Reed: Same old thing. Well, I don't recall what kind of food, to tell you the truth. I don't recall. I think that bombing on board really blocked out everything else. I can't remember much about that damn ship, or how we were fed, where we went to the toilet. I know we had so much activity aboard it that I guess I pushed all that out of my mind on that trip from Singapore to Penang.

Marcello: There was another transport plus a small escorting corvette in this group of ships, wasn't there?

Reed: Yes. There was a little corvette-type ship and another freighter.

Marcello: Describe the bombing that took place, because this seems to be something that stands out in your mind from the trip to Moulmein.

Reed: I know we stayed in the hold all the time. Whether we were permitted to get out of the hold or not, I really don't remember, but it seems to me like we were not. I do not recall ever getting out of that hold at all.

I know that we were not too far out from Penang. I didn't realize how far out we were until later, until I finally located the spot where the American PBY's hit us. It is not very far out from the coast of Burma. It was a little after mid-day, about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. I was playing bridge with Griff . . .

Marcello: This is Griff Douglas?

Reed: . . . Griff Douglas and Jack Roberts and somebody else. We were playing bridge with hand-made cards, and we heard a lot of scuffling up on the deck. A lot of running around and aircraft engines, we could hear. All of a sudden we started having explosions and firing from the ship we were on. There was an antiaircraft gun right in the very bow of the ship,

and we were in that first hold right there. We could hear it very loudly--the bombings. Every time a bomb would hit close to our ship, the rust, dirt, scrap, and corruption would just be so thick you couldn't see. We didn't know what was taking place.

Somebody . . . I don't remember if it was a Jap, but I think it was a Jap or Korean, one, stuck his head over the edge of the hold and hollered: "Doctor! Doctor! Come! Come, doctor!" Dr. Lumpkin went up the ladder to see what they wanted. He was up there a few minutes, and he hollered at me and Jack and Griff and several other medics that were in the hold to come up. I didn't think much of that idea to go up there on topside, because I could still hear those airplanes up there and still hear bombs being dropped.

I reluctantly went up that ladder and got up there. I looked around, and I could see the other freighter off on the port side, and it was listing real bad. There were bodies, heads, bobbing around out in the water in between the other ship and us. We were standing dead still in the water by then. As soon as I looked around a little bit, Lumpkin said, "Go to the aft part of the ship and take care of the wounded back there."

I took off and down the companionway. You had to go through the companionway to get from the front of the ship

to the back of the ship. I did not touch the deck the whole time I went down that companionway. There were dead Japs that covered that floor so much that you couldn't step on the deck. You had to step on them. I went down through there stepping on them as I went, and I wondered what in the world was going on and what was going to happen.

I got back there, and one of the bombs had made what they called a near miss in the aft part of the ship where the Australians were. They had suffered quite a few casualties, and they were already bringing them up on the deck. We were grabbing whatever we could to bandage them and try to get them fixed up. There were broken limbs, shrapnel wounds. We had some medicines with us, and bandages.

Also, as we were working on the guys that were injured on our ship, somebody else started bringing up the Japs and the prisoners, Dutch, out of the water and bringing them up over the side of the ship. The little corvette-like ship that was with us, it was circling around out there.

Fortunately, the planes left. They made one run and didn't drop anything and left. We often wondered whether they knew what they had done or not.

Marcello: The Japanese, of course, had marked these ships in no way as to signify there were prisoners aboard.

Reed: That's correct. They were not marked. There was no way

for those guys in the plane to know.

Anyway, we were treating the wounded, and, of course, there were a lot of dead. We were piling the dead up in the aft part of the ship in the very bottom, very next to the poop deck on the very aft. Every time one would die we would carry them back there and dump them in the pile. They kept bringing the Dutch aboard.

By the time I got aft and started working some, I looked up to see what had happened to the other ship, and it was gone. It had already sunk. I later found out that it had sunk in eleven minutes flat. The ack-ack gun that was up in the bow of the ship had shot the bridge off of our ship we were on. We weren't going anywhere. We were standing dead in the water, and we were duck soup for those airplanes if they'd ever come back and wanted to wipe us out. Anyhow, they didn't. The corvette was picking some of them out of the water. No, I don't know whether they were or not. No, I don't know whether they were or not. They might have been picking up some Japs.

I don't know who was treating the Japs, but they were taken somewhere else. We were treating all we could. We worked there the rest of the day and all that night and the next morning without stopping.

Marcello: What was the reaction of the Japanese to all this?

Reed: Well, they were in utter confusion, and they didn't know what in the world to do. They had lost control completely. I didn't know about it, but some of the sailors and Navy officers and some of our field artillery guys had gotten together to take the ship over and make a run for it. We had guys that could run that ship; we didn't need the Japs. We were going to throw the Japs overboard or put them in prison. I don't know if anybody ever thought what they were going to do with them. Then there was a Dutch officer that heard this and went up to the Jap captain of the ship and told him that a mutiny was in process. So they put up machine guns all over the place and made everybody hunker down and get back in the hold and everything.

Marcello: Also, of course, even if this takeover had occurred, you would have still had the corvette to contend with?

Reed: That's true, but we had more firepower than the corvette did. We had a big gun on the aft part of the ship, and we had that ack-ack gun forward in the bow. Plus, we had some machine guns. We could have had quite a few machine guns on there. That corvette really wasn't much to contend with.

Marcello: I gather that your vessel must have been really crowded now, since you had picked up all of these survivors?

Reed: Yes. They were all over the place.

Marcello: Did the Japanese attitude toward the prisoners change in that

they became more hostile as a result of this attack, or couldn't you really detect any change in their attitude?

Reed: No, I couldn't detect any change. I know they became extremely cautious. They didn't come down on the deck with us; they stayed up in the superstructure. They had a round-the-clock watch all the time up there on those machine guns, watching us down below on the deck. I was so darn busy treating those wounded that I really didn't look up and observe a whole lot, because we couldn't afford to. We had too danged many guys that were dying on us.

Marcello: You were treating both the Dutch and the Japanese?

Reed: No. Dutch and Australians were mostly the injured.

Marcello: You were, in effect, using all of your very, very precious medical supplies.

Reed: Yes. We had to. It was available. I don't recall if we got anything from the Japs or not. Captain Lumpkin might have, but I don't know.

Marcello: So you limped into Moulmein, Burma. What happens at that point?

Reed: Well, we got off the ship. I want to tell you a couple of incidents aboard ship before this occurred, because I thought they were unusual. One was after we got off the ship.

I told you about the pile of dead out in the back. A Navy pharmacist's mate, named Kopp, and I were walking around near that pile of dead. We were discussing the fact that

we were going to have to get somebody to throw them overboard, because they were beginning to swell up and smell. We went by, and I said, "Kopp, did you see that guy move?" He said, "Oh, don't give me that now!" I said, "No, I'm really serious. I saw one of them move." He said, "You always see dead men move." I said, "I know what you mean. Let me go over there and just see, anyhow." So I went over there, and I grabbed hold of this guy's arm. He was about five guys under there, and his head and arms were sticking out. His skull was gone on one one side of his head. There was nothing there but all that brain and mucus and matter. Blood was all over him. He was a Dutchman. I felt of his pulse and he had a pulse. I said, "I told you! Feel this guy's pulse." He felt and he said, "By God, you're right! He is alive!"

So we pulled him out of there and laid him up on the hatch cover and bundled him up with some blankets. We put something . . . I don't know whether we put sulfanilamide powder or something in there on this wound. There was a jagged bone sticking out, you know. We wrapped his head and left him there. He laid there, and, of course, he was unconscious.

We went on treating others, and about an hour-and-a-half or two hours later, I went back there. I saw this guy sitting up, just sitting on the edge of the hatch cover! I asked

him how he was, and he said, "All right." He felt okay. I said, "Well, this is something miraculous!" But he really couldn't speak enough English to where I could really carry on much of a conversation. Anyway, I saw him some more, but he wasn't doing anything. He was eating when they would get some food to him.

Jack Rogers and I were treating another Dutchman, who was laying flat on the deck on his back. We asked him in Malayan what the problem was. He said, "My back hurts." So we raised him up and looked, and there was a hole about that big around (gesture) right in his back here. You could look in that hole and see his lungs and everything working in there, just moving.

Marcello: This hole was about three or four inches in diameter?

Reed: About the size of an orange. We had spoken to him, and he had answered in Malayan. So I turned to Jack and said, "Oh, boy, this guy's got a piece of shrapnel inside of him--a huge piece! There is no way this guy's going to live." Jack says, "Well, let's bandage him, anyway, and make him comfortable. I know he can't last but a little while."

The guy turned around and, in perfect English, he said, "I can understand English. You don't think I have a chance?" I really felt bad. I said, "No. I really am sorry, but I can't see how you can survive it." Well, he didn't. In an

hour he was gone.

Later on, we got off of the ship at Moulmein and went to this prison. Lo and behold, there is this Dutchman with half of his head gone walking around there in the prison. I said, "This has got to be something for medical science, really!" His whole side of his head was gone, and splinters of bone were sticking in his brain and everything. He was walking around like there wasn't a thing in the world wrong with him. Of course, I think somebody told me that two or three days after that he died. I thought, "My Lord, if a guy can take that he's got to have one strong will to live!"

Marcello: You were literally put in a prison here at Moulmein. Isn't that correct?

Reed: Right. That's where I met this missionary. He was in the prison, too. I don't remember where he was from or what denomination he was, but he told me about being a missionary over there.

Marcello: Was he an American or British?

Reed: I believe he was British.

Marcello: How long were you at this prison altogether? Just a matter of days?

Reed: Just a matter of days. It was a very short time.

Marcello: You mentioned that you met this missionary. Does anything else stand out from this meeting with the missionary?

Reed: The only thing I remember talking to the missionary about was that he told me about being a missionary, and for some reason we had gotten on the subject of loyalty among the people in that part of the country and how easily they could be bought off. I suppose I had been telling him about some of the situations in Java.

Anyhow, he told me that he had been out there many years. He would go to a hamlet and establish a church. He would have the local men build this church for him out of bamboo and thatch. Then he would gather all the people into this church and teach them the Christian religion. He would be giving them food, medicine, and clothes and have them reading and singing from American hymnals and English Bibles. Then he would take one of the men of the local hamlet and make him the head of that church, and he would move on to establish another church somewhere. Then he said, without exception, every time he went back to where he had left, what he had established as a church had become a Buddhist temple. So as long as they were feeding, clothing, and taking care of the ills of those people, they were willing to do whatever--sing, read out of the Bible, say the Lord's Prayer, do whatever he wanted them to do--until he left. Then when the food and stuff was cut off, they went back to their old religion.

This meant an awful lot to me at the time and later on

in years, especially the problems that the Americans had in Vietnam and what cooperation you can expect from those people in regard to being an ally. They will not, and I suppose will never, be an ally, because the only thing they know is that they will do whatever you want them to do as long as you are giving them something. That is not a true ally in my estimation.

Anyhow, this all came up when we were talking about how much we could trust those people throughout that part of the country.

Marcello: From Moulmein, where you stayed on a short time, you proceeded up to the base camp up at Thanbyuzayat.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: By this time, do you know that you're going to be working on a railroad, or do you find that out when you get to Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: We didn't find out until we got to Thanbyuzayat that we were going to be working on a railroad.

Marcello: Did you hear the speech that Colonel Nagatomo gave there?

Reed: I have a copy of it, yes.

Marcello: But did you hear the speech there?

Reed: Danged if I know whether I heard it.

Marcello: I guess you could find copies of that speech up and down the railroad, could you not? They were circulated rather widely.

Reed: Yes, sure did.

