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Interview with  
COLONEL ILO B. HARD  
March 26, 1980

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Ilo B. Hard  
(Signature)

Date: 26 March 1980

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Oral History Collection

Colonel Ilo Hard

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: March 26, 1980

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Colonel Ilo Hard for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 26, 1980, in Denton, Texas. I'm interviewing Colonel Hard in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese in World War II. Colonel Hard was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, 36th Division, Texas National Guard. This unit was captured in Java in March of 1942 and subsequently spent the rest of the war in various prisoner-of-war camps throughout Asia.

Colonel Hard, 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.

Colonel Hard: I was born in Tarrant County near Mansfield on December 21, 1914. We moved to Lubbock County near Shallowater in November, 1923. I grew up in that area, in a rural school district, a country community by the name of Hardy. I went through the first ten grades of school

there and then went into Shallowater for my senior year, which was eleven grades then. I lived on a farm with my parents, assisted with farming, and started working in automotive repair shops, well, before I finished high school, in my senior year. I went into business on my own in an automotive repair shop in Shallowater after graduation in 1933.

Marcello: That wasn't a very good time to go into business, was it?

Hard: No. The person that I'd been working for sold out to me, strictly on my reputation, in order for him to take a job as a maintenance supervisor for an oil company for a dollar an hour. That wage then was a utopia as far as wage-earning was concerned. I stayed with the shop, "batched" in a back room, for four years and operated the farm on the side with my father until '37.

Things were beginning to ease up in the drought and depression condition in West Texas by that time, and having had an inclination toward the military, first toward the Air Corps . . . but the Depression cut my education short. I couldn't afford to join the Regular Army. It was as low as . . . I think they got it as low as \$18 a month there during some of those years. Due to the responsibility I had with my parents, being the youngest of six children, the only one left at home, I couldn't afford to work for that sort of a wage. But in 1937, after prices had gone up and the farm had become more productive through soil conservation techniques and general improved farming procedures, developed during

the New Deal administration, I indulged in my private desires to the extent that I signed up with C Battery, 131st Field Artillery, Texas National Guard in order to experience something of the military life that I thought that I would like.

Marcello: Now was this battery located in Lubbock?

Hard: Yes, at that time C Battery was in the 1st Battalion and was located in Lubbock along with, at that time, one of the old square division regimental and brigade organizations. C Battery was a firing battery. The regimental service battery was located in Lubbock, and the band was attached--the regimental band. I enjoyed National Guard training and service and was fortunate in advancing rapidly for those days and made sergeant the second year, motor sergeant, because of my automotive maintenance experience. All of the personnel then with any seniority were still experienced with horses and hadn't gotten oriented on the motorized equipment yet. About that time, in 1938, I became aware of the education program in the Guard under what were then known as regimental instructors who were assigned from the Regular Army to direct the training of the National Guard units. I started the basic sub-course work, the Ten Series, as it was designated.

Marcello: The Ten Series?

Hard: Right. It corresponded to some extent with the . . . well, directly with the Army Reserve Officers Training Program. The Ten Series was comparable to their basic courses. First, the Ten Series qualified a non-commissioned officer in the

National Guard to apply for a so-called war pool reserve commission. But about that time--I'm not sure of the date-- they changed their requirements to include the Twenty Series, which I completed. Most of the work was done under Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mays, the Regular Army lieutenant-colonel of artillery, with a Staff Sergeant Sullivan. I don't know his first name, but he was an ex-school teacher that had gone into the Army during the Depression days for a better life than teaching school. I completed the required work and went before the board and was granted a war pool reserve commission in January, 1940. About that time I was promoted to staff sergeant due to a change in the table of organization authorizing a higher grade for a motor sergeant.

In August of 1940, we did our field training exercises in Louisiana. It was during this exercise that a vacancy occurred in the C Battery for a second lieutenant, and upon the recommendation of Colonel Mays, I was selected for that active commission in the National Guard, and it was that time-- I think it was on August 11, 1940--that I received a National Guard commission. In the meantime, in civilian life I had continued operating the farm and worked for Magnolia Petroleum Company in Lubbock until 1939, at which time I went to work for the Lubbock City Police Department, where I worked in civilian life until the mobilization date on November 25, 1940.

Marcello: Let me go back and fill in just a little bit. During that

period prior to mobilization in November of 1940, what sort of activities did the National Guard undertake? In other words, how did the meetings and how did the training program work during that period prior to mobilization?

Hard: In 1937, 1938, and 1939, our program was under a very austere budget. We drew minimum pay for drill time, which for a private was a dollar per drill. I think master sergeants drew \$4.25 or something of that order--the same thing as a basic pay of the Regular Army per day.

The only really extensive training . . . in 1938 the 36th Division, the Oklahoma . . . primarily the Oklahoma 45th Division, National Guard, and the 2nd Infantry, Regular Army division at Fort Sam Houston, making up the VIII Corps, were involved in the first major field training exercise since World War I. We did the training in Camp Bullis and Camp Stanley area out of San Antonio. Camp Bullis is now being used by the Army Medical Service, with headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, for a field training site for Army medical training in the field for their units.

In 1940 we started getting rumors of things to come. We drew some new trucks. We drew two new four-by-four GMC modified commercial trucks and two four-by-four Dodges for prime movers in the firing battery just before field exercises in Louisiana.

Marcello: Now at that time, did you have the French 75's?

Hard: Yes, we had the old French 75's. They only had the one

modification, and that was what they called the high speed adapter. They had pneumatic tires in the place of the old horse-drawn-type wooden wheels. We still had the old French columnater sights laid out in plateaus and drums and a box-trail on the piece. The French 75 Model 1897-A1--that's the exact designation, I believe.

In the field exercises in 1940, we substituted all kinds of ridiculous make-shift substitutes for machine guns, anti-tank weapons, tanks, and so forth that we were supposed to have had but didn't have. The 1940 exercise in Louisiana was practically void as far as any constructive exercise was concerned, due to a storm. They had a hurricane come in, and we had seven days on the tail-end of this hurricane. We put up tents inside of tents on top of hay bails, and everything was floating. We did some firing out at Camp Beauregard, but as far as tactical field exercises, they were nil because by the time twenty trucks pass over any unpaved road, the bottom would drop out, and that would be the end of it.

Marcello: At that time, that is, prior to mobilization, what would you estimate to be the average age of the enlisted man in the unit?

Hard: There was a distinct difference in the age of the non-commissioned officers and the other ranks because at that time our sergeants, other than myself, which was unusual and a little bit embarrassing and awkward at times . . . most of the sergeants had a minimum of six years' service in the Guard.



Even corporals . . . no one normally made corporal on their first hitch, in the first three years. But the privates--privates first class--were usually real young. A lot of the boys came in in high school, maybe stretched their age a little, and C Battery was adjacent to . . .the armory was adjacent to Texas Technological College. I think all of our sergeants, except myself, had some college education. Two or three of them, John Lee and Virgil Kershner and several of the fellows, had two or three years of college at that time. And as I said, the privates, most of them, were either still in high school or just out.

Marcello: What were their motivations for joining the National Guard? Again, this is the kind of information you would have had to pick up through hearsay or from overhearing conversations and so on.

Hard: Several of the non-coms were in it, I guess, because it was a little bit of a break from routine living, and the dollars were important. We had several fellows that were on scholarship out at Tech, and scholarships then were mighty slim money-wise, particularly under Pete Cauthon, the head coach there then. For example, they had at one time eleven ex-Marines on the football squad out at Tech. These were men that came out of school at the time I did, or about that time, with no money available, no jobs available. They went to the Marine Corps, put a few dollars together, and came back trying to get an education on what they'd saved

up in the Marine Corps. There was no education benefits in the service then except what they saved from their dollar a day out of their pay. I think for the young fellows just out of school, it was just kind of the thing to do in the community, particularly in the smaller towns like Jacksboro and F Battery, which I went to later. There was a fellowship there, a bond between the fellows, where they'd grown up together in high school, and it was just the thing to do. The battery commander was a prominent businessman in Jacksboro. He was just like a father to the boys, and it was just the thing to do.

Lubbock was a large enough town that guardsmen were kind of frowned on by some people then. I know one of my good neighbors made a remark to Mother that . . . asked her if she was aware of what her son was mixed up in down there fooling around with that bunch of guys that called themselves soldiers. She suggested strongly that she keep an eye to see that I wasn't led astray by them.

Marcello: What did mobilization mean to C Battery when the Texas National Guard mobilized on November 25, 1940? How did that affect C Battery? What happened at that point?

Hard: Well, it was a total change of lifestyle for everyone, and it was entered into by most, I believe, with a great deal of enthusiasm. Of course, at that time we were told that we were going to mobilize for a year of intensive training. I think all of us enjoyed the field exercises, and to us

it meant just an extension of what we'd been getting in the summer.

Marcello: Did you stay there at the armory in Lubbock upon mobilization? In other words, I don't think you moved directly from Lubbock to Camp Bowie when mobilization occurred on November 25th. Didn't you spend some time right there at the armory?

Hard: Oh, yes. Well, just prior to mobilization, we had been authorized to bring our battery strength up to active strength of seventy-seven men and with a mobilization reserve of twenty-two additional men for a total of ninety-nine. That we accomplished prior to mobilization; it was between the summer camp field training and the mobilization date. During that time, the battery commander and executive officer--"Hud" Wright was the captain, and John Kershner was the executive officer--were both ordered to Fort Sill to school. The other second lieutenant was Lemuel Boren, and he was out-of-state working with an engineering firm, so I caught a great deal of the mobilization preparation.

Marcello: Now by that time, you would have been a second lieutenant.

Hard: Yes, I'd been a second lieutenant since August; I became a second lieutenant in the Guard in August. Well, on mobilization in C Battery, one additional officer was assigned to us, I believe, out of the war pool reserve. There were two or three other men who had been awarded a war pool reserve of the type that I'd gotten back in January of 1940. I don't remember . . . I don't remember . . . I don't believe, on

second thought, that there was anyone assigned to our battery. We mobilized with just the four of us--"Hud" Wright, John Kershner, "Lem" Boren, and myself. "Lem" came home a few days before we mobilized, and being senior to me, he was battery commander.

We mobilized out on the fairgrounds and moved in . . . well, in fact, we'd been rented out of an armory, and our only place to stay prior to mobilization was the poultry display building out on the South Plains-Panhandle Fairgrounds there at Lubbock. On mobilization we were allowed to expand into other buildings on the fairgrounds. It was there that we began basic training, primarily physical fitness and disciplinary drills, close-order drills, cross-country hikes and runs, and calisthenics.

Our equipment was still slim. Fortunately, there was a CCC camp adjacent to there, and since they had much better clothing than we had, we did a lot of trading through the fence with the CCCs, and through them we were able to get most of the people in shoes and clothing of a light-type.

We left Lubbock and moved into Camp Bowie on January 11, 1941,

Marcello: While you were at the fairgrounds there in Lubbock, I would assume that everybody stayed there. In other words, did people commute between the fairgrounds and their homes, if they lived in Lubbock, everyday, or was everybody bivouacked right there at the fairgrounds?

Hard: Everyone was bivouacked at the fairgrounds. Some of the married people, which were very few . . . Captain Wright and Lieutenant Kershner were married, and, I think, one sergeant was about all the married people we had in our outfit. They stayed off the post at home part of the time, but everyone else slept and bivouacked on the fairgrounds. We had Regular Army calls and drills.

Marcello: Incidentally, up until this time, how much actual firing of the guns had taken place? I'm referring to the French 75's. Had they been fired very much at all? How about when you went on the Louisiana maneuvers?

Hard: We would usually have about three or four days of firing. Now prior to mobilization, we got a little extra money, and we were allowed to spend some weekends over on the Matador Ranch and fire sub-calibers with a 37-millimeter. In an infantry version, it was called a one-pounder. This 37-millimeter tube was adapted to the French 75's and sight scales were attached, calibrating it, and it gave quite a realistic sub-caliber training facility.

Well, for example, in my case, being an artillery officer, I'd only fired four or five problems in my, at that time, short career as an officer. I had been fortunate enough . . . the battery commander, Major Jack Walton, took me by the hand as a sergeant and let me fire some as a sergeant after I became qualified for a commission. But altogether, by the time we mobilized, I'd only fired four or five problems.

Marcello: You mentioned that on January 11, 1940, the unit moved to Camp Bowie. Was this move made by truck?

Hard: Yes. We had our own transport. Let's see, at that time it consisted of four 1934 Dodges, four-by-two's, two Chevrolet station wagons, the two four-by-four Dodges and the two four-by-four GMC's, a couple of shop-made or armory-built trailers, one for the kitchen and one for baggage . . . well, they actually had three; they had one for maintenance. We moved in a one-day trip from Lubbock to Brownwood.

Marcello: What sort of training did the unit undergo when it got to Brownwood? You were still in 1st Battalion at this time, is that correct?

Hard: That's correct. We entered into a very intensive training program. The division was commanded by a General Claude Burkhead. He was the head of a law firm in San Antonio, one of the largest law firms in the state. He'd distinguished himself in World War I. He was a dedicated citizen-soldier. All of our--that I knew--senior officers, as well as almost everybody else, were sincere, dedicated, citizen-soldiers. In the additional twenty-six years I've spent in the Army, I've never been with a group that were as dedicated to the job at hand as those people were. Our old regimental commander, Colonel Thomas A. Bay, was a wheat farmer up in the Panhandle. The battalion commander, Colonel Blucher Tharp, I think, worked for a railroad in Amarillo. He'd been a citizen-soldier who volunteered--very proud of the fact--with

Pershing on the border in 1916. In fact, he carried a slug that he'd taken out of a deceased mount that he carried as a charm.

But particularly Colonel Bay and General Burkhead, they lived . . . they moved in on Camp Bowie. General Burkhead did have a little one-room bungalow, but Colonel Bay lived in a large walled tent. They would alternate weekends. They allowed themselves one weekend a month to go home and take care of their business, which in those days both of them, particularly Burkhead's, was probably a multi-million estate, and even Colonel Bay's was quite extensive. They were there . . . Colonel Bay was there in the regiment. No one was up ahead of him, and few were up later than he. All we heard from morning to night was that we had been mobilized to prepare to fight a war that was imminent, and that was the only purpose that we could pretend to fulfill or be concerned with. Personal affairs . . . take care of them when you can because this comes first. We had to train this bunch of men into soldiers just as quickly as we could.

Marcello: I guess Camp Bowie wasn't actually completely built by the time you got there, was it?

Hard: No, we had to use a winch to get the kitchen truck to the mess hall the night we moved in to unload it. There was red mud knee-deep. The only permanent structure we had . . . the only structure we had other than the tent frames was

the mess hall and the latrine, which was in the batteries. Of course, we had our own regimental and battalion headquarters buildings built of wood. But there were no improvements; none of the streets were paved, no walkways. When you stepped off of the wood floor of a tent frame, you stepped into the red mud. Even at the bath house, for example, the wood, the boards, had been in the mud and nailed up on the walls, and they still had the red mud stains. The primary "extra-duty" spot for anybody that went astray in the outfit was to report with a GI scrub brush and fatigues after supper, and they'd go down and scrub walls of the bath house to get the red mud off.

Marcello: What sort of training did the unit undergo once it got to Camp Bowie?