Marcello: What happens when you get to Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: My memory is a little faded there. I can remember that it wasn't a good camp. Well, none of those Burma camps were good camps. This was getting down to rock bottom. This was the first instance of getting right down to the rock bottom. We were going out on working parties.

Marcello: Did you actually go out on working parties from Thanbyuzayat, or did you just pass through Thanbyuzayat on your way to one of the actual working camps?

Reed: I didn't go out on working parties, but they did have some people who went out on working parties. What they were doing and where they were going, I don't know. I didn't go out.

Marcello: How long did you stay at Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: It wasn't very long. I don't think it was over a month, if that long.

Marcello: What did you do personally while you were staying there?

Reed: I was working as a medic.

Marcello: Did they have a fairly big hospital there?

Reed: No, I don't recall any hospital at all. There may have been one, but I don't recall one.

Marcello: I'm using the term hospital rather loosely. Did they have rather extensive medical facilities or a recuperation area here at Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: No. There was an aid station that was better than anything

on up the way into Burma along the railroad. It wasn't anything to compare with Bicycle Camp or Tanjong Priok.

Marcello: Was the food fairly plentiful here at Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: Yes. I didn't think it was plentiful while we were there, but as it turned out, it was plentiful.

Marcello: You were fairly close to civilization here at Thanbyuzayat.

Reed: Yes. We weren't very far; we were just a short distance.

Marcello: This was the railhead or the supply camp, was it not?

Reed: It was, yes.

Marcello: In other words, I guess all the ties, tracks, and everything else came through Thanbyuzayat on their way up the railroad.

Reed: Yes. It was a very crowded camp. Lester Rasbury and I couldn't find a place to sleep, so we had to build a little deck. One of the huts was built up on long poles. Underneath the regular deck was a pretty good space, and we built us a place to sleep underneath that regular deck. We didn't have a place to sleep, but a lot of people didn't have a place to sleep.

Marcello: What sort of cases were you tending there at Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: This wasn't any more extensive than just the same thing that we'd experienced in Singapore Island, in Changi. It was little stuff, more of the same old malnutrition stuff, that is, the first stages of it. Nothing serious at that stage.

Marcello: Generally speaking, the prisoners are still in fairly good

health yet, are they not?

Reed: Yes, they are. They are still in real good health.

Marcello: They haven't really begun to work on the railroad as such yet. The monsoon season hasn't begun; the "Speedo" campaign hasn't begun; and the food, although it's not great, it's still better than what it's going to be later on.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: You mentioned that you remain there at Thanbyuzayat for about a month, and I gather this is a rather routine month for the most part.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Nothing really extraordinary happened there.

Reed: No.

Marcello: There were no air raids or anything at this stage while you were there.

Reed: No. Some guys remember Thanbyuzayat. Well, I don't remember Thanbyuzayat.

Marcello: I don't think too many people really stayed there too long. In fact, a month seems to be as long as anybody ever stayed there that I've talked to. Where do you go from Thanbyuzayat?

Reed: That's always been a bone of contention. I said that I went to 30 Kilo from there. Griff, who was with me the whole time, says, "No, we didn't go to 30 Kilo. We went straight from Thanbyuzayat to 80 Kilo."

Marcello: Was it 18 Kilo? I know a lot of people went to 18 Kilo.

Reed: Eighteen Kilo. Some went to 18 Kilo; some went to 30 Kilo. So I could be confused as to whether I went to 18 Kilo or 30 Kilo, but it seemed to me like I went to 30 Kilo. But he says no.

Marcello: You keep mentioning Griff Douglas, and you mention Lester Rasbury and other individuals from time to time throughout our interview. By this time, had you become a part of a little clique or group?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Who was in your little group?

Reed: Mainly Coy York and Griff Douglas and myself.

Marcello: This was really going to be one of the keys to survival, wasn't it?

Reed: Right.

Marcello: When we talk about cliques, we're not talking about something bad or something mean or anything of that nature. People that had like interests and got along would group together and just kind of look out for one another.

Reed: Well, we would look out for one another and share things, and sharing was a very important part of it.

Marcello: And everybody was doing this. Everybody was into these groups.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: So you do proceed up the railroad. Maybe you went to 80 Kilo

Camp, maybe you went to 30 Kilo Camp, and maybe you went on to some other camp. When we describe one of these camps in a physical sense, they are all the same, more or less, aren't they, in terms of the physical layout?

Reed: They are all very much identical.

Marcello: Describe what the buildings were like in one of these camps.

Reed: Bamboo. The uprights consisted of about a five- or six-inch bamboo tree pole. The crossbeams formed the rafters for the roof, and the joist was a large bamboo pole. These were all tied together with this particular grass that they had over there that they used everything for. They tied everything with this grass. Then the cross members were smaller bamboo, two-and-a-half inches or three inches in diameter.

Then the thatch was put on the roof. This was made out of leaves of a certain-type grass that they had over there, bent over a bamboo stick and sewn with some sort of a hemp so it formed a shingle. These are tied on and formed the roof. This was also put on the sides, and, of course, we left windows that we could put on or take off when we wanted to.

Then there was a deck built inside that was approximately eighteen inches off of the ground. These were built on posts that stuck up, and then cross members were attached. Then small bamboo trees were split in half and the rounded side of the bamboo tree was left up. These were tied on, side by

side, all the way from one end of that hut to the other on both sides with an aisle down the middle to form a deck. This is the place that you slept and lived. You were given eighteen inches of space, I think, per person on that deck, which was just a little bit longer than six feet--something in that nature. It might have been right at six feet.

Marcello: About how many people were in each one of these barracks?

Reed: Golly! There must have been 150 in each one, or more.

Marcello: Generally speaking, how large was one of these camps in terms of the numbers of men?

Reed: Golly! I don't know. They varied--3,000 to 5,000 men.

Marcello: That sounds like a pretty good round figure to use. Did you mention that you actually were not going out and working on the railroad?

Reed: Wait a minute. At 80 Kilo I did. I was not picked to serve as a medic there. I went out on the railroad and worked on it.

Marcello: Do you recall whether or not you started working on the railroad immediately after you got into the jungle?

Reed: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Right away?

Reed: As soon as we got to the very first camp outside of the base camp.

Marcello: I guess what I'm trying to establish, if possible, is the

actual camp where you started to work. The 18 Kilo Camp was not really in the jungle yet.

Reed: No.

Marcello: Did you start at a camp that was out of the jungle?

Reed: Oh, I don't remember, to tell you the truth. I am fuzzy there, I know I never worked as a medic, though, after the base camp.

Marcello: Which was back in Thanbyuzayat.

Reed: Thanbyuzayat.

Marcello: Describe what work was like on the railroad. Let's start with a typical day on the railroad from the time you get up until you got to bed that night.

Reed: All right, you got up before daylight. They used the same method of alarm system to get you up as they always had. You dressed, fell in for roll call.

Marcello: By this time, are you counting off in Japanese?

Reed: Yes. I think we're starting there,yes. We got on to the first meal, which was nothing but the same old junk--rice. Sometimes it was just rice, but sometimes you had a little something mixed up in it.

Then we were off, and the first thing we were doing was building a roadbed for this railroad. We had a cubic meter of earth to move per man each day. We moved that dirt. We had a pick, a shovel, and a wicker-type basket.

Marcello: You mentioned that you are making a roadbed, which means that

you were making either a cut or a fill. Is that correct?

Reed: That's correct. We were either making cuts or fills--either taking the dirt away from the roadbed or putting the dirt back on the roadbed, one of the two.

Marcello: How large would one of these cuts be?

Reed: Oh, if I recall, back up in 80 and 100 Kilo those cuts would have to be as long as a football field.

Marcello: How deep might they be?

Reed: Some of them three to five stories high.

Marcello: There would literally be a thousand or more men working on one of these cuts or fills?

Reed: Oh, yes. Just like a bunch of ants on an anthill. Carrying dirt, picking and shoveling.

Marcello: How was the amount of dirt to be removed marked off? You mentioned awhile ago that it was a cubic meter per man per day.

Reed: Say you're starting out on flat ground. A square meter was marked off or staked. Then you started digging down until you got a meter down. In other words, it was all done and assigned for you. It was all staked off for you when you got out of there.

Marcello: Did the Japanese engineers stake it off?

Reed: Yes, I'm sure it must have been the Japanese engineers that did the staking.

Marcello: You basically have Jap engineers, Korean guards and American,

British, Dutch, Australian prisoners. And probably Japanese administrators in the camp.

Reed: Well, I don't know about the Japanese administrators. There were some, but I don't recall them staying there. Perhaps they might have, but I don't know.

Marcello: You are making cuts and fills, and, as you mentioned, when you first got there, each person had to remove a cubic meter of dirt per day. What happens when you had filled your quota?

Reed: Sometimes you got to sit down, depending on the bastard Korean guard that was with you. If he didn't think you had done what you were supposed to, he would have you do some more.

Marcello: Is it not true, though, that in the beginning the Americans were finishing their quota as quickly as possible so that they could get back to camp as soon as possible?

Reed: That was the intention, yes. The faster you could do it, the faster we could get back there.

Marcello: How did the Japanese react to this?

Reed: They made us work longer.

Marcello: In other words, they increased the quota?

Reed: Yes. A meter-and-a-half and so on. It seems to me that at one time we were up as high as two meters a man.

Marcello: In other words, eventually they saw to it that you would be out on that roadbed from dawn to dark, so to speak?

Reed: Dawn to dark, through any kind of weather no matter what, we

were out there. It didn't make any difference if it was pouring-down rain or as dry as a bone, if there was mud up to your knees. It didn't really matter. You still had to move that damn meter or meter-and-a-half of dirt a day.

Marcello: What was the division of labor? You mentioned awhile ago that there would be a pick and a shovel and a wicker basket to carry away the dirt. Were you kind of divided into fifty-man kumis or something like that?

Reed: You were divided up, but I don't recall how we were divided up now. I know we were divided up, and I don't even recall the reasons. You never really knew who you were going to work with, although you did have a choice if you wanted to work with certain individuals, which a lot of times we did with each other that we'd been working together with for quite awhile. I don't recall why they divided us up, but they did. Did somebody else have a reason for that? I don't remember.

Marcello: I simply assume that they had to have some sort of a work organization out there on that job. I think it is Clyde Fillmore in his book that mentions that they divided everybody into fifty-man kumis. Be that as it may, you'd be out working on this roadbed. You started out moving one cubic meter of dirt per man per day, and they gradually increased it so that you would be out there all day. I assume you took your noontime meal out there on the roadbed.

Reed: They brought it out to you in trucks.

Marcello: What would it consist of?

Reed: Same thing--rice and sometimes a watery stew.

Marcello: Was there ever any chance to get seconds?

Reed: There were rare occasions when we got seconds--some. I said the food was brought by trucks. This depended on how far away from the camp we were, because sometimes we had to carry that food from the camp on a "yo-ho" stick to the working site. In other words, four guys would have to leave the working party and go back to camp, get the "yo-ho" stick or Y-john or whatever we were carrying it in; then pick it up, carry it out to the site, and carry it back. We carried it back when we went back that evening. Those guys were chosen at random by the Korean guards. Then they also brought out trucks if we were a long way.

Marcello: Then you would work all afternoon and into the evening and come back when a quota was fulfilled or whenever a Japanese told you you could return.

Reed: Most of the time, you didn't get back until just about sundown.

Marcello: When you came back, would the evening meal be waiting for you?

Reed: Yes. It was very shortly after we got back that the evening meal was.

Marcello: Who took care of the blasting and things of that nature? I would assume that from time to time, there would have to be

blasting done.

Reed: There was some blasting. Of course, the Jap engineers took care of that.

Marcello: Was there any machinery at all used in the building of this road?

Reed: Not where we were. I understand there was some machinery on the road somewhere. I believe it was at 80 or 100 Kilo that I saw a bulldozer one time.

Marcello: How about elephants?

Reed: Elephants were used, yes.

Marcello: Were they used mainly to either drag the logs or push them?

Reed: They were used mainly in logs or moving large boulders and things like that.

Marcello: I assume that they were all being manned by native personnel.

Reed: Yes, they were. No one else could handle them.

Marcello: While you were out on these work details, did the Koreans still continue to harass the prisoners?

Reed: Oh, yes! Oh, yes, continually! In other words, sometimes you could stop and rest. We felt, "Okay, we've got a meter or a meter-and-a-half of dirt to move." If we were out there and we wanted to stop for a while--smoke a piece of that wog tobacco, talk a little bit, or get a drink of water--we had that prerogative, because as long as we got our work done in the amount of time we thought we had, then the guards wouldn't

care.

It depended on the guard, again. Sometimes you got one that wouldn't care, and sometimes you got one that didn't want you to stop at all. I don't care how much dirt you moved, they wanted you to keep right on working with that pick and shovel and carrying that dirt. Most of them, I'd say, kept right on your back the whole time. They were always looking for some excuse to bash you around.

Marcello: Here again, what would they use to bash you?

Reed: Bamboo and rifle butts. Most of them, by that time, were getting a little smarter, and they weren't using their fists or hands so much anymore. They were hitting with a club of some kind.

Marcello: What would happen when you would come back in the evenings? Were you too tired to do anything except eat and go to bed?

Reed: That was it. You might sit around and talk for a little while. Of course, the curfew, so set up by the guards, said you really didn't have much time to talk. Most any kind of conversation or visiting was done while you were eating or shortly thereafter. No talking, no lights, and, of course, there weren't any electric lights. Peanut oil lamps and stuff like that we burned for some kind of a light. We got to build a fire in the middle of the hut to keep the wild animals out.

Marcello: You were in wild animal country?

Reed: Yes, we were there.

Marcello: I've heard some of the prisoners say that they either spotted tigers or at least saw evidence that tigers had been prowling around.

Reed: I saw what I interpreted as a black panther. I mean, it was dark and the only light was from the fire that was in the middle of the hut. He came leaping down that aisleway in the middle of that hut, and he stopped. You could see those green eyes, and he was right at my feet when he stopped. The hair just raised up on the back of my head and stuck straight out. Oh, boy! He let out a noise, which I can't imitate, and when he did, why, everybody woke up and ran. You could hear the rattle of those bamboos. He took off. He really got out of there in a hurry.

There was one instance when an elephant tried to come into the hut, and he could only get his head in. He almost knocked the damn hut over trying to get in the hut. Snakes would come in, you know, to the hut at night, especially if it was warm in there.

Marcello: Were snakes quite prevalent?

Reed: You know, you see the movies about people in the jungle and how snakes and animals are about every fifteen feet, you know. That's a bunch of baloney, because you could go all day long without seeing anything but birds and monkeys. No, you would see a snake once in a while. We caught, killed, and ate a

python one time. I think he was twenty-four feet long. You would see some cats of different types once in a great while if you were lucky. You had to be lucky to see them, because if there were any human beings around anywhere, those animals left and went away.

Marcello: I'm sure that by the time work begins on the railroad the thought that is most constantly on your mind is food.

Reed: Right. The sex and everything else had long since gone, as far as I was concerned. There was still some talk around the base camp, as far as sex was concerned, because there used to be a parade of Burmese girls go by there. Of course, everybody would stand at the fence and gasp, goggle, holler, and make remarks. As we got on into the jungle at 80 Kilo, that's when it really got bad. The food was very short, especially in the monsoon season, because they couldn't get any transportation down the road to bring any food.

Marcello: Let's describe this particular part of your story. In May of 1943, two things occur almost simultaneously. The monsoon season begins, and the Japanese initiate the so-called "Speedo" campaign. Work is behind on the railroad, and they've got to catch up. It just so happens that the increased workload and the rains hit at the same time. Describe first of all what it was like to work in the monsoons. As you mentioned, you are at either the 80 Kilo Camp or the 100 Kilo Camp at

this time. I believe the 100 Kilo was also a rather infamous camp.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: What was it like to work during the rainy season?

Reed: I think I was in the 100 Kilo when most of the rainy season was on. I know we moved from 80 to 100 Kilo during the monsoon. In a situation like this, it rained constantly day and night, week after week, month after month. After awhile, you walked in nothing but mud. You didn't have any shoes, so there wasn't really a whole lot to be concerned about. Your feet had become so tough then that it really didn't bother you a great deal. As a matter of fact, it was better walking in the mud.

But you were wet. Everything you had was wet--your blankets, your clothes. Everything you had was wet all the time and never dried out. You were out on a working party, and you ate your noon meal, and you would have to gulp it down as fast as you could, or your mess gear would fill up with water before you could eat it.

The working parties were absolutely futile. We could attempt to move our cubic-and-a-half meter of dirt. It was a wicker basket we carried it in, and we shoveled the mud up into the shovel and poured it into the basket, which was very loosely woven, and it just went right through it. You worked trying to fill that danged thing up and getting any

dry dirt you could possibly get so that you could carry a little bit of dirt over there and dump it. You would get bashed if you didn't carry any, so you had to carry some. You couldn't just stand there pouring mud through your basket. It was a futile effort.

Did you ever dig in mud or ever try to? It was just slosh. Exasperating is about the only word that I can think of, and I should have it more forceful than that. When we knew we had to move that much dirt, and we couldn't even get it to stick in the basket so we could move it, we could just throw up our hands and say, "This is futile! It is impossible! It is idiotic! Why do we try to even do this?" After a jab with a butt of a gun or a holler or something, we would get right back to it again. Of course, that was a very tiring experience. We lost a lot of men there.

Marcello: Plus, by the time the monsoons start, you are far enough into the jungle that you can't get supplies all the time, either, can you?

Reed: No. The Japs couldn't get the supplies out there. Once in awhile they could get one truck through. Of course, they were laying logs in the road. They had the other prisoners back down the line that were laying logs, along with natives and elephants. They were pulling logs up there and laying them in the road for those trucks to roll on. That takes an awful

lot of logs, you know.

They couldn't get the supplies up there. When they would finally get there with the supplies of meat--once in awhile they'd get there with some meat, and it was in a wooden box--you would take the lid off the wooden box, and it was absolutely alive with maggots. That didn't deter our eating it by any means. It was just the fact that we resented the maggots eating our meat. We didn't really stop eating it. This malnutrition thing set in real bad.

Marcello: They're working you harder and feeding you less.

Reed: They're working us harder, feeding us less, and not caring whether you're sick or not. Many, many guys went out there and worked, and had they been in the States, they would have been a hospital case. There were occasions when I know some were carried out, and I was one of them--carried out on a hand-made litter to the working site. You couldn't walk--it was impossible to walk--so four guys had to carry you to the working site on a bamboo litter. You would lay there and break rocks for ballast the whole time you were out there, and then they'd carry you back.

Of course, the Japs didn't care about the sick. As a matter of fact, on several occasions they refused to feed the sick until we said, "Okay, if you don't feed the sick, then we don't work and that's it."

Marcello: They would put the sick on short rations, would they not?

Reed: Yes. They were always doing that, and that meant that we had to divide what we had coming in with the sick--without their knowing it--so that the sick would have as much rations as we would.

Marcello: Is it not true that so far as the Japanese or Korean guards were concerned, they had to have so many bodies out working on that railroad?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Who determined, ultimately, whether a man was sick enough to stay in or well enough to go out and work on the railroad? Who made the ultimate choice? Was it the Japanese guard, or was it your doctor?

Reed: It was the doctor's choice, unless the guard disagreed.

Marcello: Or unless the quota of manpower wasn't fulfilled.

Reed: Yes. That was a point that they had to take into consideration. In other words, the doctor went down the line and pointed to a man and said, "He's too sick to go on a working party." The guard or the Jap sergeant could overrule him quickly if he could look at him and say, "Well, he looks good enough for me. He can go."

But the doctors did do some good. As time went on, they began to get their point across to them. We lost our doctor, but up until the time we lost him in 100 Kilo, he was beginning

to bring some guys in.

Marcello: There was a point here where the doctor might designate so many men as too sick to go out on a job. Okay, those that were well did go out on the job, but when the Japanese guard discovers that he didn't have enough men in his quota, therefore, he dips into the hospital group.

Reed: Yes. The first choice was that the doctor was given the opportunity to go back and make up the quota. If he didn't make it up then, then the guard went and made up the quota.

Marcello: And he would simply pick men that he thought looked well.

Reed: I don't think he really gave a damn. I think he'd pick anybody. I think sometimes he'd pick the sickest man.

Marcello: You mentioned that at one particular point here, you were so sick that you had to be carried out to the job in a litter. What was your problem?

Reed: Ulcers. I had three ulcers on my leg. This is one of them here (pointing). Of course, my leg was this big around then, and the ulcer was this big around (gestures). Then I had one smaller one here (gesture) and then one up behind my knee. This is called a tropical ulcer. I don't know the medical term for it.

Marcello: What you just showed me on your leg was a scar, which I would say was about three inches in diameter. It is ugly-looking right now, but I'm sure it was real ugly back in 1943 and 1944.

What are the root causes of getting a tropical ulcer? Describe how you got yours.

Reed: In the ground, as I understand it,out there, there is this bacteria. If you happen to have a slight cut or a pimple that you've scratched off, and some of those bacteria gets in there from the dirt, then your flesh will start sloughing off and gradually get larger and deeper.

Marcello: I guess, among other things, the body cannot produce antibodies, since you have so many dietary deficiencies and so on.

Reed: That's right. It curtailed the production of antibodies, certainly.

Marcello: So any exposed flesh can develop into one of those tropical ulcers.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: What happens at that stage after the wound appears and the bacteria gets into the wound?

Reed: Like I said, the flesh sloughs off.

Marcello: It literally kills the flesh.

Reed: Yes. It just becomes dead. Not hard. It just dies and sloughs off.

Marcello: I assume it is very, very painful.

Reed: Yes. It becomes so painful you can't walk. It just keeps eating and eating away until some of the guys died with it. Some didn't die with them, but they had much larger ulcers

than I did. Eventually, it just eats your whole leg off, I guess.

Marcello: How large were yours at their largest?

Reed: When my leg was swollen . . . and, of course, with all this infection that was in there, the leg naturally became swollen and became very large. I would say my leg at one time, the calf of my leg, was probably a good eight or nine inches in diameter. Then the ulcer itself was five to six inches in diameter.

Marcello: Did it fester and drain?

Reed: Oh, it drained constantly.

Marcello: How do you treat these tropical ulcers?

Reed: We had no treatment whatsoever. The only treatment was to put a little pan of hot water on and heat it up and soak it and to try to draw the inflammation to the surface and slough off--the infection. It wasn't until I got up to Kanchanaburi until I ran across Dr. Bloemsma, who had some iodoform and his spoon. He turned it around, and it started healing.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, one of the remedies was to constantly soak these ulcers with hot water. Did you ever see people use maggots to eat out this dead flesh?

Reed: Yes, I have. I never did try it . . . I take it back. I had tried it, but it was so aggravating that I took them out.

Marcello: Aggravating in what sense?

Reed: You could feel them in there crawling around, and you couldn't sleep. It was extremely tender.

Marcello: I gather if one of those little critters hit the good flesh, you felt it,too. Or would they stay away from it?

Reed: They only eat dead flesh. I don't know how to put it exactly, except to say that them crawling around in your wound would absolutely drive you out of your mind, really. So I took them out, so they weren't in there very long.