Hard: We continued the basic school of soldiers--close-order drills, cross-country hikes, field training, bivouacs, field sanitation, personal hygiene, learning to take care of ourselves in the field, field exercises. We had an extensive field exercise in the early spring of 1941 called the "Rising Star Maneuvers." The government leased up land all over the Brownwood-Rising Star-Comanche-Goldthwaite area, and that was a corps exercise, plus some special troops. Then we went into firing. We did a lot of firing. We had a new range that was . . . people who attended Fort Sill commented on what was known up there as the "U" range because so many people got a "U" for unsatisfactory on the problems



they fired. It was a snap compared to the ranges at Brownwood on Camp Bowie. The impact area was in the vicinity of Pecan Bayou, and it was rolling, hilly country covered with scrub brush and post oak. It had no distinct features, and no one was familiar with the territory. We lost more rounds there than had ever been known to have been lost on an artillery range because you'd go over a hill and you didn't know how far it was to the next one. They could drop over into a valley out of sight. But it was good training. When you could fire a satisfactory problem there, you could fire one anywhere.

Marcello: At this time how seriously was the general, run-of-the-mill enlisted man taking this training? Did he realize that he was in the Army now, so to speak?

Hard: Oh, yes. Yes, there wasn't any doubt in anybody's mind that they were in the Army, even among the officers, who had fewer privileges than recruits have now in basic training. For example, when I decided to get married, I picked the weekend of the 22nd of February, 1941, which was a holiday. It happened to fall on a Saturday, so the usual Saturday morning inspection was pushed up to Friday afternoon, which would give us a full two-day holiday weekend, which was unusual. But I wanted to get off at noon on Friday, so I had to get a regimental order authorizing me to leave the battery and miss half a day of training. No officer left the post without permission under any circumstances. Nowhere

in the Army have I ever seen discipline anything like as close to the type as we had there.

Marcello: How do you explain that?

Hard: It was the attitude of the senior officers and all of the older people. We knew that there was a war coming on; there wasn't any doubt about it. For example, old Colonel Bay had been an infantry unit commander in World War I, and he knew the importance of training personnel, you know, their attitudes, and everything was pointed toward discipline-- our march discipline, our motor movements. About that time General Kruger, who had built up the 2nd Infantry to the number one unit of the U.S. Army, was promoted to lieutenant general and put in command of the VIII Corps. Then from corps he was moved up to the command of the 3rd Army. He was commander in corps when we mobilized.

When he moved up to the 3rd Army, they brought a General Strong in as corps commander. Now he'd made brigadier general in World War I because of his outstanding work as a transport officer in clearing our supplies out of the port of Marseilles. He had everything from oxen to liberty trucks and railway transportation, and he apparently worked wonders with getting it organized and coordinated and moving tonnage far beyond what anybody else had been able to do. He was recognized by the Army as a transport expert.

The VIII Corps was selected as a motor transport guinea pig for the Army. Everything we did was planned, observed,

reported, and critiqued--the time we would occupy on a roadway, the distance we would occupy on that roadway, the time that we would be on the road covering the pre-arranged distance, the time that we cleared the road, camouflage discipline. Everything to do with motor transport was timed, and, as I say, recorded, and critiqued.

When we moved from Camp Bowie to Louisiana and East Texas for our field exercises in 1941, VIII Corps moved by its own transport entirely. They used a leap-frog technique. The transportation corps regiment had their trucks, and they would pick up excessive loads from units that didn't have sufficient motor transport. They moved the cargo and troops part-way between their home stations. See, they moved troops in from Camp Bowie, Camp Barkley up near Abilene, and . . . let's see . . . the 45th Division was at Barkley, and I guess it was the 2nd Division that moved in from San Antonio.

Anyway, we had the entire corps moving over the road net between Texas and Louisiana simultaneously, but we moved in such a manner on our schedule that would interfere least with the civilian traffic. Our movements were coordinated and planned and controlled right to the minute. I've forgotten the exact breakdown now, but we had a column, serials, and units, I believe, in that order, decreasing in number. I think the unit was a maximum of . . . well, for lack of a better figure, twenty trucks maybe. A serial was made up of two or more units, and a column was made up of several

serials.

We had advance details go ahead with these schedules and establish checkpoints. There was one officer in charge of each of these march units as they were broken down. He knew exactly when he was supposed to pass a certain checkpoint. As we would pass that checkpoint, the advance party would be there with a blackboard with our actual checkpoint time. Applying that against our schedule, we could tell how many seconds or minutes we were off schedule, and woe unto anybody that was as much as five minutes off of a checkpoint.

That carried right on into the field exercise area. It was almost worth a man's career if he got caught stopping a truck on a road. You didn't stop a vehicle for any purpose, at any time, until it was off the thoroughfare, clear of the thoroughfare, and preferably back under some sort of camouflage cover in such a position that it could depart by driving forward without any backing or fiddling around. That carried right on into the field exercise area. When we finally went out of control, from under the column control, we were in our designated bivouac area in Louisiana.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about those Louisiana maneuvers which occurred in the summer of 1941. What sort of training did the unit undergo there?

Hard: It was extensive maneuvers, primarily.

Marcello: These were 3rd Army maneuvers, weren't they?

Hard: Well, it was more than 3rd Army. We had two armies there--the

3rd Army and the 2nd Army. The 3rd Army was commanded by General Kruger, and the 2nd Army was commanded by Colonel Lear, known then as "Yoo-hoo" Lear because of a disciplinary action he took when some soldiers called out to some passing girls one time. But General Patton's one and only 2nd Armored Division was there, and several small armored units and armored cavalry and a mechanized cavalry were there. I was separated from the artillery unit during that time, personally, and don't know the details of the artillery training. I was assigned as an umpire with the VIII Corps reconnaissance unit, and it was a regiment of cavalry from the Iowa National Guard. One squadron was mechanized, and the other squadron was horse portee. It was an experimental organization whereby they had semi-trailers capable of transporting eight horses and men and their equipment.

Marcello: And that was called horse portee?

Hard: The idea was that they could move with a mechanized army, and when the situation became too unsuitable for column movement due to a tactical situation, they could unload the horses and have a horse cavalry reconnaissance unit go forward. I was assigned to the horse squadron, and the only mechanization we had . . . the squadron commander had a command car. There were two motorcycle messengers assigned to each troop as messengers, and they were from F Troop of the 2nd Squadron, which had two troops of armored cars and one troop of motorcycles.

Then those exercises were . . . some of them were quite free. One exercise would usually last four or five days, and one army would be put on the defensive and the other on the offensive, the aggressor. Then they would switch. Well, maybe the defensive unit would be top-heavy with dismounted infantry and lots of artillery--conventional-type army. The other would be smaller but with mechanization. They'd put the armored division on the side of the aggressor, and these cavalry units. Maybe in the next exercise they would switch the other way. The highly mechanized unit would go on the defensive against a conventional army.

Some of them now, as I say, were quite free exercises. We covered an area of Louisiana about 150 miles north and south, and east and west it was the Louisiana and East Texas corridor, fifty to seventy-five miles wide. We had over 500,000 troops there. The 1st Cavalry Division was there; it was a full horse outfit. That was the last, literally, dying effort where the horse cavalymen tried to sell the cavalry to the Army. They had over 18,000 mounts, and the only mechanization they had, or motorization, was the supply train. They did have a motorized supply train to haul the mountains of feed and supplies necessary to support that kind of a division.

Marcello: Well, evidently, one of the units here--and I'm not clear on this--made a very good record of showing for itself. Was this the 1st Battalion or the 2nd Battalion, or was it just

the 131st Regiment that made a good showing there?

Hard: I believe it was the 2nd Battalion that made the only . . . we had the Army training test. The Regular Army officers came in and rated the performances on tactical exercises, everything from school of soldier to firing. The 2nd Battalion, I think, made the highest rating down there.

Marcello: The reason I bring this up is because I've heard rumors that the showing on the part of the 2nd Battalion figured prominently in the decision to detach it and send it to the Far East. Now whether that's true or not, I don't know. It's strictly what I heard.

Hard: That's what we heard. We wondered whether it was told to make us feel good or whether it was a natural fact. But it was a good outfit, and I know they had a good record in the field exercises in 1941.

Marcello: I assume, then, that it was after the Louisiana maneuvers that you were transferred into the 2nd Battalion.

Hard: That's correct. I've forgotten the exact date, but I think it was in October when we had a very "hush-hush" officers' call, an armed guard placed outside the headquarters, and we were told in a whisper almost that the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, was going to be shipped overseas to a destination code-named "PLUM" and that personnel would be shifted in order to bring that battalion up to T,O, and E strength.

Marcello: T,O and E strength?

Hard: T,O and E. That's Table of Organization and Equipment. So we went into practically a nightmare of preparedness of this peacetime change of station. I was enthused about it. I'd married in the meantime, and I had hoped to demonstrate the ability, during our one year of training time, to somehow or somehow stay on active duty with the Army. I liked it. Frankly, I don't know whether I was drafted or whether I volunteered. I heard we were going to have it, and before anybody told me whether I was already on the list or not, I told them I wanted to go.

Primarily they shifted personnel, there again, maybe to make us feel good. They said they took the best available to go to this outfit, and I know some of the officers like Captain Files was considered too old then for overseas duty. I think Alfonso was his name, but he was known to everybody as "Lonnie." He was too old to go overseas. We were led to believe that we would go over, and as soon as we got settled, we'd be allowed to bring our families, take our families over.

Marcello: Well, at this time supposedly you didn't know what "PLUM" meant or what its destination was.

Hard: That's correct. But, of course, as it always is, these informed leaks, you know, always occur. We knew we were going to the tropics because we were drawing tropical equipment, and somebody whispered it was the Philippines. One amusing example of that . . . the afternoon after this super-secret conference, my wife came out to pick me up after retreat,



and I was looking down my nose, didn't know how to tell her that I'd already volunteered to go with this outfit overseas. She seemed to be a little bit, oh, estranged and finally said, "I think I know what's the matter with you," or something to that effect. She'd had coffee with some of the wives that morning, and she'd already heard about this super-secret information that had been passed out to us that afternoon (chuckle). In F Battery and C Battery, we had an ideal situation since "Hud" and I went over from C Battery to F Battery.

Marcello: Now which batteries were transferred into the 2nd Battalion?

Hard: No actual battery was transferred.

Marcello: Just individuals.

Hard: Yes, just individuals. But since C Battery was the last battery in the 1st Battalion, and since "Hud" Wright and I were both in C Battery and were transferred to F Battery, it made a simple transfer. We picked thirty-four men out of C Battery that wanted to go with us, and Captain Files picked a like number that either didn't want to go or weren't desirable or for some reason, and he took them over to C Battery.

Marcello: In other words, they were transferred out of F Battery into C Battery.

Hard: That's correct. In our case we just made a swap. The only two batteries involved, practically, in F Battery were C and F--the Lubbock crowd and the Jacksboro crowd. We all got

together over with the Jacksboro battery, the F Battery.

Marcello: Let me fill in a few more details here. Sometime after those Louisiana maneuvers, is it not true that the Army underwent a reorganization and changed from the so-called square divisions to the triangular divisions?

Hard: Well, that's correct. That's what made this unit available. Right after the field exercises in August and September of 1941, the Army adopted the so-called triangular division concept. At that time the 2nd Infantry . . . General Kruger had organized it under that type of organization before he moved up to corps. Instead of the old square organization of World War I, with two battalions making a regiment, two or more regiments making a brigade, and two or more brigades making a division, this way we did away with regiments and went directly to battalions. Instead of having an artillery brigade as we'd had, we had an artillery staff officer at division headquarters and a number of artillery battalions, each separate with its own service and headquarter battery.

Marcello: But how does it get the designation "square" division and "triangular" division? What does that mean?

Hard: Well, in the square division, as I say, you had . . . everything was in more or less blocks. You had a regiment made up of usually three battalions, and each battalion had three companies; and that regiment was backed up by one battalion of artillery, and that was attached to it as a sister. Actually, in the graphic organization drawing, everything

was in blocks--regiments, brigades, and so forth. With the triangular division, it was more or less streamlined in that you didn't have this block of artillery. You had your regiment of infantry with your battalion of artillery behind it. That's about the nearest I could describe it, I guess.

Marcello: Why did the reorganization take place?

Hard: For flexibility. See, it eliminated the brigade headquarters.

Marcello: I've often heard that the Army had been observing the successes of the German divisions in Europe and had more or less been impressed with the speed and mobility of those German divisions, and this had something to do with it. Apparently, those divisions were smaller than the square divisions.

Hard: Yes, sir, no doubt they did. No doubt the war college people, the top brass in the then War Department, were making those observations. See, the old square division had insufficient transport to move. The triangular division had its own motor transport. Each unit was self-sufficient in motor transport.

And, as I say, you eliminated at least one, and sometimes two, headquarters where orders had to travel through. You went directly from divisions. In the case of artillery, you had a division artillery officer that was on the staff of the division commander, worked with G-3, and he would go directly to battalion with any artillery support mission; where, under the old organization, you had to go through

brigade, which was not an operational unit--I mean, it didn't have any guns--and so was regiment. So we'd have to go through those two dead headquarters before you get to a tactical unit.

Marcello: Also, is it not true that around this time, that is, the time when you were detached from the 36th Division, that married men and men over a certain age had an opportunity to get out of the unit that was going overseas?

Hard: Yes, they favored that. I don't remember what the criteria was, but they did screen us very closely, and, shall we say, quite liberally in taking out the older men and the married men, particularly the enlisted men. I don't think it made any difference with the officers whether they were married or not, but with the enlisted men it did. I think the married men had to sign a waiver or something to go overseas.

Marcello: Are these the kinds of individuals, then, that were transferred between F Battery and C Battery?

Hard: Yes, yes, for one reason or another--either dependents or age or health or compassion, anything. It was very liberal in our case, as far as I know, with our people. I think it was strictly volunteer both ways. We did have some people in C Battery, more than went with us, that wanted to go, but we left Captain Files . . . culled F Battery to the extent that he thought that was as far as he could go logically. Everybody that had an excuse to leave had left,

and then we just filled the vacancies that were left there.

Marcello: Okay, on November 11, 1941, I believe you left Camp Bowie by train and were on your way to San Francisco, more specifically, Angel Island.

Hard: That's correct.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen on this trip between Camp Bowie and San Francisco? I guess this was as far away from home as most of the enlisted men in the unit had ever been.

Hard: Yes, it was. It was quite an experience. We had three trains. In fact, when we started, when we got orders for this PLUM movement, we were given 1-A priority in the Army. For example, we went down to San Antonio and took 37-millimeter anti-tank guns away from the Regular Army 2nd Infantry Division. We turned in our old French 75's with the understanding that we would draw 105's. We had been under a 105-millimeter organization ever since we mobilized, but, of course, we didn't have the material. The only 105's in this country, I believe, were at Fort Sill at that time. There might have been some tactical units at Fort Bragg, which at that time was an artillery post, but all of our 105's were going to Russia and England.

So we loaded, and we had three trains. Each firing battery commander was train commander, and they split Headquarters and Service Battery between us. Each train had a baggage car that was to be used for a field kitchen. We moved out under priority on the railroad. Most of the

time we had double-headers that kept us rolling pretty good.

The only incident that I recall en route was when one of the fellows, a real close friend of mine, came to me not long after we'd been on the train, in the afternoon of the first day, I believe, and rather sheepishly admitted that they'd had some little fracas due to hitting the bottle. They had broken a glass in one of the restrooms and wanted to know if they could kick in the money and pay the conductor and not get reported. We were lectured endlessly on conduct on the train. We didn't want any adverse reports; we didn't want any kind of a thing to blacken our unit's name. En route, we wanted everybody to behave like soldiers. So we worked that out without any repercussions. Actually, generally, other than personal feelings, that was the only incident we had en route, that came to my attention as an incident. It was a fantastic experience.

Marcello: Who was in charge of the unit now? Was Colonel Tharp in charge of the unit?

Hard: Yes, Colonel Tharp was. He was transferred from 1st Battalion to 2nd. Colonel Tharp was battalion commander; Harold Elkins was executive officer; and Winthrop Rodgers was the "three"; Ira Fowler was the "two," I believe; Fillmore was the "one"; and Clark Taylor was the "four."