Marcello: You did remember how many you put in?

Reed: (Laughter) Yes, I remembered! I got the same amount out, because you can feel them.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that Dr. Bloemsma would use the sharpened spoon. Describe how this procedure worked.

Reed: Well, he had taken a fork and cut the prongs off of it. It was a silver fork. Then he had taken a hammer-type implement and beat out that fork just above the prongs, and formed a little spoon about an inch in diameter. It was cupped like a spoon, and he had sharpened the edges to be knife-sharp.

The procedure then was to take somebody like me, and about five guys would get hold of you and hold you where you couldn't move. One guy sat on top of you where you couldn't raise up. Then the doctor would proceed to scrape the ulcer out clean. In other words, he would scrape all the dead flesh out. Of course, you would have something in your mouth so

you could bite down on it. He would scrape all this out as deep as he would have to go to get everything.

Then, I had three ulcers, and he had to do all three of them at the same time--the same holding-down process. He would fill them up with iodoform or sprinkle the iodoform in them--a sufficient amount--to cover the wound. Then he would bandage them, wrap them in bandages, and they'd stay there for approximately ten days.

Then he went back and took the bandages off, and then he had to scrape them again. So you had to go through the process again. He continued to scrape them every ten days until the proud flesh left and the true flesh, pink flesh, started coming back in for healing. It was a five-man situation every time that you went through this little operation.

Marcello: **You mentioned the use of iodoform. Was that a rather common medicine to be found?**

Reed: **Yes, it was a rather common medicine after we had gotten up into Siam there.**

Marcello: It wasn't available in the jungle itself while you were working on the railroad, though.

Reed: It might have been, but I didn't know about it if it was. There was really nothing available in the jungle. Just hot water was all.

Marcello: Judging from what you showed me from those ulcers, you also

must have given them a great deal of tender loving care all along. True, you had them scraped and all that sort of thing, but obviously they required a great deal of personal care on your part.

Reed: Oh, yes. You had to take care of them, and you had to get a little better food than was served by the regular diet. Griff Douglas provided that tender loving care, along with myself, as well as seeing that I got a little better food.

Marcello: In other words, Douglas would help you to soak those and bathe them in addition to getting you the food.

Reed: He would come over and help me out and treat them as best we had facilities for. Then he would get me an egg or some peanuts or a banana when he could and bring it over to me.

Marcello: In addition to actually doctoring these ulcers physically, I think we are also getting into that area of the tremendous will to live. You've got to have that will to live under these circumstances, do you not? That's important.

Reed: It is the most important in my estimation. I've been asked many times, "How could you have gotten through that terrible situation?" Well, the only way that any of us got through it, in my estimation, was the fact that you had to have an extreme amount of faith, I mean, faith in God and faith in yourself and faith in your fellow man. You had to have all the faith to get to where you could see some daylight. Otherwise, it became

extremely apparent to me, from watching others lose faith, that you could not survive without it.

This is where I became a true believer that there are really no true atheists on this earth. They may be self-proclaimed atheists, but a true atheist cannot exist on this earth. I have watched this time and time again from people who turned away from their faith and died almost immediately.

I know one guy had ulcers on his hands, and I slept right beside him. His hands were almost covered in little ulcers, and he soaked those hands religiously, all the time. Every day, every morning, every night he would soak them. He would keep them bandaged up and take care of them. In our conversations he informed me that he had lost faith, that there was nothing for him, that he could not go on, that there was no way for us to get out of the situation that we were in. Eleven days from the first day that he told me that, he died while having a convulsion in the middle of the night. In the meantime, he had healed the ulcers on his hands; they had all healed over. So there was really nothing physically wrong with him.

Marcello: Did you see cases where men would literally give up and lose the will to live?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: How could you tell when somebody had just given up?

Reed: (Chuckle) It is hard to describe, except for the fact that when you are working with somebody or you are close to somebody that is in very bad shape . . . you will have to know that any one of those men may die at any time. In other words, it was not uncommon to wake up in the morning and find that the guy that you had been talking to, that seemed extremely all right the night before, was dead in his bunk that next morning. So when you were talking to somebody who had ulcers or had dysentery or beriberi, when they quit eating, quit taking on any food or water, liquid--they just lay there--then you could see it in their eyes. They become somewhat glassy-eyed. They don't seem to be interested in anything. You know that they have just given up, and there is no hope for them at that point. Of course, you have to keep trying.

Marcello: Is there any way you could snap them out of this state?

Reed: There were many ways of trying to snap them out of this state that they were in. Just how successful we were, I don't know. It is hard to say whether what we did was the result of our efforts or whether God took their hand and said, "I think this man should go ahead and heal."

Marcello: What would you try and do to bring them around again?

Reed: Of course, jokes or something funny was something we always tried to use. We'd also talk about what we were going to do when we got out. Pushing them to the point of exhaustion to

walk, use their body, use their limbs, use their mind, to keep their mind active. Ask them questions, talk to them constantly.

Marcello: Would you sometimes resort to insulting them?

Reed: Yes. Yes, you'd try most anything. You'd make fun of them, insult them, tell jokes to try to get them to laugh--anything that might come to mind to try to get them out of the trance or the state of mental deterioration they were in. On top of that, of course, like I mentioned, you tried to get them to be active, not only mentally but physically. You tried to keep them going.

Marcello: I assume, from what people have told me, that one of the last things you wanted was to have to go to the so-called sick ward or hospital hut or whatever.

Reed: Everybody that went to the hospital died. If you were talking to a guy and he got dysentery and went to the hospital, he died. Nobody walked out of the hospital cured. If they didn't die, they were still there.

Marcello: Plus, you got short rations if you went over there.

Reed: Yes. Of course, after we lost our doctor, then that compounded the situation.

Marcello: What psychological effect did the loss of Dr. Lumpkin have upon the men? He died here at the 100 Kilo Camp, did he not, during this monsoon season and "Speedo" campaign?

Reed: That's right, he did.

Marcello: What effect did that have upon the men?

Reed: Well, it was very depressing. You know, you were under just about as low of conditions as you could possibly get. Men were dropping dead quite frequently. You were wet constantly; you were in mud constantly. Food was rotten, there was no medicine, and the only hope that you could have was in the knowledge of one of your fellow men that could give you some kind of hope to recover from this illness that you had. When Dr. Lumpkin died, the camp became extremely depressed.

Marcello: In other words, if the doctor can't make it, how can anybody else?

Reed: That's true. But being Americans--and I say this, and I've said it before--being an American,we came out of it. I say that strictly because I don't think Americans are that superior. I'm proud to be an American. But there were similar circumstances that hit, say, the English, and they didn't survive. They lost practically everybody in the camp. But the American attitude . . . and I didn't know about this until Dr. Hekking told me and the rest of us about the American attitude, and how different it was from the other nationalities, even his own nationality, the Dutch. He said that the American attitude was the greatest thing that he saw while he was in prison.

Marcello: Describe what the burial details were like--how the burial

procedures took place.

Reed: Well, a cadaver was wrapped in any kind of a blanket or tow sack or whatever we could find to wrap it in, and it was sewn up. It was placed on a bamboo litter and four guys, usually no more than four, would carry it over to the burial grounds, having dug a shallow grave, of course. They would place it in the grave and cover it up and come on back. On some occasions they said something over the grave. Sometimes they didn't. They just merely covered them up and came on back.

Marcello: Were there usually always individual graves, or sometimes did they have to resort to mass graves?

Reed: In Burma they were individual graves. Where we were we dug them ourselves.

Marcello: I would assume that the actual digging of the grave was a rather large physical chore in itself.

Reed: Yes, although we didn't dig them too deep. We only dug a couple of feet deep.

Marcello: I also understand you couldn't bury them with any clothing, because the clothing could be used by somebody else, what clothing they had left. Or else the natives, I've heard, would even dig up the graves to get the clothing.

Reed: Right. That's true. They would go in there and scavenge through the graves.

Marcello: Would you mark those graves?

Reed: They were marked, and a map was made of them. I understand that due to the fact that these graves were marked and that the map was made, they pulled all of those guys out of there and identified them. But by that time, the jungle grows back so fast that, really, you don't know whether that guy came back or not.

Marcello: Would they put a wooden marker there or something along those lines?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Was it a cross or just a wooden slab?

Reed: Sometimes it was just a wooden slab just stuck in the ground, yes.

Marcello: By the time we get into the 80 Kilo Camp and the 100 Kilo Camp, I assume that most people were down to G-strings.

Reed: (Chuckle) Yes. We were down to G-strings all through Burma, and no shoes. All the shoes had worn out by then.

Marcello: How did you improvise for toothbrushes and things of that nature?

Reed: Actually, we didn't improvise. I didn't,anyhow. We didn't have any, of course, and we didn't have anything that even resembled a toothbrush. Starting out, I would use a bamboo stick sharpened down to a toothpick and then rinse my mouth out, or rub my finger on my teeth and try to clean them up. But that was about all.

Marcello: I know some people would take a twig and chew the ends into a bristle-like structure, because they remembered how their

grandmothers had dipped snuff and so on.

Reed: Yes. I didn't do it. Actually, I had some bad tooth problems before we were captured. It was the amazing thing, because after we were captured and I didn't have a toothbrush anymore, I didn't have any more tooth problems (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you have any opportunity to do any trading and so on with the natives? In other words, are natives following the progress of the railroad as you move into the jungle?

Reed: No. We very rarely saw the natives along that jungle in Burma.

Marcello: Did you have any opportunity to steal from the Japanese?

Reed: Oh, yes, there was stealing. They didn't have a whole lot to steal, but there was stealing going on. There may have been some trading going on back in those jungles of Burma. I guess I wasn't really "with it" too much, because I wouldn't do much more than go to work, eat, and sleep. That's about my existence.

Marcello: Did this situation seem to be taking somewhat of a toll upon the Japanese, also?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Obviously, they weren't suffering as much as you were. But I was wondering if the climate and the conditions and everything else affected them, too.

Reed: Certainly during the monsoon season, they were affected quite a bit, because they couldn't get food any more than we could get food. Their rations went down considerably, and also the

quality of rations went down. They had sickness. As a matter of fact, they had some mental conditions. I know we had one Jap sergeant that committed hara-kiri down there in 100 Kilo, because he became so despondent over the situation.

Marcello: Up until this time, had you been able to send any mail home or get any mail out of there? Were there ever any opportunities for sending out mail?

Reed: It seems like there was a little card that we sent out. It seemed to be back at Thanbyuzayat.

Marcello: I think you're right. In fact, I was asking this to test your memory. I believe it was either in Thanbyuzayat, or it may have even been at that very short stay at Moulmein when you sent out that card.

Reed: I think it was at Thanbyuzayat.

Marcello: It was one of the cards where you had a choice of indicating that your health was excellent, good, fair, poor. I guess you'd better say it was excellent or good, or the card wouldn't get out.

Reed: It wouldn't go through if you didn't, right. Everybody was in excellent health.

Marcello: I do know that up until this point you had not received any Red Cross packages yet.

Reed: I never received any. Some of them did. I think the guys that went to Japan got some Red Cross packages. I know that at

one time the Red Cross packages came in, and it might have been in Tamarkan or Kanchanaburi . . .

Marcello: It was.

Reed: . . . but there wasn't nearly enough to go around where each person got a package.

Marcello: Four men had to share a package, as I recall.

Reed: They were all broken open and distributed out.

Marcello: While you were in the jungles,did you ever get dysentery?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Were you at the 80 Kilo Camp or the 100 Kilo Camp when you got it?

Reed: Well, let me think. Where was I?

Marcello: Let me put it another way and ask if you had dysentery at the same time as you had tropical ulcers.