Marcello: What do you mean when you designate these people as a one, a two, a three, or a four?

Hard: Oh, I'm sorry. "One" is personnel and administration; "two"

is intelligence; "three" is operations and training; and "four" is logistics.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get to Angel Island in San Francisco?

Hard: We drew what shortages we might have had in clothing, which was very slight because all we heard while we were preparing was that everything is going to be ready--full strength, full equipment, and everything. We were very close to it. All we had to do actually at Angel Island was to get our immunization shots. We could have been ready the second day after we got there, but we waited and were joined by some other units. Let me see . . . I think they were the 147th and 148th Artillery. I can't remember, but one of them was a full regiment, and the other one was a regiment less a battalion. I've forgotten now which is which. They were National Guard units from up in the Midwest somewhere.

Also, there they broke the news to us that we wouldn't get the 105-millimeter, that we would get the modified 75's, the latest modifications. They were a split-trail mount with a different type of sight, a panoramic sight, in other words, a telescopic-type of sight instead of the old French columnater that you looked over the top of to sight. Let's see . . . ours had a jack. There were several of those modifications about that time, trying to make a modern piece out of that old 75, and ours had a split-trail and a jack pedestal which, when you went in position, you'd split the trail and

run down the jack, elevated piece. The wheels were clear of the ground, and they were on a tripod mount.

Marcello: Did you have an opportunity to go on liberty in San Francisco during this stay at Angel Island?

Hard: Yes, we had quite a bit of time there. Personally, I never did go in much for liberty, and I only went into San Francisco, I believe, one time. Some of the fellows had a real fine time there. Some of the officers' wives came out there by car, and I regretted very much later that I didn't have my wife come on out, but I figured we had all we could do to stay with the unit and try to be sure everything was ready. It was just another wait as far as I was concerned.

Marcello: By this time do you know that the destination for "PLUM" is the Philippines? Maybe not officially, but are you pretty sure you know where you're going to go?

Hard: That's right. Oh, that's correct. I know we'd been advised to take our recreational equipment with us--hunting and fishing. There would be a primitive area, tropical, and there would be very little in the way of improvements or civilized facilities, which was no problem as far as I was concerned. One of the very unusual things that's hard to make people believe now . . . I heard we had an officers' club at Brownwood somewhere, but I never was in it. We just didn't have time for those things. The requirement was to make reveille in the morning. We never knew when the day was over until



we'd watch the old man, Colonel Bay, and the adjutant get through with supper. In many cases our wives would come out and have supper with us, and we'd watch that head table up there. One of two things would happen: either you'd see the adjutant reach over and peck on his glass, or the old colonel would reach up to get his old beat-up campaign hat. That's what we wanted to see, because if he reached and got his hat, we knew we were through for the day. But if the adjutant pecked on that glass, that meant gunnery school or officers' call or something after supper. We just didn't have any time on our own there at all. We ate three meals a day in the regiment. One of those at least was in the battery to see what was going on there.

Old General Kruger was the best "soldier's general," I guess, we ever had in the Army. I know when we first started field exercises at Camp Bowie, they were all followed by a critique, and one of the first ones . . . that's when he was still corps commander. He said it came to his attention that one of the infantry units got his men up on the line at 12:30 a.m. or something, and the jump-off time wasn't until 4:30. They had nothing to eat before they went up there; they had nothing to eat while they were on the line; and they weren't fed until sometime during mid-morning, and then there was just some cold lunch-type or snack-type stuff handed out. He, in all sincerity, said, "Gentlemen, any commander that can't take care of his men under these

training conditions is not fit to take them into combat, and that's what we're training for. If this ever occurs or comes to my attention again, that officer will be relieved of his command." He had the doctrine that if you work all day, feed the men three good meals, two of them hot ones; if they work all day and part of the night, feed them four times. He didn't tolerate any deviations from that. It was just hurry-up-to-wait, nervous-Gertie-type of a command that we ran into in all phases of the military. Some officer is afraid that he's not going to be able to get the job done on time, so he gets his men out there way ahead of time, and they wait and they wait and they wait. General Kruger wasn't that kind of a general; he wouldn't tolerate it at all. But that was one example of his policy. We were indoctrinated with that type of thing continuously.

Marcello: So you didn't get a chance to get into San Francisco at all?

Hard: No, I didn't. As I say, I didn't have the inclination. I was real homesick, didn't have the money to celebrate on, and, in fact, as it turned out, my wife almost had to go on welfare before she finally started getting some money. She did go to work, but I don't know when. I don't know just how long it was before any pay started coming through.

No one can imagine how confused and incompetent the Army organization as a whole was at that time. We applied for, you know, allotments. We were authorized allotments so our wives would start drawing part of our pay. We made

application for National Service Insurance and even sent mail home while we were en route and from Australia that never got there. Some excuses were that due to the sensitivity of the situation, they couldn't compromise security by sending mail out or something. People that came into the service a year or two later just can't understand how little we had as an army and how poorly organized we were.

Marcello: I gather that your purpose in being sent to the Philippines was for a new division. Is that what you heard?

Hard: That's what I've heard. I don't know when I heard it, now, at this late date, but I understand we were to have formed the nucleus of a new division out on Mindanao under General Sharp. My one big regret of the whole affair is that we didn't get there, because if we could have been on a land mass of that size with friendly natives, I never would have been a prisoner, because I was in Walter Reed after the war with a group of the survivors of Mindanao that had stayed loose with guerrilla action there. All it took was the will to fight and stay loose, which was entirely different from what we were caught in.

Marcello: On November 21, 1941, you board the transport USS Republic, and your first stop was to be Honolulu in the Hawaiian Islands. Describe the trip on the Republic.

Hard: Of course, everything about it was, to a bunch of West Texas guys, incredible. The size of the ship, having the men stowed away five holds down in the deep bottom of the thing,

the smell of the galley (chuckle)--everything about it was strange and wonderful in a way. Most of us proceeded to get thoroughly seasick.

Marcello: Did you?

Hard: It was sort of a sympathetic sort of thing. I did pretty well until it was getting pretty close to bedtime, and I congratulated myself on being about to take it pretty well. I went by the head before turning in, and there was evidence of seasickness all over the floor and around. Every stall was filled with the donor of the misery, and the suggestion was just too great, so I found a vacant stall and lost mine, also (chuckle), and went on and turned in.

But the thing that impressed me more than anything else then was the feeling, the atmosphere, and the attitude of the crew of the ship. I guess the second day out--the first or second day out--our battalion officers were called together in the wardroom by the Navy personnel and advised that we were going to get some Navy version of antiaircraft artillery and that we would be responsible for manning the antiaircraft guns on the ship. There was four, oh, 3-inch guns that had been . . .the ship had been modified earlier and had made one trip to Iceland since its modification. They took a bunch of fighter pilots and nurses to Iceland, came back through the canal and up to San Francisco, and we loaded on. We had, as I say, these four 3-inch antiaircraft guns and one 5-inch or 6-inch Naval surface weapon. It was mounted back

on a gun platform on the fantail, and the four 3-inch guns were on the four corners of the ship, so to speak, two aft and two forward. The Navy had just been designated as the surface water transport authority. Prior to the Iceland trip, they had just taken over the old Republic. The Republic had been an old Army transport. It had been confiscated by the British in New York harbor, I believe. It was a German vessel originally, but it was made into an Army transport. In the good old days, it sailed out of New York once a year, I believe, maybe twice, down past Norfolk, Guantanamo Bay, San Juan, Puerto Rico, through Panama, up to San Francisco, across the Pacific to Hawaii and the Philippines, and return. But the Navy had taken over, and the ship was manned . . . at this time, by the time we went aboard, it had an Army troop commander, an old cavalry colonel from somewhere. There was reserve Navy commissioned personnel; there was reserve and regular Navy enlisted personnel; there were civilian personnel working for the Navy and civilian personnel still working for the Army. But en route, the seven days between San Francisco and Honolulu, we put in about four hours a day, being crammed on Navy antiaircraft gunnery and actually training crews on the weapons. We stopped in Honolulu at the civilian or commercial harbor, and we were there overnight.

Marcello: Incidentally, you were not the only unit aboard the Republic, were you? I think the 26th Brigade and the 22nd Bombardment Group were aboard.

- Hard: Yes, there was a bunch of smaller units. The 22nd Bomb Group's planes were being flown over and were due into Honolulu the morning of the attack, which was used, partially, as the explanation of the "SNAFU" there. Yes, their ground crews were with us. There was an ordnance unit; there was a bunch of casual fighter pilots, replacements that were going to the Philippines; there was some Army officers that had never been . . . I know they had some second lieutenants aboard that had never seen a day of active duty, and they were being assigned to the Philippines as well as this brigade. I believe this brigade of headquarters personnel was with us.
- Marcello: So what happens when you get to Honolulu? Did you get a chance to take some shore leave there?
- Hard: Yes, we had the afternoons free there. Everybody went their way. I went into town for a while and went back to the ship.
- Marcello: I don't think anybody had too much money at this point, did they?
- Hard: No, nobody had any money . . . what little that some had, that had any money with them to begin with, had been spent in San Francisco.
- Marcello: In other words, you had not been paid.
- Hard: No. I don't remember when the last time we were paid, frankly. I've lost track of that. Some of the people went to Pearl Harbor. I know Jimmy Lattimore, a lieutenant, went down to Pearl to see his brother who was a pilot aboard a carrier,

and it happened to be the carrier that was at sea with a task force that was not in Pearl when they were hit. I know one officer made a remark, "Boy, that fleet there in Pearl was really a sitting duck. If anything ever happened, somebody could catch them there."

So we left there the next day, but I don't remember whether it was the 28th or the 29th. We made up a convoy there. We went under strictly a Condition Two situation-- complete blackout; we were ordered to man the guns twenty-four hours a day. It was to be the gun commander with the headphones on and the ready box open.

Marcello: That Republic was not too fast a vessel, was it?

Hard: No, she made about fourteen knots going to Hawaii. We picked up a convoy, made up a convoy out of there, of a total of about eight ships, I think. Our Navy escort was the Pensacola, a heavy cruiser, which was the hottest thing we had. She had the 5-inch/.38-caliber, radar-directed antiaircraft secondary battery and the 8-inch main battery. She had just come out of Mare Island and was tops in the fleet. We felt like we had everything going our way with a vessel like that with us. We had two other transports-- the Holbrook and the Gregg--that carried these other two artillery units. There was a Dutch ship, the Bloemfontein, that carried some of the cargo, I believe. The one that really slowed us down, I think, was an old freighter called the Prairie Farmer. Anyway, we cruised at 8.8 knots all

over the South Pacific there. There was one small . . . it had been a luxury yacht that was en route to the Philippines for use as a seaplane tender, I believe they said. I think that was about the size of it. There might have been . . . oh, yes, the Navy transport, Chaumont, was with us. I think that about made up the convoy.

Anyway, the first day out it took most of the day to get the convoy together and take up stations, and by nightfall everything was strictly tactical--the ships weren't supposed to make any smoke during the day; there were no lights showing; radio silence.

I started to say awhile ago that I was so impressed . . . that Navy crowd aboard the Republic knew something was in the wind the day we went aboard that ship in San Francisco because I know men well enough to know when they're nervous and when they're scared. I don't remember his name now, but a lieutenant commander was the gunnery officer that taught us the gunnery while we were on there. I've never seen a man in combat that was any more nervous or keyed-up than he was when he was teaching us that gunnery en route from San Francisco to Honolulu.

Marcello: It was somewhere near the Gilbert Islands, I believe, when you received word of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Hard: Yes. The nearest I can fix it, we crossed the equator the day before, on the 6th, and we crossed the International



Date Line the 8th, so we were in there on . . . in that triangle between the equator and the International Date Line, pretty close in there around the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in there, when we got word.

I was on the number three gun, and I believe they had church call already. Anyway, they sounded General Quarters, and the chaplain, I believe, made the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: It came over the public address system?

Hard: It came over the P.A. system aboard the ship, and we never changed . . . I mean, we went back from General Quarters to Condition Two--exactly as we had been before we got word. There was no change in our status.

Immediately following that--I don't know the date or anything--this brigade commander, named Brigadier General Barnes, that was aboard, since he was a senior officer in the convoy, formed South Pacific Task Force Number One. We heard all kinds of rumors about what we were and what we were going to do. I do know that we zigged and zagged all over the country, and one time we definitely took a heading right straight back toward the States, and I was hoping we would keep going that way. They had a repeater compass back on the fantail near the number three gun where I caught the duty all the time, and I watched the bearing and the course bearing very carefully. We went over toward . . . it wasn't New Caledonia . . .

Marcello: Well, ultimately, of course, you did go to the Fijis.

Hard: Yes, but we started toward the southeast into an island over there, and the Jap submarine came up and shelled it. It wasn't too far away at the time, so we turned back southwest then and went on into the Fijis. We had one experience just before arrival in the Fijis. General Quarters were sounded, and we took battle station, and it turned out that the British cruisers Ajax and Achilles picked us up and escorted us into the Fijis and from there on into Australia.

Marcello: Incidentally, what was the immediate reaction of the officers and the men upon hearing the news of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor? Do you recall what your feelings were at the time?

Hard: More or less the attitude, "Well, it's finally happened." As I mentioned before, about the attitude of the Navy personnel aboard and what we found in Hawaii . . . see, they were all on full alert when we were Hawaii, and they called it off the night before the Japs hit.

I'd written a letter that finally got home. I wrote it kind of as a daily diary going over, and I'd already told Mary that I figured it'd be a long time before we got back together, and some rough times, because I was convinced then that we were going to get into the war. As I say, when we got the word, it was a shock, but, as far as I was concerned--and I think most of them felt like me--it was

just like we'd been kind of listening for it.

Marcello: Did you foresee a rather long war against the Japanese?

Hard: Oh, no, no. There was a magazine I picked up in a newsstand in Hawaii, and I can't recall which it was. It was Look or Life--one of those picture magazines that had almost the entire magazine taken up in full color pictures and maps of what the Navy would do in case the Japs, or our aggressor in the East, ever made an aggressive move. Among other things, I was irritated that it went ahead and mentioned our army of so many thousand men, 125,000, I believe, and it used the term "contaminated" or "diluted." Anyway, it used one or the other to describe the National Guardsmen that had been mobilized in the Army. It said the Air Corps was "understrength" and "untrained" and "ill-equipped"; but it said, "The Navy--the Navy--is ready now." In six weeks they were going to have them bottled up in Tokyo Bay, and the war would be over in case they ever started anything.

Marcello: So you did actually foresee a short war at that point.

Hard: Yes.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you conjure up in your own mind?

Hard: Oh, yes, we'd been thoroughly indoctrinated about the little, short, weakly, ignorant, stupid, spectacle-wearing Asian that wouldn't be any real problem. Their equipment would be no good, and they couldn't build ships that would float upright, that they capsized.

I know we had one officer that mentioned what sitting ducks the Navy fleet was in Pearl. He was a casual officer-- a fighter pilot going over. He was one of the hottest we had. He'd flown missions with the RAF, and he was an advanced, trained interceptor pilot--a first lieutenant. He was talking about what Chennault's crowd had done to the Japs over in China, that it was just like shooting fish in a rain barrel, you know, to knock them down. Of course, he didn't say that they never had been up against their first-line planes--nothing but the old army observation craft, almost, that our P-40's had been hitting. Anyway, he figured that he could take a P-40E, which was coming off the assembly line that time, armed with six .50-machine guns, and they couldn't put enough Japs in the air that what he could knock them down.

I guess this is the point to go ahead with that story here. He did stop off in Australia, and he led the first flight of P-40's from Australia to Java, and he lost five or six of them over Timor. A Jap had jumped him, and he only got away from him by diving. That's the only way a P-40 could out-fly a Zero, was in a dive, and he'd blown away from him in a dive and gotten on into Java. But he had a thorough case of "Zero-itis" when he got there, and he hadn't been there long until he got one shot out from under him. He came up to our outfit for a little rest from that.

But it was talk such as he gave . . . in fact, there was some . . . I've forgotten the designation . . . a dive-bomber . . . a big single-engine dive-bomber built by

North American. Some of them were in the convoy with us. They were all floated in Australia. At that time, he was going to try to get some of them assembled, and he figured one of them would hold its own against anything the Japs had.

Marcello: So the opinion of the officers toward the Japanese and toward the duration of the war was really not that much different from that held by the general run-of-the-mill enlisted man.

Hard: No, I guess not. I was always very optimistic. I know my first sergeant told me that he disagreed with me very sharply. Glen Jones figured it would be a long one, and I found out he was a lot more accurate than I was.

Marcello: Okay, so as you mentioned, you stopped in Suva, Fiji Islands, very briefly, I think just to pick up some fresh supplies.

Hard: That's correct. I didn't know why we stopped there because, being a battery officer in those days, I didn't know anything that took place outside of my battery, hardly. Headquarters was a far-distant place that I stayed away from as much as possible.

Marcello: And I gather, then, that you didn't get off the ship there at all there at Suva.

Hard: No, no.

Marcello: Okay, you arrived in Brisbane, Australia, on December 21, 1941. Obviously, your course had been diverted; you weren't going to the Philippines because the Japanese had hit the Philippines almost simultaneously with the attack at Pearl

Harbor. What happens when you get to Brisbane?

Hard: Before we get to that, there's one thing about our course. We learned later that the intent when we left San Francisco and Honolulu to go to the Philippines was to go there by way of Port Moresby, all the way down to Port Moresby, and back up through the Dutch East Indies. That's the reason we were headed out that far south to begin with. They'd already stopped sending ships through the nearest way, by way of Wake and Guam. We had to off-load all the surplus oil out of the old Republic to get up the river there at Brisbane. We got in there, and they took us out to the Ascot Racecourse.

Marcello: Fairgrounds and racetracks seem to be playing a prominent role in this story, and later on, too.

Hard: I would say that's right. I didn't leave the ship until . . . let me see . . . I think it was Christmas Eve, I guess. We were trying to get some of our stuff out of the ship--unload it. I don't know who knew what at that time, but all I knew was that we were trying to get enough stuff to get our battalion equipment out on the dock so we could reload it. I don't know whether they knew then where we were going or not. All I knew was that I was trying to help find stuff in the hold of the ship that looked like it would fit the battalion. If it didn't happen to be our own piece, but was a corresponding item, we'd paint over the identification and claim it. That's all that I did, that's all that I knew.

Marcello: In other words, you knew nothing more than the enlisted men.

Hard: No, I didn't, because, as I say, headquarters was a place to stay away from. We stayed with our men and tried to do what we were told to do.

Marcello: You really didn't do anything after you bivouacked there at the Ascot Race Track, did you? In other words, you didn't undergo any training or anything of that nature?

Hard: I don't believe we did. As I say, I wasn't there but one night, I think.

Marcello: Were you staying aboard the Republic?

Hard: Yes, I stayed aboard ship there at the dock. I know that our people got a real warm reception in Brisbane. I was free on Christmas day, and I alternately walked and rode their streetcar or tram to go sightseeing. I declined an invitation to Christmas dinner from, I guess, a dozen people. The Australians were very pleased--and thought we should be--that we were in war. I couldn't quite see their point of view, but they were real friendly and all enthused about fighting the war and getting it over with.

Marcello: Were you struck by the absence of young men in Brisbane at that time? I know this had been mentioned to me by some of the enlisted men.

Hard: Actually, not I, because I'd seen so little of it. Again, I was thoroughly . . . I never was much of a . . . I guess it's a shortcoming. I've never known anything but work most of my life, and I never was much of a player. That one day, part of one day, that I rode the tram from one side

of Brisbane to the other, and more or less thinking about the situation, I talked briefly to fellow passengers on the tram. That's about all the first-hand information and observations I made in Australia. I never went out at night or anything there.

Marcello: Did you enjoy eating mutton?

Hard: No (chuckle). I had mutton for my Christmas dinner. I went in late Christmas afternoon, and there was hardly anyone out there at the track because everyone in our outfit had accepted invitations and were guests of Australians somewhere, and some of them found a home away from home, no doubt. But I went into our kitchen, and all there was was cold mutton left over from the Christmas dinner, and I ate a little of it, and that was it.

Marcello: On December 28, 1941, you get back on a ship again. This time it's the Bloemfontein, and you're on your way to Java in the Dutch East Indies. The Bloemfontein was a much faster ship, was it not?

Hard: Oh, yes, it was a fine ship. It was one of the early passenger-cargo vessels that the Dutch operated. It was a 10,000-ton, twin-motor, diesel motor ship, and she cruised at sixteen-plus knots.

Marcello: Now did you pick up the 26th Brigade again? Were they with you? I guess what I'm asking is, were there units other than the 131st Field Artillery aboard the ship?

Hard: I believe that some of them were brought aboard, but I'm not



sure. There again, I'll have to admit that I'm real ignorant of exactly what all did take place outside of my own outfit.

Marcello: The reason I ask this is because awhile ago, off the record, we were talking about Ben Dunn's book, and Ben Dunn was out of that 26th Brigade.

Hard: Yes, I think that we made some shuffle there, I know, in personnel. In fact, the assistant S-3, "Boots" Atkinson, became ill in Australia, and we picked up Captain "Ike" Parker in his place. I believe we did pick up brigade there. I believe I remember some of the brigade personnel. We didn't get them all because we didn't have any general officer with us. We picked up Colonel Albert C. Searle, an old Regular Army "bird" colonel, that was with us. He was the ranking officer. Barnes was promoted to major general, I believe, and remained in Australia until General MacArthur got there. But how many of the brigade personnel continued with us, I don't know.

Marcello: Describe the trip on the Bloemfontein from Brisbane to Surabaya, Java.

Hard: It was to me most enjoyable. We set up a field kitchen, one forward and one aft, I believe, and our men had plenty of room. I think they were quite comfortable, and we had good food. The officers were quartered in the luxurious passenger compartment or quarters.

It's a kind of funny thing in my case. I caught the antiaircraft defense of the vessel, I think I had . . . I've

forgotten now how many posts . . . something like . . . it seemed like we had thirty-two BAR's--that's the only thing--Browning Automatic Rifles on these posts. We tied them together communication-wise with field wire, and I had a command post right up in the bow. We were using field telephones. We lashed a couple of 75's down on the deck, and we were going to shoot something with them, but I don't know what. But I caught that detail, and orders were to inspect every watch, so I did from then from the 28th of December to the 11th of January. I stayed on duty on this antiaircraft deal, and I accused some of the others of forgetting about me, but I rode right up in the bow of the ship during all the daylight hours and part of a lot of the night.

We went up inside the Barrier Reef from Brisbane to Thursday Island and the Torres Strait--that area--and I think we made about eighteen knots due to the current going up through there. It was beautiful water, and I enjoyed that trip very, very much.

Then we had one very unique celebration on New Year's Eve night aboard. I guess this was the first time in history that an Army transport ever had an open bar aboard, and we were initiated into the "Knighthood of Torres Strait" by the purser and some of the crew of the Bloemfontein.

We had some submarine alerts en route, but the old Dutch skipper wasn't worried about submarines, it didn't seem.

He said if he could see one, or even a torpedo en route, he could dodge it. The Dutch impressed me on that ship. They were about the coolest professionals that we'd met.

Then we stopped in at Darwin, and that was a physically disagreeable and emotionally nerve-racking thing. We knew we were sitting ducks, and it was hotter than Hades in that old port. We stopped there to wait for . . . I don't know what. I understand it was for ammunition. We got some 37-millimeters for our antitank guns, and it turned out to be for aerial 37-millimeters and didn't fit the guns.

Marcello: 37-millimeter ammunition?

Hard: Right. It was for the P-39, the Aerocobra, which had a single 37-millimeter cannon. I think it was the only plane that we had at that time with that weapon, and somehow this ammunition had gotten out there for it; but it wouldn't fit the antitank gun.

We went from there on up through the Bali Strait and into Surabaya.

Marcello: Surabaya wasn't exactly a pleasant place, either, was it?

Hard: No. It was like a dream almost going in there. It was night when we unloaded, and to be unloaded in that type of a city in Far East, with the sights and sounds and smells of the Far East . . . we were moved by rail out to Malang.

Marcello: Now you were actually at Camp Singosari, were you not, which is very close to the town or city of Malang?

Hard: Yes. It was just a few miles out. I've forgotten now the

distance, but it was a very short distance.

Marcello: Did you move out there during the morning?

Hard: No, we moved out at night, in the darkness.

Marcello: You moved out at night. In other words, you off-loaded your ship and moved out there during the night hours.

Hard: Well, they off-loaded in the afternoon, and it had become dark en route, I believe. Yes, while we were traveling by train from Surabaya to Malang, it became dark.

Marcello: Now you arrived in Surabaya on January 11th, so you were out at Singosari by January 12th then.

Hard: I believe that's right. I believe we made that move in one day.

Marcello: Describe what Camp Singosari looked like from a physical standpoint, and then we'll go into what you actually did after you got there.

Hard: It was a new army camp built by the Dutch, supposedly for a tank battalion. The architecture was strange. The facilities were strange--open sewer lines or ditches. They were concreted, open ditches--a peculiar type of latrine facilities. The camp was completely barren of any other facilities. They had the makings of bunk beds, but they were made for about 5'6" personnel, and our people had a little trouble in getting on them.

The officers moved into officers' quarters that were just outside of the compound--into little separate houses. I don't recall how many to the house, but they were a nice

little bungalow-type house. The bed was equipped with a full canopy and mosquito nets and a ceiling fan.

Of course, the kitchen mess hall was practically non-existent. I think we used a vacant barracks for that, or one of the tank sheds. We were using our field equipment.

Marcello: You mentioned the Dutch latrines awhile ago. What was unique about them?

Hard: They were floored over the open-gutter drains, and in the place of a commode there was a hole in the floor, a depressed area with a couple of over-sized, raised footprints, and "X" marks the spot where you get in position to use them.

Marcello: What exactly did the unit do after it got to Singosari?

Hard: The battalion practically disintegrated as a unit after arrival there, but not without purpose. Camp Singosari was right adjacent to the Singosari Airfield, where the remnants of the 19th Bomb Group out of the Philippines were operating.

Marcello: Was the 19th Bomb Group there when you arrived, or did it come in after you got there?

Hard: I believe it was there when we arrived. At least portions of it were. Everything happened, as I say, simultaneously there. Again, I'm not too sure of the why's and wherefore's of it. Our battery, F Battery, was assigned the mission of defending the camp and the airfield, providing security there, fixed security. Some of E Battery joined a mobile defense group led by the Dutch. They had some home version of armored cars. They'd taken some Ford truck chassis and put some

armored . . . or they'd lay steel plate on them, and the purpose . . . they were afraid of paratroopers. The Japs had used paratroops some coming down through the islands, and they were afraid they would come in with paratroops, airborne forces. Service Battery was engaged in hauling supplies. There was a bunch of supplies arriving in Surabaya.

Marcello: I think Clark Taylor had a lot to do with this, did he not?

Hard: Yes, he and Eldon Schmid. Schmid was more or less the motor transport officer at least, and Taylor was made a Class B finance officer, which gave him almost unlimited authority to operate as a logistical officer for an independent command. In fact, about that time--I'm not sure of the date--some of the staff came over from Australia and set up U.S. Headquarters, Dutch East Indies, but Clark was finance officer, logistical officer, period, for that.

I don't know what we had in the way of supplies coming in. I've heard that the Dutch had been promised three divisions to defend the Dutch East Indies, and there was quite a bit of supplies coming in. We turned every available truck over to Service Battery, and the drivers were used as motor transport.

Then there was another large group . . . anybody that was mechanically inclined at all went over and worked with the Air Corps--arming the planes, doing maintenance work. Some people went in as combat crew because when they'd come out of the Philippines, they flew key personnel out, and the

people we sent over as combat crewmen relieved those technicians--technically qualified, non-commissioned officers--to work as ground crews as they should have been used. So between those details--the logistical deal, clearing the port, support of the Air Corps, and security . . . we had an outpost guard that included the whole camp area, and then we had an interior guard. I know our people met themselves coming back. They'd go off of one detail and directly onto another. If a man got six hours' sleep out of twenty-four, he was lucky.

Marcello: What did you do with your fieldpieces?

Hard: Well, first, we got ambitious, and we put them in our defensive position by the camp, and when the Japs came in on low-level strafing attacks, we shot at them. The Dutch claimed we hit one. I don't know whether we did or not, but they claimed that there was one plane went down somewhere in the vicinity with the marks of the ammunition we were using. We were using the old combination fuse shrapnel that was a primary weapon in World War I. All we'd do, we'd cut the fuse at the shortest time that we could and point it in the general direction of the path of the approaching plane and fire, and whether we ever hit one or not, I don't know. But I guess we made the Japs mad because they came back and just about wiped us out. I lost . . . well, actually, three guns out of four got hit.

One of them was practically destroyed . . . well, it was destroyed. For some reason--I don't know whether it was

an antipersonnel bomb to begin with or whether it got an early activation by going through the roof of a hut or something--we got an above-ground burst that just riddled one of my guns.

Marcello: Is it not true that at one point you dug pits for those guns so that you could elevate them to fire at the airplanes?

Hard: Oh, yes, we did. That was part of the emplacement. We dug the trails down, lowered the trails, so we could get all the maximum elevation that the recoil mechanism would function. In fact, in that position the return to battery was very slow. Since the gun was designed to fire on the horizontal against ground targets, and since it was a gun and not a howitzer, it wasn't made to be elevated to any extreme elevations. The recoil mechanism was one of the finest ever built for its purpose, I mean, within its limitations--the old French recoil mechanism, gas pneumatic. But there was a limit to how much of it would return to battery in an elevated position.

But after we got the guns damaged, and we weren't doing much good except seeming to attract the Japs, they had us put the guns in storage in some warehouses near town somewhere. We had forty-eight old British 75's. I heard we were going to the Philippines, that we was going to stick them in on the beach, put skeleton crews with them, and use them until they were overrun, and then destroy them and leave them. Anyway, we had those forty-eight fieldpieces that we strung around over the island rather "conspicuously" in camouflage. We



at least led ourselves to believe that this served a good purpose in misleading the Japs on the force that we had there.

Marcello: I assume that at this stage you had no idea why you had been sent to the Dutch East Indies, other than to help reinforce the Dutch.

Hard: That was all that I knew.

Marcello: Incidentally, where does Lieutenant Roy Stensland come into this story?

Hard: I'm not too sure. All I know about Roy was hearsay. He turned up in Surabaya with a briefcase full of money and was supposed to have been on a mission of an advanced party in preparation for his unit to move into some of the Dutch East Indies. I've heard the Celebes and I've heard Timor, but I don't know which. But Roy showed up in our group and was kind of a strange individual. Frankly, as rumor has it, he came under questionable circumstances. I think he was supposed to have been somewhat under house arrest or something when he first came to us. There was some question . . . I don't even know who picked him up. I don't know who contacted him or how he came into being with our unit. But all I know, he showed up in our battalion. I believe his old outfit was 148th Field Artillery from South Dakota. He was from South Dakota. He'd been an outstanding college and pro football player and had trained down in Salinas, California. I believe it was around either Camp Roberts or Fort Ord, somewhere down there. But that's about all I know of his origins.

Marcello: Unfortunately, Stensland is dead. Otherwise, I think he'd have a very good story to tell.

Hard: Yes, he proved himself to be a real good man.