Reed: Yes, I did. They were at the same time, but they didn't come on at the same time. I had had the tropical ulcers.

Marcello: Did you have a very bad case of dysentery?

Reed: Well, I thought it was pretty bad (chuckle). I didn't get dysentery, really, very bad until I got out and I was able to walk again after Dr. Bloemsma started my leg to healing again.

Marcello: Then you were out of the jungle when you got dysentery.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: You actually did not have it when you were at either the 80

Kilo Camp or the 100 Kilo Camp?

Reed: No, I didn't.

Marcello: Somewhere along the line here they had established a hospital camp, and I use the term loosely, back at 80 Kilo Camp.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: I assume that you never had to go back to that hospital camp.

Reed: I never did. Nobody wanted to go, because it was. . . .

Marcello: It was a death camp, was it not?

Reed: Yes, it was. As we could figure it out, the Japanese, after we had left 80 Kilo, had established what they called this hospital camp at 80 Kilo strictly for the purpose of getting the sick back there so that they could be out of the care of the other Americans so that they would die quicker. That would give more rations to the rest of the prisoners so that they could get more work out of them.

Marcello: Is there anything else that we need to talk about relative to your experiences in the jungle at this point?

Reed: Well, I know that we ate just about everything that we could get our hands on.

Marcello: Can you elaborate on that?

Reed: Any kind of bird that we could catch, dogs, any kind of animal. Some of them ate cats, but I never did get quite that hungry. Rats, anything. Mostly birds. Any kind of birds that we could catch was a good meal.

Also, the Dutch taught us how to get those big ants that build those great big anthills. They are huge anthills, and they are big ants. You would get a bed of hot coals and get a handful of those ants and pitch them on those hot coals, and they would pop off like popcorn, and you would eat them.

Then we ate bamboo shoots out in the jungles. It was just a very young bamboo tree, and just a shoot was coming up,and you would dig it up and eat it.

Marcello: I guess you could learn a lot from the Dutch, could you not? They probably had more knowledge of foods to be obtained in the jungle than anybody else.

Reed: Some of them sure did, especially the half-Dutch, half-Javanese.

Marcello: Are these the ones they referred to as the "Black Dutch?"

Reed: Yes, the "Black Dutch." And they called them something else. The only thing I can think of is the sabotage to the railroad.

Marcello: Okay, how would you possibly sabotage the work on the railroad?

Reed: Leaving nails out of the rails where you nailed a rail on to the tie. Leaving a bolt out or not even putting any bolts in one side where the rails connected together. They had some crazy ideas about how they would sabotage that railroad.

I remember one time . . . I think it was 105 Kilo where they sabotaged the darn railroad right there at the camp. The darn engine and I think one or two cars came off the tracks right there. We had to get up and go down there--everybody

in the camp--and work all night to put that danged engine and those cars back on there on that track. Then we had to go out on a working party the next morning.

Marcello: I've heard it said that on some occasions the prisoners would plant termites around the pilings in hopes that the termites would get at the road, too.

Reed: I don't remember that.

Marcello: We mentioned dysentery awhile ago. How could you possibly cure dysentery? Was there anything you could do for it?

Reed: In the jungle, no. There was no cure for it.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the crust off the bottoms of the rice pots would help sometimes because of the vitamins and so forth.

Reed: Burnt rice, yes.

Marcello: Or charcoal in any form.

Reed: Charcoal of any form. I don't know whether it did any good or not. I know it was used. Almost everybody that contracted dysentery while we were in the 100 or 80 Kilo area died.

Marcello: I guess everybody had malaria, too.

Reed: Yes. I had malaria, too.

Marcello: Was there plenty of quinine? There should have been plenty of quinine.

Reed: No, there was nothing to give you for malaria, either.

Marcello: So you just literally had to sweat it out?

Reed: Yes. It wasn't until we got into Siam that we got any quinine whatsoever.

Marcello: Normally, I don't think malaria was enough to keep you off that railroad.

Reed: No, it was not. Despite the fact that you were having chills and felt terrible, you went right out on the railroads. I said earlier that some guys would have been in the hospital, had they been in America, instead of working out there on that railroad. One guy--he was out of the Navy--came up to talk to me. He had come in off the working party. He sat down on the deck across from me on somebody else's bunk, and I was sitting there on my bunk, my space. He was talking to me, and all of a sudden he took several short breaths, and his eyes rolled up in his head, and he just fell over backwards. I jumped from my side across the aisle over to straddle him and started giving him artificial respiration and pounded on his chest. I worked for quite awhile on him, but he died immediately. That's the way they would go, and you never knew when <u>your</u> time was going to come. You never knew when you might wake up and you might not wake up.

Marcello: At this stage, do you live from day-to-day? You're not looking months ahead at this stage, are you?

Reed: I have, but today I don't.

Marcello: No, when I say, "at this time," I'm referring to the period when

you were working on the railroad. At that time, you couldn't be looking several months ahead, could you? Weren't you kind of living from day-to-day?

Reed: Well, yes, you were living from day-to-day, because you had no idea what tomorrow would bring. But you always had faith that somewhere down the line all this was going to come to an end, and you were going to get out.

Marcello: That is definitely true, but what you were hoping is that you would be alive when you finally got out of this predicament. Therefore, you still had to live from day-to-day.

Reed: Yes. I would say we were living from day-to-day, because we had no idea of what tomorrow would bring. You had no way to know.

Marcello: At the end of the day, I suppose you would say, "Thank God, I made it through another day!"

Reed: Right. The only thing I can think of that we really haven't touched on that we did in the jungle was the tremendous amount of bashings that took place, especially on the sick guys, those that were ill.

You know, there was no barbed wire around the camp or anything. You were free to walk right out of there and walk right down the road, if you wanted to, in the middle of the night. They had one guard. Nobody ever tried it, because you couldn't go anywhere. The natives would turn you in if you

went very far down the road. Of course, you didn't know how you were going to live. We were way out there--80 and 100 Kilo.

The Japs continued to beat up on guys. Fortunately, I didn't get but one bashing, and that was way back early, and I didn't get any more after that. Some of the guys were getting beat up continually. Especially during this procedure where you are picking out the sick to make up the work complement, the bashings became bad. Whereas, before you kind of shrugged it off, but it really got to you then and made you mad.

Marcello: I suppose that a lot of the earlier bashings in a way were deserved, because perhaps you had broken a rule, and you knew you were going to get bashed in that particular case. I think what you're saying is that when you get up to the 80 or 100 Kilo Camp, they were really becoming sadistic about the bashings then. They were bashing for no apparent or good reason.

Reed: Yes. That was the Korean. He was exerting his superiority.

Marcello: In other words, he felt that he could get a sick man to go out on the work detail by beating him.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: This only compounded the sick man's problems.

Reed: That's true.

Marcello: Again, that probably is indicative of the type of mentality or

ignorance of people guarding you.

Reed: It was my impression, yes. I've always thought that they were extremely stupid, because they did stupid things. Even the Japs considered them quite stupid, so they must have been. Their mentality . . . even the ones that could speak English couldn't speak very intelligently. I mean, they couldn't carry on a very intelligent conversation.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the nicknames of some of the guards, and some others that I ran across, in addition to the ones that we already mentioned, were such people as "Pretty Boy Floyd." Do you remember him?

Reed: Yes, I remember him.

Marcello: There was another one called "Pock," I think.

Reed: Yes, he was all pock-marked. I was trying to think of the great,big, ol' Korean.

Marcello: There was another one named "Donald Duck."

Reed: "Donald Duck" (chuckle).

Marcello: Finally, in October of 1944, most of the prisoners were moved off the railroad. It had been virtually completed at that time, except for some maintenance details and things of that nature, and you finally moved out of the jungle.

I do have one last question concerning the work on the railroad. Did you ever actually lay the rails or the ties or anything of that nature, or were you mainly engaged in

making the cuts and the fills?

Reed: No, I never did lay any rails. Now, I did lay ties and ballast, but I didn't lay rails. Most of my work while I was on the railroad was making cuts and fills.

Marcello: I guess the majority of the people were doing this.

Reed: No. Well, they had special groups laying rails; they traveled up and down the railroad.

Marcello: I gather that one of the things that the American officers tried to do was to get as many men off that railroad as they possibly could, in terms of trying to create other jobs for them. For example, each officer was allowed to have an orderly. Even though American officers didn't ordinarily have orderlies, I think they would take advantage of having an orderly just so they could get a man off the road. In other words, it wasn't necessary to have a person wait on them and serve them, but it was a way of getting a man off the road.

Reed: There is a slight recollection that this did happen, yes. I think it was on into the end of the time we spent in Burma, which didn't last.

Marcello: Obviously, if you could get a job as an orderly or as a truck driver or as a helper in the cook shack or something like that, that type work was better than being out on the road.

Reed: Oh, yes. Anything was better than being out on the road,

because that's where you were susceptible to all this. Your body was weakened so much that you had very little resistance.

Marcello: How much did you weigh when you went in the service?

Reed: 187 pounds.

Marcello: Do you have any idea what your lowest weight was during this period?

Reed: During this period? I don't know what it was during that period, but when we got out and weighed at Calcutta, I weighed ninety-two pounds. I was thinner at one time that I was then.

Marcello: In other words, when you were back at 80 Kilo or 100 Kilo, you weighed less than ninety pounds.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Where did you go from the jungle after the railroad was completed?

Reed: We went to--and I sometimes get this mixed up--Kanchanaburi, which was very close to Tamarkan.

Marcello: Did you ride the railroad?

Reed: Yes, which was a harrowing experience! Oh! I couldn't believe that some of those prisoners on up ahead of us built that railroad along in those mountains. Of course, we weren't in mountains; we were more or less in flat terrain. It wasn't until we started leaving there on that railroad that we ran into the mountains.

Marcello: And it was on the British end where most of the bridges were.

Reed: Yes. Although we built several bridges, they were small. They built on the side of a mountain, you know.

Somebody hollered at me when we were traveling along--the first time that the experience occurred. Somebody said, "Come over here and look at this." I couldn't maneuver too well--I couldn't walk--so I crawled over there and looked down, and I couldn't see ground! The ground I could see was way down there, and I thought, "How in the devil are we riding?" The slope of that mountain was so steep that by actually looking off to the side of the boxcar you couldn't see the ground until it was way down there. I thought, "If this train ever derails now, we're gone!" It was a tremendous amount of work involved there, I'm sure. They must have had machinery at that point. I don't know.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you had to crawl over to look over the side of this car. How long had you been in that shape where you could not actually walk?

Reed: Well, I had been in that shape about a month, I believe, because I had been carried out on working parties.

Marcello: Did you ever miss any time on the road?

Reed: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Did you spend some time in the hospital shack?

Reed: I stayed in my own place, and there were some days I didn't go on the working party.

Marcello: During those days, then, were your rations cut?

Reed: No, no, because I never went to the hospital.

Marcello: I see. Now, by the time you leave the jungle, are your ulcers getting any better?

Reed: No. It wasn't until I got to Siam.

Marcello: Okay. You get to Kanchanaburi, and this is a pretty good camp compared to everything that went on before, is it not?

Reed: Oh, it was a great improvement over what we had just come from.

Marcello: The Japanese had to give you a break. They had worked you about as hard as they could. They couldn't get any more out of you.

Reed: I suppose they felt that way. Yes, they had taken about everything they could get from us.

Marcello: How did things improve when you got to Kanchanaburi?

Reed: Well, of course, the rations were better. Like I said, we met Dr. Bloemsma, who had iodoform. He had very little else, but he could start the cure on these ulcers.

Marcello: I guess he must have been kept pretty busy. He had a lot more cases than yours to take care of, I'm sure.