Marcello: This is what I gather.

Hard: As I say, I'm simply answering the question as I knew it. That was the impression that I got when he came to our unit-- from hearsay, which I can't substantiate anything about it.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship developed between the American personnel and the Dutch personnel here at Singosari? Obviously, Singosari was under the nominal control of the Dutch, was it not?

Hard: Well, so far as I know, yes, it was the Dutch area; but as far as I know, they didn't influence our activities there at all.

I may be getting ahead of myself, but when we left Singosari to go try to meet the Japs on the west end of the island, we went under Dutch control then--under tactical command of the Dutch. At Singosari, primarily, as far as I was concerned, we were available in every respect to Colonel Eubanks of the 19th Bomb Group for anything that we could do to support his operation. He had a son who later made major general and who led the first flight of B-47's non-stop around the world. He was in command out at Castle Air Force Base. I had a support detail out there in later years.

Marcello: Castle Air Force Base in California?

Hard: California. His son made first lieutenant on the airfield

there at Singosari. His father pinned his first lieutenant bars on him while we were associated with them there in January or February of '42.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were mentioning the air raids, and, as I recall, the first one took place on February 3, 1942.

Hard: That's correct.

Marcello: Describe that first air raid as best you can remember it.

Hard: We got our first warning through what we called the "jungle telephone." The natives over there had a drum signal that we heard. We'd heard that, but we hadn't got an alarm, I don't believe, until the planes started coming in, and then the alarm went off. But those Navy Zeros came in, and they dispelled any idea we had about their bamboo and rubber-band airplanes. They did as good a job of flying and coming-in-as-low-and- Strafing-type attack as you could ever expect from a plane.

Marcello: Well, what did your personnel do when the air raid alarm sounded?

Hard: Well, what was left of our battery had this defensive position mission, anyway, so we just took up our position at the edge of the camp. There was "Windy" Rodgers and Travis Smith, I believe, and some other people who came along and got on one or two of the guns. We thought we was having a lot of fun shooting at them. "Shooting at," I think, is all we did (chuckle). But it was quite an experience when you get shot at.

Marcello: I assume that the Zeros were strafing.

Hard: Right, yes, they strafed. As I recall, we didn't have any high-level bombers on that attack. It was just a strafing attack.

Marcello: How long did the attack last?

Hard: Oh, just a very few minutes. Three or four runs, I believe, is all they made, as well as I recall. It seemed like a long time, but I think they just made no more than three or four passes.

Marcello: How much damage did they do to the base?

Hard: They caught some B-17's on the ground, over on the field, and they shot up a few trucks. That was about all the damage, as I recall, they did on that first raid.

Marcello: From what you just said awhile ago, I gather that you really didn't have time to be scared or anything of that nature.

Hard: No, there again, it was one of those things. We were just more or less expecting it, and it materialized. That's about the only way I know to describe it. We felt terribly exposed, on top of the ground; we didn't have any decent foxholes at that time, but we made some real quick.

Marcello: Then in the subsequent raids, did they use the high-level bombers?

Hard: Yes, they came back on the 5th, I believe, and they did as good a job of high-level bombing as I've ever seen. I must say, fortunately, it was better than our Air Force usually did later on. They came in, as I recall, with

twenty-seven planes, and I believe they flew over the camp intact, or very closely formed. It was either twenty-seven or twenty-three, and then they split in half, except for the odd plane. I think there was thirteen and fourteen in the two flights, and they came back and made runs right across our artillery position where we had these guns. I believe we counted 250 craters in that area. There was a few duds. Fortunately, I had one right by my foxhole.

They hit right on the fieldpiece that Sergeant Sparkman and Corporal Duckworth were on and covered them in the first drop. We got Duckworth dug out and Sparkman's face uncovered, and they came back and covered him up again. The two runs they made . . . if you were to plot the craters on the map of the area--just like "X" marks the spot--they were right on target. They just laid a perfect pattern right on the battery position. That's when we decided that it weren't very profitable to try to shoot at planes with the fieldpieces.

Marcello: So I assume that overall the base action wasn't putting up very much resistance to these planes.

Hard: No, we didn't have anything to put up any resistance with. The only machine guns we had that might even be effective were those .50-calibers some of the fellows pulled out of the burned-out or wrecked B-17's. They put some of them on ground mounts and some of them on jerry-rigged mounts on trucks or jeeps. We had no effective air defense there at all.

Marcello: How many raids were there altogether? Do you remember?

Hard: On Singosari, while we were there, I think we had over five. I'm not sure.

Marcello: Did they seem to occur at the same time, or would the Japanese vary their timing for the attack?

Hard: It seems to me they all came in pretty well up in the morning. I believe they were all in the forenoon, as I recall-- around noon.

Marcello: In the meantime, did you ever have an opportunity to get into Malang?

Hard: I was in there a couple or three times. One time the officers of a Dutch regiment entertained our group as guests--invited us in as guests of the club for luncheon and drinks and talk. I went in one time and placed a telephone call home.

Marcello: Did your call get through?

Hard: Yes, yes, it got through just for a matter of seconds, and then we lost communication. It was just enough to exchange greetings, and that was about all.

I put in most of my time traveling over the area there in the east of Java, thinking that's the area we were going to stay in at that time. There was high mountains over on the east end of the island, just east of where we were located. Every spare moment I could get away from the camp, I'd take some of the soldiers--sergeants--and we'd get on a jeep and run out the roads over there and reconnoiter the country. Some of the most beautiful mountainous areas that I've ever

seen was in East Java. The Dutch had started carving a pack trail through the mountains so that they could move troops from north to south, from one side of the island to the other, without having to come around through Malang. We were able to follow that trail with a jeep well up into the mountains.

The people up there were friendly. There were tea plantations after we got above the rice country. The attitude of the population there was entirely different from what it was around town or over in West Java. They were friendly. I had every intention, if we did get into combat on that end of the island, to make use of the knowledge of the country and the acquaintance of the people actually to try to do my job as an artilleryman. The thought had never come to such a thing as surrender. I don't think that any of us ever knew the meaning of that term.

Marcello: With reference to the natives, are you saying, in effect, that those around Malang seemed to be wavering in their loyalty at this point already?

Hard: Yes, you could see signs of resentment in some of them. At least I thought so. Some of them were not as friendly as they might have been, and definitely, when we moved to the west end of the island, what few we met had a hostile--I sensed--attitude toward us.

Marcello: At this time, that is, around the time that these air raids are actually taking place, do you have the impression that

your stay on Java is only a temporary one and that the Navy's out there to pull you off the island, or are you already beginning to realize that your position is untenable even though the Japanese haven't landed yet?

Hard: I guess I was an optimistic fool. I never thought too much about the future. I thought we were capable of putting up a pretty good fight, and I figured that . . . well, I never allowed myself to consider our situation hopeless or doomed. I thought that some way or somehow we were going to make it out of it then. I applied what intelligence or ingenuity I might have had to try to improve the situation that we were in at the time. Actually, I didn't think much about tomorrow.

Marcello: Okay, some time around in here, the Japanese land on Java and very shortly thereafter--I believe it was on February 27, 1942--the 19th Bomb Group was evacuated. Do you recall the circumstances involving the evacuation of the 19th Bomb Group?

Hard: I can't recall the exact dates now. Most of them left before the Japs landed. The Japs actually landed the night of the 28th of February. The 19th Bomb Group, as I say, as a unit had already departed then.

Now this is some more hearsay. I had a pair of twins in the outfit, Don and Dan Barnes. Don was killed in a plane that was shot down on one of the raids we had. I don't remember . . . it wasn't the first one, I don't believe. Dan was working over at the air base, and he told me that he overheard Colonel Eubanks on the radio to somebody, trying



to convince them to let him fly us out of there. Apparently, the person on the other end remarked something about the disposition of material, and he said, "They're going to lose that, anyway. They might as well destroy it and let me get the personnel out." Now that came to me from a private in the outfit, and I don't know. That was while we were still at Singosari. All I know is . . . I believe it was on the night of the 26th that we got the word that the Jap force was coming down on the island and for us to get our equipment and material out of storage in trucks back from Service Battery and form a battery. We hadn't been a battery as such, artillery battery, since before we left the States--no gun drill or anything. We cleaned the guns up after we got to Java, and that was all, and we then put them in storage. We stayed up all night--I believe it was the night of the 26th--and on the morning of the 27th, we started moving to the west end of the island.

Marcello: Now what effect did the evacuation of the 19th Bomb Group have upon the morale of the members of the 2nd Battalion?

Hard: Well, actually, there again, I wasn't associated with them. I was sticking around camp over there, trying to help pull our outfit together and take care of the details. I never sensed the feeling of being left like the people that had been working with them very closely. I'm sure--in fact, I know from personal contact with some of our people that were working over at the base--that they had a distinct

feeling of being left in a hole when the Air Force pulled out.

Marcello: Were there sufficient planes to take the unit out of there?

Hard: I don't think so. They would have had to have shuttled us out.

Marcello: In other words, there would have had to have been several trips between Java and Australia, wouldn't there?

Hard: I think so. The most B-17's we ever got off the ground on one mission, I think, was fifteen. Now they had some old B-24's in there--a few. I don't know where they came from. See, some of these planes they flew from the States after we were there, and most of them were B-17's, E-Models. But there were some B-24's that showed up occasionally. I don't know how many planes we had--not many. We couldn't have had . . . I doubt that there was more than six or eight aircraft that were operational when the 19th Bomb Group pulled out of there.

Marcello: And altogether weren't there somewhere in the neighborhood of about 500 American personnel?

Hard: Oh, yes, yes. Our battalion originally was 527 personnel and officers together, I believe--something like that.

Marcello: And that would not have included the 26th Brigade.

Hard: Then we picked up some extras, yes, that's right. So I guess we had 550 people, probably.

Marcello: Up until this time, you really hadn't lost too many personnel to Japanese fire, had you? I think you lost a couple, like

you mentioned, in the bomber crews.

Hard: Yes, that's all we lost up until this time.

Marcello: Okay, like you mentioned, about a day or two after the 19th Bomb Group left, then the unit also pulled out of Singosari.

Hard: Right.

Marcello: Is it at this time that E Battery goes in one direction, and everybody else goes in another direction?

Hard: That's right. E Battery stayed there around the field and helped the 19th Bomb Group get out--what was left of the remnants of some of them.

Marcello: And then I think E Battery went east toward Surabaya, didn't they?

Hard: They did. They went in support of a Dutch regiment over in the Surabaya area.

Marcello: What did the rest of the unit do? Describe what happens at that point then. What does the rest of the unit do when the base is evacuated?

Hard: Well, we started west, generally, and the situation was tactical or was supposed to be. To me it was quite frustrating--moving in daylight, and stopping in little villages at night. This was contrary to what we'd been taught all year, about getting off the roads and moving under blackout and staying under cover--that sort of thing.

I remember we were becoming quite provoked. The Dutch were supposed to support us logistically, and I think it was the first morning out or something that we turned up without

any breakfast for the men. I got unhappy about that. But somewhere about that time is when the staff that we had over there pulled out back to Australia. That crowd pulled out on the ship out of Tjalatjap. I know some of our people hadn't joined us yet, right in that period, and I'm not sure of the days. Anyway, they helped move the headquarters staff to that southern port, and they got out on this ship. Some of the Houston crowd that were wounded, they were evacuated. I had one man leave, Roger Maulden. I assigned him to a driving detail with one of the headquarters staff--I think it was the chief of staff--and he left with them. I know the men later came back and joined the battalion, and they had a bunch of civilian passenger cars that the staff had had and left and a bunch of gear that had been left on the dock at Tjalatjap that couldn't be moved out. It was right in that period that we were moving west on the island. I guess we moved the 27th and 28th of February.

I believe the 2nd was the first time that we got close enough to the Japs that we became aware of them. We could hear their firing. The Australians, two practically cadre-strength Australian units, had moved in over there as infantry, pioneer battalion and a machine gun battalion, under Brigadier General Blackburn, I believe. I know I went up with Captain Zeigler, and we got close enough . . . we were trying to find possible positions and just to see what was going on, and I think that was near the 2nd. As far as I was concerned, it

was the first time that I was aware of any Japs being on the ground. We heard that they'd landed the night of the 28th, I believe, but I don't think we heard it until the 2nd. I don't believe we heard that the Japs had landed until the 2nd.

Marcello: In all this time, that is, after you evacuate Singosari, the unit is constantly on the move.

Hard: Yes, more or less until . . .

Marcello: What was the purpose of continuing moving around?

Hard: Well, we were getting . . . see, we moved about 500 miles over those little ol' roads at a rate that . . . I don't know who set the pace, but we did, I thought, a very poor job of moving. I know our outfit was capable of moving a lot faster and better. We'd pull into these places in the afternoon and stay there until way up in the morning before we'd get going again. I presumed that we were under Dutch orders for our schedule or movement at that time.

Marcello: Are the Allies putting up very much resistance? By Allies, I'm referring to the Australian and the British and the Dutch and the American units.

Hard: Well, up until the 2nd, we hadn't heard about anything except that these Australian units in West Java were in contact with the Japs. I didn't hear anything about what was happening anywhere else on the island at that time.

On the 3rd, I was ordered to take two guns on an anti-tank detail, to set up position in a little village overlooking

or near a river or creek there in West Java out of Buitenzorg. The information I had was that the Australians . . . and there was a Dutch engineer platoon or squad that was supposed to set demolitions on a bridge, and that was supposed to let the Japs come through--some tank units--during the night. We helped to cut them off and get them on the road over on our side when they tried to come on. It was going to blow the bridge behind them. We thought we could knock off part of the Jap force that way.

As I say, I took these two guns and took up position in a little village there, and I thought it was a good antitank position. David Heiner put two guns in back down the road behind me, I believe, backing me up.

Then nothing happened. Early on the morning of the 4th, I guess, somebody told me that the bridge had been blown prematurely, and the Japs didn't get to cross it. So there was no need for the antitank position.

There was talk . . . and there again, I don't know by whom; I don't know what authority. Major Rodgers, Ira Fowler, and Captain Zeigler were in and out, passing along the road and talking. Roy Stensland was up there. There was talk that the Australians were taking a beating and needed to get some artillery support in. I left the guns--they were camouflaged in huts in this little village--and I took a couple of sergeants, John Lee and Ed Worthington. John was chief of 1st Section, and Ed was an instrument sergeant or

survey sergeant. We started looking for a position. Somebody said that in view of the terrain, we wouldn't be able to give the Australians any support with our guns. We didn't have any military map; all I had was a Shell road map. But measuring the distance off, I found a Dutch plantation headquarters that was on the forward slope of a hill that, according to the map and speedometer mileage, it looked like it was in range, just barely. So I proposed that we go in there and try to give some support, and I don't remember how things developed, but, anyway, they told me to go in there. They brought up David Heiner with the other two guns and gave them to me and told me to put them in.

In the meantime, Roy Stensland and Sergeant Buzzo and Travis Smith and some of them had gotten the land lines laid up to the Australian positions. By the time we got the guns in that very ornate garden or yard there . . . and we put them in position. I put them in with a jeep. We laid them by compass, and I remember it was 4800 due west by compass. By the time we got them in there good, communications was established and Roy and Buzzo were up on the forward observation post. I don't know who gave me authority to fire, to start firing, but, anyway, we did. We got the compass bearing that we had laid the battery on, and they were able to pick up the first round. I think it only took two or three rounds, single rounds, to get adjusted. Stensland came in and told us to fire for effect. We had a field day that

afternoon for a while. So we was able to relieve the Australians from pressure from heavy weapons and mortar fire and machine guns that the Japs were cutting them up pretty badly with.

Late that afternoon, we got orders to pull out, that the battalion was already leaving. We were to catch up with them over what road they were on. We were to rejoin them. So we pulled out after dark, as well as I recall. We first got the guns out of position. There had come a flood of rain, and we had to winch them out of their positions, but we got them part-way out but still undercover because the Japs had aircraft overhead all the time, and we had to stay undercover. But after dark we pulled out, and some time that night we caught up with the battalion and rejoined them. They were going east.

We did nothing but run from then until . . . I don't know . . . it was the 7th, I guess, that we got the word that everything had folded, that the Japs had cut the island in two, that the Dutch were trying to capitulate and the Japs wouldn't accept their surrender without ours and threatened to take reprisals on the . . . I guess there was some 70,000 European Dutch on the island at that time. They threatened to take reprisals on them if we didn't turn in. That's when we were introduced to a new word in our vocabulary-- "capitulate." That's where this other racetrack came in. We were told to go into the little ol' town of Garoet or



something to that effect.

Marcello: Now by this time it is quite clear, is it not, that the situation is more or less hopeless?

Hard: That's right, yes. Of course, we still . . . the word "surrender" hadn't entered my mind or some of the others. I know some of us had made a pact more or less that, no matter what the battalion did, we weren't going to turn in.

Marcello: Had you heard the rumor that the Japanese didn't take prisoners?

Hard: Oh, yes, we'd heard that, but actually it didn't make a whole lot of difference. I know my opinion of surrender, being a prisoner-of-war, being captured, meant being overrun and probably run out of ammunition or wounded or incapable of defense. We would be literally physically overwhelmed and physically restrained and captured in a physical sense. I never quite interpreted the term as something where you walk up and say, "Here I am! Come get me!" or that sort of thing.

Marcello: I've heard some of the men say that they were kind of ashamed by having to surrender.

Hard: Oh, yes. I know several of our men that I . . . see, I served enlisted and commissioned with the same group, which is not supposed to happen, but it did. Several of the sergeants . . . well, my first sergeant, we'd been privates together. He'd been a driver when I was motor sergeant. Anyway, four or five of them and I had made the agreement

that we weren't going to turn in, that if the battery was overrun or anything, we had all the weapons and ammunition we could handle, small arms, and we were going to sell out at the best price possible. It just hadn't entered our mind yet to surrender. One in particular, Sergeant Miller, a machine gun sergeant, was ex-Marine Corps. He was one of those that had served a hitch in the Marine Corps and came back to Tech and signed up with the unit. There also was the first sergeant, mess sergeant, and chief of the 1st Section. And Eddie Fung . . . those particular ones were very close friends of mine. We didn't have any intention of becoming prisoners until the . . . and when the time did come, after we received orders to capitulate, some of them I had to give a direct order, personally, before they'd turn in their weapons.

Marcello: In other words, after the surrender came down, you were not actually on your own. Suppose that you had decided to head for the hills. Would you have, in effect, been disobeying orders?

Hard: As an officer, I assumed that attitude. I was a battery officer, and I had been associated with these men for four years, most of them. The order was for the battalion to capitulate, and I felt that I was obligated to stay with the unit and see what happened. Now the individual enlisted men and staff officers, I figured they could do what they wanted to if they wanted to take a chance on it.

Marcello: In other words, you did not give them, as an officer, direct orders that they definitely had to surrender.

Hard: Not until after the situation developed. We had some problems with the natives. Some of the people went off among the natives and pulled a little bit of a "wing-ding" which didn't help any. The natives were already hostile, and it got pretty touchy. When those things developed, I told the men-- I didn't order them to--I told them that I thought that was the thing for them to do.

Marcello: What sort of altercation developed between the men and the natives after the surrender came down? You just referred to that a moment ago.

Hard: There again, it's hearsay. Some of them got hold of some "white lightning" and got drunked up. Some of the local natives got pretty much on the rampage, enough so that Ira Fowler and the colonel thought we ought to establish some local security and confine people to the Garoet Racetrack area so they wouldn't get out and mix with the natives. We thought there was a possibility of getting the natives on us.

Marcello: After the surrender came down, what did you do with regard to your vehicles and your weapons?

Hard: I know on mine they told us not to destroy them. Everything we had . . . the passenger cars . . . some of the fellows had them. The battery clerk and the first sergeant, I think, had one. We destroyed them. We cut the fan belt and drained the oil out and wound them up and bent the throttle over and

left them. The guns . . . we used a bronze drift on the sight mount to knock it completely cock-eyed without marking it, trying to keep . . . with the threat of reprisals, we tried to do it in such a manner that they wouldn't detect it.

Marcello: What did you do with this bronze drift?

Hard: It's a soft metal punch or drift that you use to keep from marking metal that you're working on. We took it and a sledgehammer and bent, actually bent, the sight mounts out of alignment. We made salt brine in the kitchen and drained the recoil mechanism and charged it with that salt brine instead of recoil oil. We figured that that would render the pieces unusable in a matter of hours.

Marcello: Did you actually have small arms such as rifles and pistols and things of that nature?

Hard: Yes, we were equipped with the old Springfield rifle, which was a .30-06, and .45's.

Marcello: Each man in the unit?

Hard: Yes. Non-coms and officers had pistols, and the other ranks had a rifle. We had to turn them in. Now the Japs allowed the battalion to keep . . . I think we had twelve rifles that we were allowed to keep for local security. This was for a few days, subsequent to the turn-in. I think we had twelve rifles, and they allowed one officer per battery to keep his side arms. The battalion kept some trucks--I don't know how many--a command car, and a truck or two. They painted their

front fenders white and were allowed to . . . Service Battery and Headquarters used them for a few days before we were put into a camp.

Marcello: So the surrender order comes down, and then you are ordered to proceed to this racetrack at Garoet.

Hard: That's correct.

Marcello: What did you do when you got to Garoet?

Hard: I don't remember the days--how long we were there. People passed the time one way and another. There was some Australian rum picked up along the way which some used to pass the time. I know I picked up a brand-new Norton motor bike one day while we were on the road, and I'd been taking it along, and some of us played with it until the colonel made us put it out of commission because he was afraid we were going to break our necks or something. We were running it on that racecourse there at Garoet, making a lot of noise and raising a lot of dirt. Mostly, as far as the line outfits, we just sat there and waited and passed the time as best we could.

Marcello: Did you have any contact with the Japanese here?

Hard: I think there was two officers who came out on one occasion and accepted a roll of the outfit, normal roll--alphabetically, by rank. I believe that the battalion prepared one and handed it to them. I think there was a captain and lieutenant. I'm not sure.

Marcello: How long are you going to be a prisoner-of-war at this stage? Are you speculating as to how long you're going to be captives

of the Japanese?

Hard: Oh, I was going to stay a couple of months or six months at the most or something like that. That was my idea. Again, I don't know whether it was ignorance or stupidity or just unwilling to accept reality, but I could never look more than a very few months ahead--never did. It was from one day to the next, mostly.

Marcello: Approximately how long were you at Garoet altogether?

Hard: Just a few days.

Marcello: Were you living on your own rations at this point?

Hard: Yes. Eddie Fung went out and raked up an acquaintanceship with a Chinese merchant there on Java. We always kidded Eddie about speaking the language, the Chinese language, and said that he couldn't speak it, but when he found a way to get the outfit chow, he could talk it up a storm. In fact, this merchant had a son a little younger than Eddie, and he offered to take Fung as his son and get forged papers and let him stay loose. Fung's remark was, "Whatever's good enough for the battalion is good enough for me."

In fact, we bought everything we could find along about that time. The battalion . . . Clark Taylor had quite a bit of money, but I don't know how much.

Marcello: Literally thousands of guilders.

Hard: A couple hundred thousand, I believe, and he was going to burn it. Well, some of us, old "Windy" Rodgers and I in particular, said, "Huh-uh, we're not going to burn it."

We split it up and carried it. We carried that money as personal money. I know I had 40,000 guilders. We moved into the first camp, and I don't remember whether the Japs looked at it then or whether it was the next camp that they found it. Anyway, they knew we were a National Guard unit, civilian-soldier outfit, so we decided we would all play the role of wealthy Texas ranchers and always have a lot of money. They pretended to believe us. In other words, we were allowed to keep it until we got into Bicycle Camp in Batavia, and then we turned the money over back in to battalion and had an organized situation then. But while we were out there around Garoet and on the road before we got there, we spent . . . anything we could buy for food for the battalion, we did.

Marcello: I think we need to keep the record straight on this point for future historians. You three officers didn't simply split up this money for your personal use, and I assume that Taylor was keeping careful records as to how much each of you received.

Hard: I don't know how much of a record there was of how much we received. I don't remember now how we divided it and how many of us carried it, but as soon as we got back into a stable situation and found out that we could use the money legitimately through the Japs for local purchases, we turned in everything we had. Then counting started specifically and accurately. But during that time that we had it, from

the time we split up until we got back together, it was just a matter of a man's honesty of what we did with it. There wasn't much we could do except buy food, and we bought flour and canned goods and that sort of thing-- particularly what Eddie Fung made through his contact with this Chinese merchant.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were only at Garoet for a few days. Where did you go from Garoet?

Hard: I don't know whether it was the Japs' strategy to take it easy with us for fear we might give them trouble or whether they were sincere, but they gave us the impression, that is, the way it got to me, at least, that we weren't going to be full-fledged prisoners-of-war, that we were going to be more or less interned for the duration.

We did move up to a tea plantation, and we were allowed . . . we still had trucks there. I know I had one truck that was completely loaded--about 100 percent overload--with field wire. I had already observed enough about the jungle living to know that everything in the jungle's built with bamboo, and if we went up there and built our huts and stuff, we'd need all the wire we could get to tie it. So at that time, we still had our trucks, or some of them, at least. I don't remember the exact sequence and the dates of when we got rid of them, but at that time I know we still had some trucks because I personally drove this load of wire up there. I scrounged all this wire and all the hand tools, carpenter



tools, that I could get, and we moved the men up there.

We still had our clothing and food and everything we could rake and scrape together to prepare for an extended stay as internees, more or less, up at this tea plantation.

Marcello: Where was Garoet located?

Hard: It was pretty close to the south side of the island.

Marcello: What large city was it near? Was it near Batavia?

Hard: No, it was over pretty well across the island from Batavia. It was southeast of Batavia, I'd say, roughly a couple of hundred miles, maybe. It was closer to Tjalatjap, the main port on the south. It was not too far from the coast and not too far from Tjalatjap because some of the fellows, "Windy" Rodgers and Sergeant Miller and "Trav" Smith . . . I think they got as far as Tjalatjap, and there wasn't any transport there of any kind. They said even the fishing vessels that were there had been sunk. There wasn't even a decent rowboat left in the port.

Marcello: How far was Garoet from the tea plantation? Was it a relatively short distance?

Hard: Yes. Yes, we drove up there. As well as I recall, we moved up there in a matter of just an hour or two, as well as I recall.

Marcello: And you are not being accompanied by any Japanese?

Hard: No.

Marcello: What happens when you get to the tea plantation? What do you do while you're there?

Hard: Well, we started getting ready to start building huts. We started laying out a campsite; we started buying bamboo and having the natives bring it in from the jungle or bamboo groves.

Marcello: Are you using these company funds to buy the bamboo?

Hard: Right, right. That part right there is kind of hazy. We weren't there long.

Marcello: Were you there long enough to actually complete any huts or anything of that nature?

Hard: No, no, we didn't get anything done.

Marcello: So you were just living out in the open, then.

Hard: That's right, living in pup tents and some warehouses. It seemed like there were some storage sheds or something that some of the people lived in. That phase right there is quite hazy to me.

Marcello: Do you still have most of your personal gear with you?

Hard: Yes. At that time we had it all, practically speaking.

Marcello: Were you there more than a week?

Hard: I don't believe we were. I don't believe we were there . . .

Marcello: In other words, again, it's just kind of more or less another transit station.

Hard: Right, it was definitely that. As it turned out, it was definitely a transit station.

Marcello: I guess at this stage the Japanese really don't know yet what they're going to do with you.

Hard: I think that's probably the case. As I say, it was one or

two things: they either were confused and didn't know what to do with us, or they had some pretty good psychologists in the crowd and figured it would be a lot easier to handle us easy than it would to push us. Of course, that's contrary to their nature, as we learned later on. In other words, all the way through, even after we moved into Batavia, to the second camp there, we still had most of our personal gear--all we could carry. At that time, anything we threw away was voluntary--something we couldn't carry. But other units coming in later--Dutch or some of the other Australians--they'd stripped them of everything. It just depended on . . . anything you say about the Japs, nothing can be said that's all-inclusive. It all depended on the personality we're dealing with. For some reason or other, the ones that we were with there originally treated us . . . well, actually, in the first few days there, I can't complain about anything of their treatment. There in the little old village at Garoet, when you'd go downtown there . . . I think I went one time, but Service Battery and the Headquarters people went down more, put on a white armband, and the Japs in the emplacements, combat soldiers, would snap-to and pay respects to an officer in passing--no problem during those first few days whatever.

On the other hand, a couple of Australians out of our group were captured on reconnaissance a few days before, and they were worked over thoroughly. One of them, Johnnie

Haynes, had an eye knocked around pretty bad, and "Blackjack" Kennedy from Tasmania had his back injured. They were whipped and beaten. But in our case, that first few days, you couldn't ask to be treated any better by an enemy army.

Marcello: I've heard it said by some of the men that the Japanese seemed to be quite in awe of Americans. Did you ever get that impression in the beginning?

Hard: Well, all along, they always were--most of them. Of course, there were some that didn't respect anybody or anything, but most of the Japs seemed to respect Americans to a degree greater than any other nationality. We used to get out on a work party. As an officer in charge, we'd engage the Japs in conversation. They would set down open-mouthed and listen to America and American stories a lot of times. That's before we got up on the railroad, while we were fiddling around there in Batavia. This was the front-line Japs, too, combat soldiers. Later on, I mean, that was the big change. To replace the prime combat troops, they brought in the old, war-weary troops out of China--the army of occupation-type. Things started getting rough with them. Then when they brought in the Koreans, then is when it really deteriorated. But the front-line combat Jap troops that we encountered, I can't say a word against them from personal experience.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were at this tea plantation for a couple of days, and then you're on the move again. This time, I think, you went to Tanjong Priok. Is that correct?

Hard: That's correct. We moved into a train station up there somewhere, and, as I say, that phase of it is hazy on me now. I can't recall the details, but we moved into a rail station. I remember Ira Fowler with one of his . . . he was always finding something comical to remark about in the situation. He quoted the Japs as saying, "We had too much people for so little train," or something like that. Anyway, they loaded us on a train and moved us into Batavia. On arrival there we got our first indoctrination of what was to come.

Marcello: Describe that so-called indoctrination.

Hard: The Jap officer on the spot--I don't remember his rank--got up on a platform or some high point by the station where we unloaded. He laid the law down. He gave us a lecture that we were prisoners, and we would conduct ourselves as prisoners, and any form of violation of his rules or anything . . . we were supposed to work for the Japs, and anything other than that, he couldn't guarantee our safety. He was going to watch over us and take care of us as long as we obeyed him, but if at anytime we disobeyed his orders, he would not be responsible for our safety.

Marcello: Now was this particular speech given after you got off the train at Tanjong Priok, or was the speech given before you got on the train?

Hard: I believe it was after we got off at Batavia, and then we had to walk quite a ways to Tanjong Priok. In fact, that march

there, I don't know how long it was now, but that's when we got rid of some personal gear because we simply couldn't carry it that far.

Marcello: I've also heard some of the men say that it was around this time that the physical harassment began. Not a whole lot, but some of it.

Hard: Yes, when we got into Tanjong Priok, that's when they put up the barbed wire, and the Japs came around and started harassing us.

Marcello: Now when you march from Batavia to Tanjong Priok, did the Japanese ever try to humiliate you in front of the local population or anything?