Reed: Oh, yes, there were quite a few there.

Marcello: And Dr. Bloemsma was a Dutch doctor.

Reed: Yes, he was in the Dutch Army, and on Timor when he was taken prisoner. Morale in all the men improved considerably.

Marcello: You were getting more food here, too, were you not?

Reed: Yes. I mentioned the food was better.

Marcello: Were you getting a different variety of food? I'm thinking in

terms of eggs and things of that nature.

Reed: We were getting some eggs and were getting some bananas and peanuts. Most of it was what you had to buy, but this was also part of the diet on occasion.

Marcello: By this time, I guess we should have also mentioned that you're getting paid, such as it was.

Reed: Well, those who worked got paid, and I wasn't working. But, there again, we still had guys like Coy and Griff who were taking care of me, so I didn't feel any pinch.

Marcello: So what did you do with your time here at Kanchanaburi?

Reed: Well, I was flat on my back most of the time in Kanchanaburi, because I couldn't walk.

Marcello: Did they have a hospital hut here?

Reed: No. Everybody stayed right where they were sick. I know one night I woke up,and the siren for an air raid alarm was going off, and you could hear the bombers coming. They started dropping the bombs, but they weren't on us. They were over there on the bridge near Tamarkan, but we were close enough to where it sounded like it was on us. I know I got up . . . now, I couldn't walk. I couldn't walk, I couldn't get up and walk away, but when the bombs started coming in--you could hear them--I got up and moved to the outside of the camp before I realized what I was doing, and fell. So I was amazed at the fact that I could walk after all, when consciously I

couldn't even set my foot on the ground.

Marcello: By this time, had Dr. Bloemsma already performed the operation?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: You were kind of healing now, or trying to heal.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: I assume you also had to be very careful that you didn't hit those open sores or brush them against something, because it could start all over again.

Reed: Right. You usually padded them--I did--with a pillow or some kind of something you could stuff up in there--old clothes or rags. Anything you could stuff up something and sew it up.

Marcello: You talked about the air raids, so let's follow through on this, because when you were at Kanchanaburi or Tamarkan, you did come under Allied air raids. What did that do for your morale?

Reed: Well, absolutely nothing as far as improving it. You never knew that those people in those airplanes could ever know who was occupying those camps down there. Although it wasn't until we got to Tamarkan that they hit the camp, we were not sure at all that they knew where we were, or if there were any Americans there.

I would say when you got an air raid, you became frightened, but you got over it pretty quick. You didn't think about it the next day.

Marcello: At least, I would assume, you now knew that the tide of the war had turned.

Reed: Yes. We knew that we had awful large bombers, which we didn't know about. Those were the B-29's. We could see them up in the sky, but we knew it wasn't any kind of plane that we were familiar with.

Marcello: The Japanese evidently weren't too excited about those B-29's, either.

Reed: That's where your morale went down, was in the Japanese and the Koreans.

Marcello: You could see them taking a turn for the worst?

Reed: Right. They were becoming extremely concerned about the situation.

Marcello: Did they follow up in the air raids by being rougher on the prisoners then? Did their attitude toward the prisoners change any?

Reed: They may have, but I don't know. I don't recall the rations or any privileges, although we didn't have any . . . but what little we did have were not taken away.

One time--and this was not in Kanchanaburi, but it was over in Tamarkan--after a bombing raid, I confronted a Jap sergeant, and this was when he whipped me with that Samurai sword about the head. The only thing I could figure out was that his reasoning was that he was mad because of the bombing,

because I had given him no other reason. As a matter of fact, I didn't even pay any attention to him at all.

Marcello: I'm sure that after one of these raids, or during one of these raids, you couldn't show any emotions of happiness or delight with what was happening.

Reed: No, definitely not. As a matter of fact, I wasn't prone to show any happiness either, no matter what, because we didn't know when the next bomb was going to hit right where we were (chuckle). They had hit our camps.

Marcello: Could you definitely see your health improving here at Kanchanaburi?

Reed: Oh, yes, after Kanchanaburi. I began to walk in Kanchanaburi and began to improve considerably.

Marcello: But you never actually did do any work here?

Reed: No, I never did. I don't recall ever going out of the camp at all.

Marcello: This was another huge camp, was it not?

Reed: It was a large camp. It was a mixed-up camp. There were a lot of different, mixed nationalities in this camp.

Marcello: I guess there was a lot of manpower here to do whatever tasks needed to be done.

Reed: Yes, that's right. Did anybody mention that in Kanchanaburi that there was a Dutch masseur there?

Marcello: I don't believe so.

Reed: He believed that he had a magnetism in his body that he could not touch you, but only get his hands close to you, and he could cure any ailment that you had by just moving his hands over you. We thought this was extremely funny, because he was a massive-type man, ape-type--long arms, real long hair, and bushy beard and moustache. His whole face was covered with hair. He would come around, and he would run his hands over people--other Dutch. We were always imitating him. We would go around to each other, and we would make out like we were moving our hands, and we were curing that way.

Dr. Bloemsma stopped us. He said, "Don't do that anymore. I don't believe in what he does either, but those people who do believe in him, psychologically it is helping them. So don't make fun of him." But we used to get the greatest kick out of watching that guy. I don't know why I remembered that.

Marcello: How long did you stay at Kanchanaburi?

Reed: We weren't there very long; it was a very short time.

Marcello: Was it a matter of months or weeks?

Reed: I don't believe it was much over a month, or maybe a month-and-a-half.

Marcello: And then did you move on to Tamarkan?

Reed: Yes. We went straight from there to Tamarkan.

Marcello: Are you still with your buddies?

Reed: Yes, we were all still together.

Marcello: What happens when you get to Tamarkan, which is very, very close

to Kanchanaburi?

Reed: Oh, yes. It was very close, because the bombs dropping on Tamarkan we thought were going to drop on us over at Kanchanaburi.

Marcello: Did you have some fear and trepidation about going to Tamarkan, since you knew that's where most of the bombing was being done?

Reed: Yes, I had quite a bit of anxiety about going over to Tamarkan.

Marcello: So what happens when you get over there? What do you do?

Reed: Well, Tamarkan was the best camp without a doubt. It was the best camp in many respects, disregarding the bombings and the guys that were killed. We had our own entertainment; we had our own stage; and we could play baseball or softball.

Marcello: You were well enough that you could participate in sports of that nature?

Reed: Eventually, I got there. That canteen was created, a store, where you could buy stuff if you had money.

Marcello: Who operated the canteen?

Reed: Well, it was Americans. I say Americans. I'm not too sure about that. It might have been Dutch or somebody else.

Marcello: I never have understood exactly how one of these canteens would be set up. Do you recall? In other words, where and how did they get the goods with which to stock the canteen?

Reed: They were bought from the natives.

Marcello: But where did the money come from originally?

Reed: I don't know, unless some officers or somebody who had some money started it off. Or somebody may have got together and created this store before we got there--the English. Tamarkan and Kanchanaburi were old camps to the British. They'd been there a long time before we ever got there. All this was established before we ever got there, so I really don't know how it was started or who started it. It seems to me like the British still ran it.

It was sanctioned by the Japanese or the Koreans. I'll say it was the Japanese, because the Koreans were nothing more than guards. That's all they were. I don't know whether the Japs furnished part of the material and took part of the proceeds or what. Somebody probably knows.

Marcello: Could you work at this time? Were you able to work?

Reed: Yes. I was going out on working parties.

Marcello: What sort of working parties would there be here at Tamarkan?

Reed: Well, you went over and worked on the bridge, went across the river and worked on the railroad.

Marcello: What sort of work would you be doing on the bridge or the railroad?

Reed: Just repair work on the railroad . . . ballast work. Let's see, what else were we doing? I can't recall. We went across the river and worked over there quite a bit, and I can't think what the dickens we were doing over there. We were working

on the railroad or working on something over there.

The camp itself was surrounded by barbed wire and a moat, but still guys got out and traded with the natives there at Tamarkan. That's the first time I knew where so much of this trading was taking place. They were slipping out in the middle of the night and coming back in.

Marcello: Did you ever go out?

Reed: No. I had the opportunity, but I never did go.

Marcello: Why?

Reed: Because it was certain death if you got caught, that's why!

Marcello: It's amazing to me that people would take chances like that.

Reed: It's amazing to me that they took chances like that. Some guys that you'd never suspect, meek, very mild-mannered guys who weren't very vocal about anything, would be the biggest trader in the camp.

Marcello: I understand Roy Offerle, for example, got involved in quite a bit of that here.

Reed: Yes. Quite a few of the Americans got involved--more than I suspected. It was very hush-hush, because you never knew when you might be telling the wrong guy.

Marcello: By this time, had the Koreans and the Japanese eased up a little bit in terms of the bashings and so on?

Reed: It's hard to say that they had eased up any. There were still quite a few bashings going on. They had us going through these

rituals, you know--their rituals. In Tamarkan every morning they got out, and as the sun rose they did their little ritual, religious thing, to the Rising Sun. Well, when we got to Tamarkan, we were doing the same thing. They got us out there, and we were doing their little religious thing and speaking the same thing. I don't remember the words now, but we were supposed to know the words, but nobody ever learned them. We would say a bunch of gobbledygook. Of course, you had to bow every time. We learned this, and they were still not out of the fact that they wanted to show themselves superior at that time.

Marcello: Once again, they're not working you too hard, though.

Reed: No. Working parties weren't to compare with those in Burma.

Marcello: We were talking about the canteen awhile ago, and I wanted to ask you what could you purchase there.

Reed: Eggs, sugar or sugar-type brown sugar, bananas, peanuts.

Marcello: Where did you get your money?

Reed: Well, after you started working, then you got paid.

Marcello: How much did you get paid?

Reed: A dollar a day. I mean, a baht a day, one baht a day.

Marcello: One baht?

Reed: Yes. That was the Siamese money, baht.

Marcello: What would that enable you to buy?

Reed: You could buy an egg with it, or you could buy a little tobacco.

I know you had to work a week. One caddy of "wog" tobacco cost seven bahts, so you had to work one whole week before you could buy one caddy of "wog" tobacco.

Marcello: How much is a caddy of "wog" tobacco?

Reed: It was about the size of a building brick, and about as hard (chuckle).

Marcello: How often did you get paid?

Reed: Let's see. We were paid every week, I believe. Griff and I were talking the other day. He said, "Why in the heck did we go out there and work all week and then go buy a damn caddy of "wog" tobacco? That was really stupid!"

Marcello: Instead of buying food?

Reed: Instead of buying food. Of course, one caddy of "wog" would last for a month-and-a-half, if you didn't smoke like a fiend.

Marcello: From time to time, I've heard a lot of the prisoners talk about having pets and things of that nature. What do you know about that?

Reed: (Chuckle) Yes, several of the guys brought in monkeys for pets. Some had cockatoos for pets. The monkeys were the most distasteful, nastiest, damn things that ever breathed! I never did have one because they were destructive; they tore up everything. They tore up all the people's stuff around them. They shit on everything (chuckle). They had one they called "Mac-Mac."

Marcello: This one wasn't the same as "Mick the Yank?"

Reed: No, that was a different one.

Marcello: Was "Mac-Mac" in the same camp or around the same place?

Reed: Yes. This "Mac-Mac" was the one I'm familiar with, and I'm trying to figure out who had the darn monkey. That damn monkey, you couldn't believe! He'd just stand there and pee all over. He'd get up in the top of the hut and just spray everything and everybody below him. I've seen him go to crapping, and he'd get it in his hand and then throw it out over everybody down below. We called him "Mac-Mac." He was such a crumb-bum, anyway.