Hard: I don't recall it, other than just . . . they became strictly prison guards when we got off the train there in Batavia. They was a different size, a different-looking Jap completely, from what we'd met in the field.

Marcello: What do you mean when you say the Japs were of a different size and were different-looking?

Hard: Well, they were more like what we'd been looking for. They were little, scrawny, ol' dope-head misfits, small, stupid. They were, I guess, what we'd call 4-F's in our draft classification. They were strictly the dregs of the Jap army.

Marcello: Describe what Tanjong Priok looked like from a physical standpoint. It seems to me you got in there about March 31, 1942. That's the date that I have.

Hard: That could have been probably about right. I believe it

had been built for a coolie or dock laborers' quarters. It was just little, as well as I recall, shed-like buildings with little stalls or cubicles kind of like you'd see in a bazaar or market--very shallow, small, just long enough for a bunk, I believe. I don't know whether they were that deep or not. They were five or six feet deep, and each cubicle was only a matter of six or eight feet long. They had mud-brick floors, as well as I remember. For sanitary facilities they still had, I believe, the open-gutter drain there. There was a limited water supply. We had to line up and wait pretty much at the water point to get drinking water.

We got introduced to the British there, and they were more or less in charge of the camp, internally. We turned in what chow we had--what we'd been able to carry in there--into a central kitchen. That's when we were introduced to the poor grade of rice in our diet.

Marcello: You mentioned that this camp did have a barbed wire fence around it.

Hard: It was built shortly after we got there. Some of the immediate area that we moved into didn't have it, but I think we had to build our own fence. Just outside of this little cubicle, we had to put up this barbed wire. I think that occurred just shortly after we got there.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the water was scarce here. What did this mean in terms of taking baths and things of

this nature?

Hard: We didn't have a bath place, as I recall, as such. We could take what water we could scrounge and bathe wherever we were quartered. I just don't recall what we had in the way of sanitary facilities in that particular camp. We weren't there long, and things were happening so abruptly and quickly that part of that's kind of hazy.

Marcello: Is it safe in assuming that you were kind of going through a transitional phase here? In other words, at this stage you were perhaps learning how to be a prisoner-of-war?

Hard: Yes, it's just beginning to dawn on us that we were actually prisoners.

Marcello: Up until this time, like we pointed out on several occasions, you really had no contact with the Japanese.

Hard: That's right; that's correct.

Marcello: In a sense you're going through a learning process. You have to learn how to conduct yourself as a prisoner-of-war.

Hard: Yes, and we're in a kind of a state of shock. We were just beginning to realize that we were prisoners.

Marcello: And I'm sure there is an art to knowing how to conduct one's self as a prisoner-of-war. If you're not going to cooperate, you're going to run into all sorts of troubles with the Japanese.

Hard: That's right. Definitely, there's a lot of phases to it. I guess number one is to psychologically adjust to being a prisoner, to accept their orders and their abuses, to realize



that you've got to eat the food because if you don't eat . . . that was my first, I think, actual realization that that was going to be the major problem, was staying alive and getting enough to eat. I made up my mind in the beginning that I've got to keep my body together to have anything, so whatever we had to eat, I ate it. A lot of fellows couldn't do it. We had people that started going down as soon as we got in Tanjong Priok. The rest of the time, they'd been able to scrounge around and get good food. When they were choosy about it, particular about it, they could still get enough to eat. But when we got there, and they started working us, and the food was very limited, we had to learn to eat whatever was available and to accept it and to always . . . I don't know . . . you can call it . . . some that hadn't been there might call it "yellow." But you learn to read those Japs and not push them too far.

Marcello: In other words, it's very idealistic to say that you're not going to cooperate in any way possible with the enemy, but you know full well that these guys don't bluff.

Hard: That's right. No, they weren't bluffing. They're not worried about civil rights or being charged with violating our rights or the Geneva Convention. They don't have to answer to anybody. Anybody is an idiot, or just hadn't been there, who he thinks he can do otherwise. When the time comes, I can tell you some stories about that that will bear that out.

In fact, there's one thing I'd like to state right here.

The roughest spot, in my estimation, that any American military officer has ever been placed in was the position that we were in most of the time. See, we requested that we stay together--enlisted men and the officers--to stay intact. Colonel Tharp showed a lot of wisdom, I think, in that.

Marcello: When you say "stay together," what do you mean?

Hard: Allowed to remain in the same camps. We retained a certain supervision of the men--overseeing the supervision of the food, the personal hygiene. One thing is a good example of that. In Bicycle Camp a lot of our people thought that old Colonel Searle was crazy, some kind of a nut. Boy, he made us police that area. We wouldn't leave a grain of rice in those open drains after clean-up before the morning inspection. We had inspection there in camp. Nobody was served food in a dirty mess gear. Now some of those sailors, particularly, thought that was ridiculous. We had an officer stand at the head of the chow line, and he inspected that mess gear and saw to it that it had been cleaned, dipped in boiling water, before any food was put in it. During that time, we never had a man even ill. The British in the compounds next door were dying like flies simply because they didn't have the field sanitation discipline that we had.

Marcello: I think you hit upon the key word here. Discipline was going to be one of the keys to your survival.

Hard: Yes. Not a "by-the-number" discipline, but basic discipline

and do the right thing at the right time.

Marcello: And even though you were all prisoners-of-war, somebody still had to be in charge.

Hard: Somebody had to be in charge. That's what we get to . . . I may be ahead of myself here, but later on, when we were divided up into work parties, the Japs broke us down into seven kumis, as they called them--officers in Number One, first three grades of enlisted men in Number Two, and so on down. The colonel picked officers that . . . there again, it was kind of like being picked to go overseas. We were made to feel good. We believed that we were picked because of our ability to handle the troops. I got Number Seven, which was made up of all the buck privates and second-class seamen and private Marines, which included the non-coms and what-have-you that had been busted and reduced in rank to that grade.

Marcello: In other words, you got all the "eight-balls."

Hard: I got all that was left (chuckle). Now we had to work with those men day after day. The Japs would assign a task to us to get done. We had to walk that straight and narrow path: do no more than was absolutely necessary for the Japs because it was strictly a matter of life or death. The men later got so weak that the more we did, the more we lost. But on the other hand, you couldn't agitate or aggravate the Japs, or they'd take reprisals on the whole crowd. I never minded taking a bashing, but if I brought a bashing or

had brought a bashing on the members of my work party, I was a stupid so-and-so for pushing the Japs too far. So that put an officer in a real spot. I was walking that fine line by trying to . . .

Marcello: It's a fine line, almost, between collaboration and being responsible for the welfare of your men.

Hard: Right. The welfare of your men was the whole story, but in order to accomplish that, at times you had to play up to the Japs.

Marcello: Collaboration is perhaps too strong a word.

Hard: Yes, yes, but fraternization is a better word. For example, one day in Batavia, we were working on a work detail, and that's after we'd got the money back into the battalion and were working in an organized situation. We'd buy all the food we could get on the black market and then bring it into camp and turn it in to battalion. Sergeant Schmid then was the supply sergeant, and it would be doled out to the kitchen. The officer in charge would always take money out to buy with. Well, this particular day, I had the work detail, and we were . . . I don't remember now, but at someplace we were working--Studebaker plant, I believe.

A little ol' Jap had been promoted from private to corporal, and he wanted to celebrate, so he wanted somebody to celebrate with him. Well, he had a bottle of good Scotch whiskey, and he was pouring that Scotch out in sweetened tea, and he offered me a drink with it. I joined in. Then

he happened to think, being from Texas, and a cowboy, we ought to take it "neat," you know. So to make a long story short, I helped that Jap drink up his bottle of Scotch that day and got him drunk, and he sent out messengers, and he had every black marketeer in Batavia coming by with what he had to sell.

We went into camp that afternoon, and . . . every man carried a little backpack to put his loot in, and every man was loaded just to the limit. Nobody ever brought that much chow back into camp in one day as we did that day, simply because . . . and there was nothing that I would have relished any less than drinking with a cotton-pickin' Jap, but the drunker I got him, the more chow we got to bring into camp. So there was one example.

Marcello: Getting back to this discipline again, were there any difficulties in making the enlisted personnel realize that discipline was going to be necessary? In other words, I'm sure that some of the enlisted men had the idea, "Okay, we're all prisoners-of war, so we don't have to listen to these officers anymore."

Hard: Oh, yes, yes, at first we had a problem that way, particularly with the Navy personnel.

Marcello: Of course, you didn't run into the Navy personnel, though, until you got into Bicycle Camp.

Hard: Right, that's correct, yes. I'm getting ahead there.

Marcello: But the point is, this problem did come up.

Hard: Right, right. In the lower ranks the younger men were more prone to feel that way, too.

Marcello: How do you go about making it clear to them that a certain amount of military discipline has to continue? Did you work through your sergeants and so on and so forth?

Hard: Generally, yes. We had key people in all ranks. Now later on there was some low-ranking people, people that didn't have any rank, who became quite influential because they were good men. They had character and leadership capabilities, and they demanded respect. They set the example, and you couldn't ignore them. We worked through the influential men. Most of the non-coms stood up real well; they held their rank well or their positions well in most cases. There was some that were weak. I had some that were weak. We had some that were extremely strong. But there was other ranks--privates and PFC's--that everybody listened to. We used them.

Marcello: Also, I think we have to realize that you're dealing with men who really aren't mature yet. Maybe they're becoming mature in a hurry, but we're talking about relatively young men here.

Hard: Oh, yes. The youngest Navy man had his eighteenth birthday in the prison camp--little "Shorty" Ingram. He was on the Chaumont in the convoy going over with us, and he transferred to the Houston off Thursday Island. That was in early January, and he went in the water in February.

Marcello: I assume such formal military courtesies as saluting and so on has obviously ceased.

Hard: Right.

Marcello: You're not doing that sort of thing.

Hard: No, not us. The British kept that up (chuckle), and we had some problems over that. All we expected, when we talked to a man, was that he give us his undivided attention, that he'd listen to us, you know, respectfully.

Marcello: And I assume that there would be a certain chain-of-command. In other words, orders would go from the Japanese to the officers to the non-coms and down through the ranks.

Hard: Well, most of the time, out on the work party, it went directly from the Jap to the officer to the men, other than when it was necessary sometimes to get support from a work group. Then we'd talk about it to the non-coms that were in the group, but usually it went directly from the Jap to the officer to the work party.

In camp the matter of camp discipline, camp behavior, went from the Japs to our adjutant, which was usually Captain Ira Fowler. He was one of the finest people that we had in the outfit. He dealt with the Japs day after day. He never lost his sense of humor; he never gave away anything in the way of dignity for the Americans in any way; nor did he ever agitate the Japs and bring anything on us. You couldn't have found a better man in his spot. He would bring it back and pass it on to the kumi commanders--the

work party commanders--and we'd have to go from there.

Marcello: Let's talk about the food here at Tanjong Priok. I would assume that there were adjustments that had to be made in this area, also.

Hard: Yes, that was a shocking change. We were served straight rice of the poorest quality. It was literally warehouse sweepings. There was a good sprinkling of rat droppings and rotten, decayed rice, and dirt in the rice, and some form of a little white worm, similar to a common maggot. I don't know what they fed on in grain, but they were in it. We'd be served a fairly liberal portion of that, but by the time we'd culled it and separated the non-rice items from it, there wasn't a great deal left. The only addition to that was a watery, so-called stew--a poor grade of soup.

Marcello: Would you normally just put the stew on top of the rice or whatever?

Hard: Usually, yes. Every individual had his own technique and way of trying to make the best of what we had. Some would dump it all together and wolf it down; others would keep it separate and kind of pick over it. But usually it was mixed in, and you'd eat it with a spoon.

Marcello: I guess you would do anything to give that rice a little bit of flavor.

Hard: Oh, yes. Anything that . . . chili peppers . . . later on, particularly, the most prized find that anybody could scrounge or get on the black market or any other way was pork fat.



We became literally starved for fat, any kind of fat. If one of us were fortunate enough to contact somebody that worked in a Jap kitchen, and trade clothing or jewelry or anything we might have for a quinine bottle of pork fat, it was really going our way.

Marcello: Awhile ago you said that you did receive a liberal portion of rice. What do you mean by a liberal portion?

Hard: I guess it would be about two measured cupfuls, probably, in the ol' shallow, old-time GI mess kit. It would be just about full, slightly rounded.

Marcello: Now would this be on the same meal that you received three times a day?

Hard: More or less. Probably at noon, when they'd bring chow out on the work party to us, they'd usually mix the soup in with the rice before they come out to simplify carrying.

And the measuring . . . the mess personnel were really on the spot. They had to come up with a measuring instrument that was accurate right to the last drop of the grain, preferably that there'd be just enough to serve the group. But at the most, there'd be just, as the Australians use the term, just a few "back-ups." We had a very elaborate roster arrangement to see who got the first whack at the "back-ups" because food was serious, and there was just no such thing as playing favorites or somebody getting more than the others. That was a fighting situation right quick.

Marcello: I'm sure that more fights would come about as a result of food

than any other activity.

Hard: It was a primary concern. Fortunately, our mess personnel were aware of that, and they did everything within their capability to eliminate any possible suspicion of irregularities of any kind.

Marcello: Would there be an officer who would be supervising the mess personnel?

Hard: Yes. We always had a mess officer, as long as we had officers and enlisted men in the same camp.

Marcello: And I would assume that the enlisted men especially kept a sharp eye to make sure that the officers didn't get any more food than the enlisted men.

Hard: Oh, yes, there was always some people that were looking to find special privileges being enjoyed by the officers, but we tried to eliminate that as much as possible.

Marcello: By this time were the company funds being used to purchase food on the outside, or didn't that occur until later?

Hard: I believe that . . . now there might have been some local purchases at Tanjong Priok; we weren't there but just a short time. As I recall, the organized routine or local purchase operation took place in Bicycle Camp, after we moved over there.

Marcello: Incidentally, how much of a problem did the cooks have in learning how to prepare this rice and so on?

Hard: Oh, it took time. The British helped us some. They were familiar with the preparation of food out there under those

conditions, much more than we were, because . . . well, for example, the Australians that we were with most of the time, they were seasoned combat troops. They'd been through the whole Middle East affair over there--Palestine and Syria--in 1939 and 1940. Their existence in the field was rough. They didn't have the plush conditions that the American soldiers were used to. They were a lot of help in telling us or showing us how to handle what food we had.

Marcello: Talk a little bit about the work details here at Tanjong Priok. How did they work?

Hard: We didn't do a great deal of work out at Tanjong Priok--it was just beginning. Now I'm not exactly . . . I can't recall clearly exactly when we did what. When we got in the Batavia area--and some of it might have taken place in Tanjong Priok but definitely so in Bicycle Camp--the Japs would give us details working around the docks, cleaning up the docks that had been bombed out, the warehouses, "go-downs," as they termed them, that had been bombed. We loaded out some ships for the Japs with gasoline and other supplies, tapioca and sugar and rice. They confiscated all of the civilian vehicles there on Java and collected them in that area out on a golf course there in the Batavia area. Our people, part of them, on work parties were required to strip the engine--power train components--out of those cars and ship them out to Japan. There was one period there when a bunch worked in the park and filled up air raid shelters that the Dutch had dug there.

The Studebaker place . . . there was a Studebaker assembly plant there, and all of the spare parts and components that were there were preserved and shipped back to Japan.

It was in these two operations there that I know of any form of sabotage taking place. When we were loading gasoline . . . they were the five-gallon tins with the cold-soldered cap on them that used to be common in the Far East. You see the safari-type pictures of the coolie with a five-gallon can on their back. That was Shell gasoline, some of it 100-octane aviation gasoline, that we loaded out. I know I concealed a tack in the toe of my shoe, in the sole of it. We'd set a can in place in the hold of the ship and give it a push with our foot to push it in place. The gasoline--that high octane in a hot climate--evaporated as fast as it came out of those small holes we'd puncture in there. I don't know whether . . . we never heard of a ship ever going up, but, hopefully, it didn't make it back to Japan.