"Mac-Mac" in Javanese . . . when we were in Malang, the prostitutes in Malang would holler at you when you were walking down the street, "Mac-Mac." That meant if you wanted to go in and be serviced, you see. We called that monkey "Mac-Mac," and that was a good name for him. A terrible situation!

Marcello: How did these guys get hold of these monkeys?

Reed: Well, damned if I remember now! I wish they hadn't, I know that! I think they bought them off of these damn natives that came around. They brought them into camp at night. They didn't last very long, believe me. Nobody could stand them.

Marcello: It seems to me that would have been a good way to lose a friendship, too, if you brought one of these monkeys in.

Reed: Right.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. You mentioned that on occasions guys would have cockatoos. Do you remember a person who had a cockatoo maybe even back in Bicycle Camp?

Reed: Yes, that's true. There were cockatoos in Bicycle Camp. O.L. Smith had a cockatoo, and several others had cockatoos there. As a matter of fact, when we were in Singosari, several had cockatoos.

Marcello: Do you remember a cockatoo named "Piss Pot?"

Reed: (Laughter) Yes, I remember. Do you know who owned it?

Marcello: Crayton Gordon mentioned who had it, and he's the only one who seems to remember that cockatoo. He'll be glad that you have confirmed his remembrance of that cockatoo. He seems to think that perhaps it was some officer that had it in Bicycle Camp.

Reed: Yes, I think it was, too. It was in Bicycle Camp. I'm pretty sure it was.

Marcello: How long did you remain at Tamarkan altogether?

Reed: Oh, Lord, I don't recall. We were there quite a long time. I say a long time . . . we couldn't have been there a year, because I don't think we were there over seven or eight months.

Marcello: You must have left there pretty much near the end of the war.

Reed: Let's see. From Tamarkan we went to Kanchaburi. I get Kanchanaburi and Kanchaburi mixed up. Kanchaburi was a camp that

actually was called Cashew Mountain Camp. We were in Cashew Mountain Camp long enough to build one airport, or clear the jungle for one airport. Then we cleared a jungle for the second one before we left there.

Marcello: Why was it calléd Cashew Mountain Camp?

Reed: There was a mountain right beside it. I don't know. We don't know whether the darn mountain was called Cashew Mountain or not. We understood that it was, and this was why we called it Cashew Mountain Camp.

Marcello: Was it a very big camp?

Reed: Pretty good-sized. It wasn't as large as Tamarkan or Kanchanaburi, but it was a fair-sized camp.

Marcello: In other words, there were several thousands of prisoners there.

Reed: Yes, right.

Marcello: How far was it from Tamarkan?

Reed: Oh, it was a long way from Tamarkan, because you went to Bangkok and then turned south and went south out of Bangkok down to it.

Marcello: So you went by a train?

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: Was there anything extraordinary about this train trip?

Reed: I was frozen with fear the whole damn time I was on it, I know that!

Marcello: Why was that?

Reed: Well, the B-25's and B-24's were bombing those trains and strafing those trains constantly! How we got through, I don't know.

Marcello: Did your train itself come under bombing and strafing?

Reed: No, it didn't. As I said, I don't know how we got through. I don't recall any bombing or strafing, but there might have been a scare at one time. I know that we were riding in an open gondola, and I was watching continuously during the daylight hours to see if I could see any aircraft anywhere, because we were "duck soup" in that dang thing if they'd have come over and found us. But we got down there all right.

Marcello: Other than the mental anguish, there really wasn't any physical suffering and so on on this train trip.

Reed: No, not really. Not that train trip.

Marcello: Didn't it take a couple of days to get there to your destination? How long did it take you to get to this Cashew Mountain Camp?

Reed: I believe it was two days.

Marcello: Now, were you still living in the atap-type huts when you got to Cashew Mountain?

Reed: No. There wasn't anything there when we got there. We had to build them.

Marcello: By this time, you knew how to build the atap huts?

Reed: Oh, yes. We were quite experienced at that. We had to build our own huts, to their specifications, of course. We got

fairly good rations there.

Coy and Griff and I got into the business there, over and above going out on working parties. We got to splitting paper. We got hold of a real big book, and we split paper. Coy was an expert at splitting paper, and it took an awful lot of patience to split a page of a book. You split it, and sometimes you can split it three times.

Marcello: What did you use to split it?

Reed: Anything that we could find--fingernails mostly. You would just work with it until you finally got it peeled off to where you could pull it apart.

Marcello: For the benefit of people who read this transcript resulting from the interview or who listen to the tape, why were you splitting paper?

Reed: For cigarette paper (chuckle).

Marcello: This split paper was at a premium, was it not?

Reed: Yes, it was. You couldn't find any paper and once you could get hold of a book it was very valuable, because you could split those cigarette papers and sell them and make real good money. Also, we got in the business of making shorts.

Marcello: As an historian, I wish you'd have used that paper to write diaries, but you didn't do that, right?

Reed: No (chuckle).

Marcello: How much would you sell this paper for?

Reed: I was trying to think awhile ago. I don't recall. I know that we made real good money splitting this paper. It didn't take very much splitting to make a pretty good day's wage. I really don't recall what we were getting for it. Of course, some of it was trade-off-type things.

Marcello: You also mentioned that you were making shorts.

Reed: We made shorts out of any material. Of course, this was a rare item, too--material of any kind.

Marcello: Where did you get the material?

Reed: We stole it and pilfered it and traded for it, whatever we could do.

Marcello: I understand the material off the bottom of the mosquito nets was prized.

Reed: Yes, it was prized material. Scots would sell their kilts, and that made good shorts. Somewhere, and I don't remember where--we must have stole it or confiscated it somewhere--we got some real heavy canvas, real heavy-gauged canvas. I couldn't push a needle through the darn canvas, and Griff couldn't,either, but Coy had such strong fingers that he could push that needle through that canvas where you had to double for a seam, you know. Coy was the official short maker of that canvas because nobody else could make them. We would lay them out in patterns and cut them out.

Marcello: Where did you get needles and thread?

Reed: Well, at one point we saved them back when . . . and carried them with us. It seemed to me like Coy had carried a couple of needles with him all the time.

Those shorts that were made out of that canvas, a guy would put them on, and he could walk, but the shorts wouldn't move at all. His body was moving, but the shorts would stay absolutely still (chuckle). You could take them off, and they would stand straight up just like you were wearing them.

Marcello: They probably chafed a little bit, too, didn't they (chuckle)?

Reed: Quite a bit! But at least they were shorts. They bought them.

Marcello: How did you cut out these shorts? What sort of a cutting instrument did you use?

Reed: Let's see . . . I'm trying to think. We didn't have a knife. It seems to me like we had a little bitty pair of scissors we got somewhere. It was sort of like scissors that come for real small children. You know, you can buy small little scissors to cut paper dolls and things with? There were some scissors like that we had. It was extremely hard to cut, but we got them out. We sharpened those scissors.

Marcello: You also mentioned that you were working on an airfield here at this camp.

Reed: We were clearing a very dense jungle for an airfield.

Marcello: This, I'm sure, could have been very dangerous work. I would assume that the Allies knew that you were building an airfield,

and that you might have come under some sort of bombing.

Reed: Oh, yes, they bombed every night. We'd go out there, and we'd cover up bomb holes all one day, and that night they'd come and just blow the devil out of the whole thing. We'd have to go back the next day and cover up the bomb holes again.

They didn't really start bombing until we got it all cleared off and built a couple of bamboo buildings over there. Then they came in, and they never let us or the Japs ever finish that airfield. So the Japs finally got finally disgusted and moved us about ten miles away.

Marcello: Was the airfield far enough away from where you were quartered that you were not in too much danger of being killed?

Reed: Well, we thought we were. What we didn't know was that the Americans knew that we were there, because the OSS men were in and around that area. We didn't know they were there, but they had us spotted.

Those bombers would fly over in the night, and we just knew they were going to drop bombs every time they flew over. Every time they bombed the airfield, they came over us. But they didn't. They were far enough away that we didn't get any flak or anything from them, but it was close enough to where we could hear the whole action that was taking place.

Marcello: Am I to assume that the Japanese weren't necessarily working you too hard here?

Reed: Well, some of it was pretty hard work. First you had to cut the jungle out and then dig all the stumps out. It was pretty hard work, yes.

I worked out there for quite awhile, and then I was moved in and started working as a medic there. I didn't work on the second airfield. The Japs got disgusted with trying to finish the first one, so they went over about ten miles away and started clearing jungle for another one.

Marcello: Is this where you were when the war ended?

Reed: No. We then took a train out of there. In this one we were in enclosed cars. We went up to a place north of Bangkok. There again, I was scared to death the whole time we were on the train. We stopped in Bangkok in the railroad yards there, and they were bombing the damn railroad yards daily. They stopped the damn train right in the railway yards and left it there and with us on it. I knew they were going to come over and bomb that railroad yard that day. For some reason, they didn't.

Then we moved out of Bangkok and went on to this next camp, and I can't think of the name of it. Most of the guys were Australians that were there, and they were digging caves back in the mountains for ammunition dumps. I was a medic, and I didn't go out on the working parties there.

Marcello: Is this where you were when the war ended?

Reed: Yes. We were only there a short time when the war ended.

Marcello: Describe the end of the war. In other words, how did you get the word that the war was over? How did you know that the war was over?

Reed: One morning we got up, and there were no Japs anywhere. The gate was locked. Everybody got prepared to go on the working party, and there were no trucks, and there were no Japs--no Jap guards, nobody at the gate. They had left during the night.

Marcello: Did you immediately become suspicious?

Reed: We became extremely suspicious of what in the world was going on, because we had no idea what was happening.

Marcello: Did you have a fear for some time that the Japanese might murder all of you if they lost the war?

Reed: Yes. We were fearful of the fact, even from the time we got out of that particular camp, that we were going to be killed. As a matter of fact, they came back. They never did come back to the camp, but they came back and at about a hundred yards out, all around the camp, they set up machine guns.

Marcello: That same day?

Reed: That afternoon.

Marcello: In the meantime, you didn't dare venture out of camp. All you were doing was speculating.

Reed: Well, that day we didn't venture out of camp. That night several of the guys decided that they wanted to get some sake, so they did.

Marcello: Was this camp at Phet Buri?

Reed: It very well could have been.

Marcello: Anyway, these guys were going out of camp to get some sake.

Reed: Before that, we couldn't understand why all the Japs were gone. Finally, there was an Australian sergeant-major who was in charge of the camp, or he was the ranking officer. Somebody met him at the gate and informed him that there had been an armistice declared. He came back and announced that to everybody.

Marcello: Were the Japanese still outside the camp by their machine gun emplacements?

Reed: No, they hadn't set up the emplacements yet. They were still gone. It wasn't until after that that the Australians sang "God Save the King," and then we tried to sing the "Star-Spangled Banner," and nobody could remember the words, so we sang "God Bless America." We had a little ceremony there.

Marcello: Let's back up a minute, because I'm getting confused. You wake up that morning, and the Japanese are gone.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: When does the Australian sergeant-major find out that the war is over, or at least that an armistice has been declared?

Reed: It was about mid-morning, I would say.

Marcello: Then the Japanese come back that afternoon.

Reed: Yes.

Marcello: But it is after the Australian sergeant-major got the word that the singing and the celebrating began to take place.

Reed: Yes. He was informed that the armistice was declared, and he came back and said, "Armistice has been declared. The war is over." Of course, everybody rejoiced and started singing. No Japs were around, so several of the guys decided they would go down to the Jap warehouse, which was about a half a mile down the road. They went down there, and they brought back a five-gallon crock of sake.

Marcello: Is this still inside the camp, though?

Reed: No. They slipped out of the camp and went down there and got it and brought it back in the camp. We were all still in the camp, because it was locked up. We were told not to leave camp.

Marcello: And there was a barbed wire fence around this camp.

Reed: Yes, there was a barbed wire fence around it, and a high one. So, we proceeded to get our ration of sake and get stoned. Then the Japs came and set up machine gun emplacements all the way around the camp about a hundred yards out, and they stayed there until we were taken to Bangkok.

Marcello: Did you ever break into any of their warehouses within the camp to get any extra rations or anything of that nature?

Reed: They had moved everything out; they were gone. Of course, they didn't live there at that particular time. They just had their headquarters there.

Marcello: How long was it before you got out of that camp?

Reed: We were in that camp for just several weeks.

Marcello: What I'm saying is, after the armistice had been declared, how long was it before you got out of that camp?

Reed: Just a few days.

Marcello: How did you get out? Who came to get you?

Reed: A stake-bed truck . . . there was only two trucks. They had been commandeered by an American Air Force officer. He drove into camp, and he hollered when he drove in. Of course, he busted the gates and came on in. He ignored the Japs out there altogether. He hollered, "Is there any Americans in this camp?" A few of us that were there said, "Yes!" So we all piled on the truck, and they took us to Bangkok.

Marcello: Well, there couldn't have been too many of you if there were only two trucks.

Reed: There were only a few of us there.

Marcello: So they took you to Bangkok.

Reed: Yes. We were in the docks at Bangkok--a warehouse. That's where we got new khakis, and we stayed there for a while.

Marcello: Did they immediately begin to feed you?

Reed: Yes. As well as I can remember, it was food but much different from what we'd been getting. It wasn't steak and potatoes or anything like that. It was mostly canned rations and some fruit that we got there.

Marcello: How long did you remain there before you took off?

Reed: We were there several days. I don't recall exactly. I know we slept right there in that warehouse.

Marcello: Were you getting a little restless by this time?

Reed: No, I was really enjoying it. We were beginning to see people that were coming in from all over. I got to see Dr. Bloemsma there, and I hadn't seen him in a long time. We met some of the OSS men who had been out in that area and knew where we were and everything about us. We were ready to go when they decided for us to go.

Marcello: I assume you flew out of there to Calcutta.

Reed: We flew out of there to Rangoon, and we sat down there first. We flew in a C-47. There was a field hospital there in Rangoon, and the first white woman we'd seen in all that time were some nurses. For the guys that were real sick, we had one nurse board the plane with us there and fly on into Calcutta. There were three planes, I believe. We got into Calcutta early morning or late night. It was about midnight or one o'clock in the morning, something like that.

Marcello: What happened when you got to Calcutta?

Reed: They took us straight to the hospital--142nd Field Hospital, I believe it was. The cook had prepared us beautiful steaks and all the vegetables and everything to go with it. We were taken in and sat down, and he served that meal, and he was

so proud. Of course, before that we were being interviewed by different ones that met the plane and trying to get us to talk. We were rushed right out away from them. But we couldn't eat the damn steak, and that cook was so disheartened. He had worked so damn hard to please us, and then we couldn't eat.

Marcello: When you say you couldn't eat it, you meant that you regurgitated it?

Reed: No. We could eat some of it, but we couldn't even hardly make a dent in the plate that he served us. Our stomachs were so small that we couldn't eat very much.

Then we were taken and put to bed that night. Then it was "Katy, bar the door" from there on, because it was one hell of a party. They had cases of beer and whiskey right on the ward where we were. We were sitting there in the hospital bed drinking, which was unheard of. Anyway, we got Wacs, nurses, and Waves, and they all gave us a party, so we were partying all the time.

Some of the guys just left the hospital and went to Calcutta. They just shacked up there in Calcutta and never did come back to the hospital at all. Of course, we were there quite a while--long enough that we could go around and see things.

Marcello: When you say they "shacked up," you mean they shacked up with some of the locals or some of the nurses?

Reed: No, some of the locals. Crap! You could have gotten all you

wanted from any of the nurses there. All you had to do was stick around. They went up and got some damn old dirty Indian gal and shacked up. I guess they were happy (laughter).

Marcello: During this stay at Calcutta, were you ever debriefed in any way at all?

Reed: Not in Calcutta.

Marcello: They were mainly concerned with your physical rehabilitation there?

Reed: Yes. They were doing some tests on us when they could catch us. The doctor came in one morning and said, "Please stay here until we get this test made now! I'm begging you! Don't get up and run out of here, because these tests are going to take all morning!" We obliged him and stayed there, but usually we were up and gone and off on another tour of some kind.

Marcello: How long did you stay in Calcutta?

Reed: It seems to me like about two weeks.

Marcello: During this time, they were mainly taking care of you in a physical sense, that is, probably giving you medical examinations and administering medicines where they were needed and feeding you a proper diet and things of that sort.

Reed: Yes. They were feeding us a proper diet and giving us tests. There wasn't much medicine taken. Mostly everybody had a bottle with them all the time, and they were drinking whiskey or beer, one, the whole damn time. Medication wouldn't have done much

good or made them sick, one of the two. There were so many parties they were holding for us. Mainly they were just giving us tests and giving us a proper diet.

They let us go, wherever we wanted to go, whenever we wanted to go, except this one morning when that doctor walked in and begged us, "Please stay! We'll never get these tests made if you don't stay here!"

Marcello: Then from Calcutta did you more or less make your way back home to the States?

Reed: Yes. We left Calcutta in a C-46 to New Delhi. We had to land at New Delhi because the port engine caught on fire, and we were going to have to bail out. Oh, Lord! It was like the middle of the night, and that damn old airplane . . . and the engine caught on fire. The co-pilot came back there and said, "Get your parachutes on. We're going to have to get out of here." I was shaking so bad that I couldn't even put my parachute on. I thought, "My God, coming this far and we're going to have to do this!" Finally, the fire extinguisher on the damn engine started functioning and put the fire out. We went in on one engine. We landed at New Delhi and spent the night there.

Then we went on to Karachi from there. We never did leave the airport at New Delhi. We stayed in Karachi for about a week and didn't do much there--just more good food and more

heavy drinking and partying. Then we boarded an old DC-7, four-engine job, and started our trip back through North Africa and across the Atlantic.

Marcello: When you got back to the States, were you interrogated at all by Military Intelligence or anybody of that nature as to what occurred in the various POW camps?

Reed: We were interrogated continuously for seven straight days, approximately eight hours a day, at Walter Reed Hospital.

Marcello: What sort of information was being sought?

Reed: We were telling a story, just like I've told it here, entirely around the time that we spent in prison--in Java, in Singapore, in Burma, and in Siam. Mostly the interviews were repeated, and we had to tell the story mostly about the period of time spent in Singapore and through Burma building the railroad.

Marcello: In other words, were these people looking for evidence that they could use against the Japanese for war crimes and things of that nature?

Reed: Yes. They wanted us to name people from that time on. All these names and appearances were fresh in our minds. We could give them names, nicknames that we'd given these Korean and Jap guards, and physical features about them that were distinguishable.

Marcello: To your knowledge, did every one of the Lost Battalion people go through these interrogations?

Reed: No. I found out later that only a few of us were interrogated like that.

Marcello: You do not know exactly who conducted the interrogations or what happened to the material that was being gathered, other than the fact that it was being used in the war crimes trials?

Reed: Well, it was being used in the war crimes trials, but I don't know what happened to it after that.

Marcello: When these people interrogated you, were they taking notes?

Reed: Yes, they were constantly taking notes the whole time. They sure were.

Marcello: Were you ever given any psychological tests or anything of that nature?

Reed: Yes. At Walter Reed we were given psychological tests, and I was given psychological tests,also, at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

Marcello: When was it that you were finally released from the service?

Reed: March or April of 1946. I think it was in April of 1946.

Marcello: Had you been able to get home before April of 1946?

Reed: I was on leave. I left Walter Reed Hospital and went home from there to see my parents. Then I went to Fort Sam Houston for a short time, only a couple of days. I got an extended leave then until the time I was discharged.

Marcello: Did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Reed: Yes, I had quite a bit.

Marcello: In what sense?

Reed: One thing that comes to my mind now is the fact that I would not take orders from anyone. No one told me what to do. They could ask me to do something, but nobody told me to do something.

Marcello: Did this lead to problems?

Reed: Yes. It led to problems not only with my own family, but with the girl that I married. Things set me off, which I knew why they set me off; but the people, not knowing all the things that I'd been through, they couldn't figure out why I would get set off and get mad about certain things.

I did have a complex, too, about the fact that I couldn't get a decent job, because I had no experience at anything. I was too high-strung, too nervous to go to school. I tried it. I went to Texas University and didn't last but a semester. Later I went to TCU and did learn something.

I suppose I was looking for a good time all the time, looking to make up some time, which was impossible. I wasn't prepared, really. I shouldn't have ever . . . I don't think any of us should have been turned out immediately after we got back.

Marcello: I think the authorities thought they were doing you a favor by getting you home as quickly as possible, but, like you point out, the world that you returned to was a lot different than the world you'd left, too.

Reed: It was. Everybody was just trying to bend over backwards. When we were coming home, in Karachi, they treated us like something extra-special, and in Calcutta, of course.

When we landed at Casablanca we were treated just like we were presidents of countries there. We were given the royal treatment. We stayed in that hotel where Stalin and Roosevelt stayed and where the conference was. We were highly entertained, fed the best food, and it was French cuisine, which was very good.

When we were in the Azore Islands, they moved a whole barracks of damn Wacs out of their sleeping place so that we would have a place to sleep there in the Azore Islands. The plane was boarded by two congressmen there in the Azores--the plane that we were on. We had to give permission for them to get on our plane. A three-star general, a lieutenant general, boarded the plane there. We gave him permission to come aboard. The pilot was the one that was telling us that we had to give permission. He couldn't permit them to come aboard. They were hitching rides. When we came into New Brunswick, the Canadians entertained us there.

We flew over New York City. Somebody had the bright idea of doing a figure eight real low, right over the Statue of Liberty, and then flying down Broadway. The pilot said he could not do it. It was all kinds of a restriction against it.

The lieutenant general told him to go ahead and do it and that he would take responsibility for it, and so he did. We flew right down over Broadway, and we did a figure eight over the Statue of Liberty, then right down Broadway.

Then we went right into the National Airport in Washington, D.C., where we were met by a throng of reporters and photographers and all that stuff. Hell, we didn't know what to do. We were too flabbergasted to speak. Then they took us over to Walter Reed.

Marcello: I've heard it said that a lot of the former prisoners had trouble staying in one place for any extended period of time once they returned home.

Reed: Yes. I was moving all the time. My poor parents never did get to use their car, because I was always gone. I would go and I would take the car one evening, and I wouldn't even show up that night. I'd just be gone, and I'd show up the next day sometime. They never said a word. I thought I was really living it up, doing the great. Of course, I was spending money hand-over-fist. It was pitiful. They should have put us all in the psycho ward for about six months before they let us out.

Marcello: As you look back upon your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as being the key to your survival? What enabled you to survive your experiences while a lot of your buddies

are still over there, so to speak?

Reed: I really don't understand.

Marcello: Well, how come you survived? How come you didn't die over there?

Reed: Oh. I thought we covered that. I think, and I know, that the reason I survived was because I found that the only way that you could survive in those conditions is that you had to have complete faith in God and in yourself and in your fellow man. I am more convinced of it now than I was then.

Marcello: I think that is a pretty good place to end this interview, Mr. Reed. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to speak with me. We started this interview at 10:00 this morning, and it is now 6:40, so I think we've picked your brain pretty well.

Reed: It is a shame we took this long, but I'm sorry (chuckle).

Marcello: That's okay. I wanted as much detail as you could remember, and you've done quite well.