Then down at the Studebaker place, they were treating all the bearings and spare parts with a lubricant, like a pressure grease or pressure lubricant. Somebody found a hundred-pound drum of soldering flux, and we presented it to the Japs that this was a good preservative, so that hundreds of pounds of soldering flux was used to preserve a bunch of precision bearings, frictionless bearings, and so forth.

That's, to my knowledge, the only two instances that

I knew of personally that anything was done to sabotage the Japs in any way.

Marcello: And this was called soldering flux?

Hard: It's a paste-like material with acid in it--the same type of material that's in the acid-core solder. It's used to clean the material when you're soldering. It's quite caustic and didn't do any metal part any good when it's left on it for a period of time.

Marcello: What opportunities were there to pilfer things while on these work details?

Hard: (Chuckle) It depended on the thickness of our skin and the durability of our heads to a great extent. I worked in the warehouses, and we would steal sugar--take a piece of bamboo and cut it . . . just make a tube out of it with a slanted point on one end and puncture a bag with that, put our canteen cup under it, and the sugar would pour out through this tube. As long as it was available when we were working in the warehouse, we'd do that, and that was just about all.

Now we had some exceptions up in the jungle. We were working at a cargo transfer point at one time, and carloads of small, white potatoes would come in there, and they were Jap supplies. People would pilfer those potatoes, sugar--their stuff--out of the cars there. They were like we'd call cattle cars; they were flat inside cars. That was about all. There would be occasional food that we could get from them.

Marcello: Would the Japanese search you when you came back into camp

with these goodies?

Hard: Sometimes they would; sometimes they wouldn't. But like in the case I told about the drunk guard buying the stuff, we prepared these backpacks supposedly to carry our mess gear and canteens in. It depended on the guard. If the guard was cooperative, he would push us right on past the guard gate without us being stopped, but if somebody'd rubbed him the wrong way during the day, and he was feeling bad, we'd stop and get searched. If we got caught, we'd get bashed.

One of the most . . . actually, I guess it was an amusing situation. They caught somebody stealing out of our crowd, and when the work parties came in, they had these men standing out by the guardhouse. Their heads were peeled clean of hair--been clipped bare. They tell me that in the Jap society that's a sign of a thief and a great disgrace--to get your hair cut off and displayed in public. So we were supposed to be all humiliated, I guess, by seeing some of our people with their heads shaved, but we all practically broke ranks laughing as we went by. Seeing these characters, they looked so funny with their white heads shining.

The Japs got all upset. They couldn't understand that, so they ordered all of us to cut our hair. So we didn't stop at only clipping it--the ones of us who still had razor blades; we shaved their heads just as slick as cue balls and went around rubbing each other's heads and laughing. If there

was anything that the Japs just couldn't quite understand, they could never understand the American perverted sense of humor. We were supposed to be totally disgraced and embarrassed to hold our head up; and to make a game and make fun of it, they just couldn't understand how it could happen.

Marcello: Was it worth it to try and sneak things back into camp and risk getting bashed?

Hard: Yes, if it was good food, like a canteenful of sugar, a ball of twine, something to work with. We had some fellows that did some of the most elaborate knot-work that I ever observed. We'd steal anything of value--something to be used to repair clothing, but primarily food, anything in the way of food.

Marcello: So even as early as your stay in Tanjong Priok, then, men were already becoming scavengers, that is, they were picking up anything that they thought might be of some future value to them.

Hard: Oh, yes, that's correct. In fact, some of them had started it before we got into Tanjong Priok. While we was up at the tea plantation, and while we was bivouacked at Garoet, some of them started stashing stuff away. Some of them paid for it. We had some men that we had ordered not to eat native food, you know, native-prepared food, or drink any of their liquor, but, unfortunately, some did, and we had some men that got pretty sick. But we all learned to scrounge, and we got to be experts at thievery before long.

Marcello: Describe the conduct of the guards here at Tanjong Priok.

- Hard: They generally stayed outside the barbed wire, but there was one or two of them that decided it was time that we start paying them some respect or something. When they would come past our quarters--the area where we were staying--we were required to get up and bow to them, that is, if we were uncovered, bow or hand salute if we were covered. That's when I guess the first bashings took place, is when somebody was a little slow on getting up and paying them the demanded courtesy.
- Marcello: But you still did have Japanese guards here at Tanjong Priok.
- Hard: Yes, they were still Japs there.
- Marcello: Incidentally, were these work details voluntary in a sense? In other words, everybody wasn't going out everyday on work details, were they?
- Hard: No. The officer kept a roster, and I believe they were put out pretty much on a rotating roster basis. I know Major Elkin kept a roster of the officers at that time. That was before we organized the kumis, the work parties. The Japs would just tell the adjutant how many work parties was required for the next day, and he in turn would turn that over to Major Elkin to select the officers to go out. Each unit first sergeant, or in the case of the . . . well, we hadn't got with the Navy yet, but we'd still go through more or less the channels of the . . . well, we'd practically go from the adjutant direct to the unit first sergeant.
- Marcello: I guess by this time you are already learning that it wasn't



a good idea to get too close to any of the Japanese guards. In other words, it was best to stay as far away from them as possible.

Hard: Yes, generally. The only time that we would go out of our way--I guess you'd call it fraternize, to any extent, with the guards--would be on the work parties. At this time, around Batavia there, if we could get a Jap to talking, boasting about their conquests and us standing there open-mouthed and listening to him to give him a good audience . . . or in many cases, the Japanese that could understand just a little bit of English, and we talked to them about America and the American way of life. Or if you had any family photographs, if you had any pictures, particularly of children, you could show it to them. And if you could get the guards busy listening to somebody--usually the officer with the work party or somebody within the party that was good at getting along with them--that meant everybody else could sit down and rest. That was the only purpose in it, was to keep the Jap in a good humor and keep him distracted so he wasn't pushing the work detail--give us a breather. It also gives the good thieves a chance to sneak off and do a little scrounging.

Marcello: What did you do in your spare time here in Tanjong Priok?

Hard: What little time we were there, there wasn't much we could do except talk about what we had done and what we planned to do. I think the ones of us that came out in the best

shape either lived in the past or in the future. About the only thing where we applied ourselves to the present was to size up the situation for self-preservation in case something went wrong, and that was about it. Then the rest of the time, there was some card-playing; at that time we still had some cards in the crowd. I never played any cards at that time. I think I did some whittling on some wood.

Usually, if there was a work party out, I went with it. That's one thing--I think that's one reason--I got out as well as I did. I got outside the camp at every opportunity, even if it meant working harder or . . . but anything was better than that barbed wire. In fact, I guess I have a strong back and weak mind, but usually my roughest time was in some of the better camps. The times I fared the best, comparatively speaking, was under some of the roughest conditions because that's when I could get out and get away from camp. Somehow, I'd then half-way forget I was a prisoner. I took any kind of a job that I could volunteer for; I mean, somebody had to go.

My first preference was to do something that would benefit the men in the camp. Woodcutting, cutting firewood . . . there, of course, I'm getting up into Burma now already. I had a cattle-herding detail. I turned in my occupation as a cattle rancher, so up in Thailand they decided to feed us up a little bit, and they bought a herd of cattle from an Indian merchant up there. They came through . . . they

had our records--civilian occupation and so forth on a card file record--and they came back by looking for cattle herders. I was the chief cattle herder for several months there in Thailand, which meant getting out by daybreak with some other people that we picked and taking the cows out and grazing them over the country all day and bringing them back into the compound at night. We drew our rations by the head, so the better we'd take care of those cattle, the better people ate in camp. I wanted that sort of a detail.

Marcello: Now on May 14, 1942, you move from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp. How far are the two camps apart?

Hard: I don't know, actually. Tanjong Priok is right out in the waterfront area of Batavia, and I've even forgotten how we moved--by what means. I think they transported us by truck from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp. I think it's only a matter, I'd say, of ten or fifteen miles.

Marcello: Now it was about this time that the Battle of the Coral Sea took place. Do you recall anything about hearing any news about the Battle of the Coral Sea?

Hard: Yes. I don't know what our source was, but we were getting news in Tanjong Priok. Now I don't know whether we had an American radio there--a radio in an American group or not--or whether it was coming from the British. Those things . . . it paid not to know too much about them. But, yes, we heard it. We heard that the Battle of the Coral Sea was on, that

they were engaging in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

I was duty officer for the Americans when we got ordered to move to Bicycle Camp. I recall the move and the date, and I know when we got into Bicycle Camp, we had an American source of information. There was a Navy chief petty officer and a master sergeant working together, and they set up a radio, and we got the information and the results of the Battle of the Coral Sea. That's the first good news we'd gotten.

Marcello: I'm sure that must have done wonders for your morale.

Hard: Yes, it was good. I don't remember now just where . . . I don't know when the Doolittle raid on Tokyo was, but it wasn't too long after that. But that was good--to see them move. Then we started hearing news of action in New Guinea, around Port Moresby. We started getting information of action, and that was the main thing. It was beginning to show that we were getting a build-up in the Pacific. We could actually see the possibility of turning the fight around.

Marcello: At this stage, how long are you going to be a prisoner-of-war?

Hard: Oh, I still kept it down to months. I had a false hope that the Chinese were going to do wonders. I thought that the Chiang Kai-shek crowd were going to make enough headway on the continent until they bombed Tokyo from air bases in China.

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

Hard: It was a camp built by the Dutch. It was fairly new, and

for the climate and the type of troops they had, I guess it was a first-class facility. The barrack buildings were very sturdy and well-ventilated. For toilet facilities, they had the outside, open sewers again, but we learned it can be kept clean. All around the buildings, under the roof, there was a concrete ditch, drainage ditch. The concrete walkways . . . in some cases there were covered walkways between the building.

We had fairly adequate space. The officers moved into what had been a canteen building, I believe. Let's see . . . there were twenty-some-odd of us there then, or better, living in there with . . . we had enough room for cots or beds on the floor, whatever we had. The enlisted men were . . . some of them hung hammocks on the verandas of the buildings, but most of them had enough room to live in fairly good comfort. It was the best we ever had while we were prisoners. It could be kept clean, as Colonel Searle proved with his daily inspections. It was kept sanitary.

Marcello: In other words, the men's quarters were inspected even by the American officers and so on.

Hard: That's correct. The Japs didn't worry at that time too much about our living conditions. They started wandering inside our compound there and rousting us out so we could pay them our form of respect. Some of them had to take advantage of that authority. But actually our internal housekeeping was left up to us. We had our own mess, and that's where we

were able to put into practice, as I mentioned earlier, the boiling of water. We wouldn't allow any individual fires. We didn't have enough fuel for individual fires to brew up tea or any scrounged material that we might have. Everything that was flammable and used for fuel was kept and collected at the cookhouse site to sterilize the mess gear before we ate.

Marcello: Incidentally, did the Japanese provide you any fuel for your fires?

Hard: Frankly, I don't know. At that time, I don't know where the fuel came from . . . no, they had some gas. They had some form of gas that they used to fire the pots over in the cookhouse at that time, and I believe the wood all came from old dead trees or parts of the barracks or anything we could scrounge for firewood for the water.

Marcello: Up until this time, had the Japanese processed you in any way? In other words, were they keeping records on each individual prisoner?

Hard: I don't believe they had. I think that most of that took place there in Bicycle Camp. I'm not sure of that now, but the best I recall, other than the one list that was given them at Garoet when we first became prisoners, that Colonel Tharp turned over to these first two officers that came out . . . now from that time on, I don't know when the more detailed information became available to them or when they compiled it. But by the time we left Bicycle Camp, they

had a card on everybody.

Marcello: Do you recall how they processed you here at Bicycle Camp?

Hard: I've forgotten what form of questionnaires they used or how they ascertained our background. For example, I don't know how I informed them that I was a cattle rancher instead of a mechanic and machinist, but it was there that we were processed in two or three ways.

That's where the overseas work parties were formed and shipped out. The first one we had was what we referred to as a technician party. I guess I better back up there. The day we moved into Bicycle Camp, the Navy people off the Houston were already there. They'd been there just a few days. They'd moved them out of the old civilian prisons at Serang and various places, where they'd put them in when they picked them up on the beach. They had moved them into Bicycle Camp, and they were there in mid-May when we moved in. We stayed there pretty much intact until, I guess, from May to September. Everything went fairly peacefully. We had local work parties, and we thought some of it was pretty rough, but we found out it was real easy compared to what we caught later on.

But during that time, we had two experiences . . . two or three. They inquired as to our civilian qualifications. Around the Fourth of July, they had been trying to get us to sign a statement, an agreement, that we would obey the Japanese and that we would not attempt to escape. We'd

held out on that . . . they'd started in June. Well, we had declined to sign the thing because we felt that that was going too far. We held out, and they kept pressuring us. We refused to sign it, and they cut our rations. They cut down on the local purchase privileges and one thing and another, and we decided that they were making it hard on the enlisted men . . . you see, they were just after the officers to sign it at this time. Well, after two or three refusals--and each time everybody was made to suffer for our refusal to cooperate--we agreed that that was sufficient duress to make it permissible for us to sign the thing. We couldn't see where it would amount to anything because if any of us got a chance to go over the hill, we would, anyway, whether we'd signed and promised not to or not. It was a ridiculous sort of a thing to have a prisoner sign. But, anyway, we'd agreed that we'd sign it.

But on the morning of the Fourth of July, they came in bright and early with armed guards, and they roused all the officers out, and they marched us over across town a ways--I don't know where--to some old camp. They lined us up along a wall over there, and we waited. They'd changed the guards, and we waited. Finally, just about the time the day was over, they came along and told us, "If you do not sign this statement to obey our orders, we cannot guarantee your safety," or something to that effect. Their wording, anyway, was either sign it or else. Well, we'd already



agreed among ourselves days before that the next time it came up we would sign it. So we said, "Sure, we'll sign the thing," and went back to camp.

We felt kind of . . . didn't know how the enlisted men would take it. We got back there, and they were acting kind of sheepish-like. What the Japs had done, just after they got us out of the camp, they went through there with bamboo poles and fixed bayonets and rounded up all the enlisted men and said, "You will sign." So they had signed, so we'd all signed on the Fourth of July, exercising our independence in 1942 (chuckle).

Then, after they started talking about these work parties, these technician parties, to go somewhere to work, well, then they decided to give us a physical. We referred to it as the "Royal Order of the Glass Rods." They lined us all up and took us all out by a warehouse or a shed out there, and here were these two big footprints drawn out on the ground with crayon, well apart. And all these white-frocked Jap medics were out there, or at least they were Japs with white aprons and smocks on. We had all kinds of thoughts about what might be fixing to take place, and none of them were pleasant. Anyway, what we did, supposedly to check for carriers of some disease--what, I don't recall--we all had to drop our pants, and they made a rectal test at this time with a glass rod. I don't know what the proper name for them is. But we went through that ordeal two or three other times,

and one of them was bent wire and another one was bamboo, but that was the only form of physical that we ever got from them.

Marcello: So in terms of processing, then, you never really sat down with any individual Japanese officer and went through any sort of an interview or anything of that nature.

Hard: None whatever, none whatever.

Marcello: Were you ever assigned a number or given some sort of tag or identification or anything of that nature?

Hard: Yes. I don't know whether it was in Tanjong Priok or Bicycle Camp, but they gave us a portion of wood, and we were assigned a number through the adjutant, based on our roster. Each of us received a number. It was our responsibility to carve that number--I believe we had to carve it--on the piece of wood that we had, and we carried that with us or wear it like a dog tag. It seemed like there was one other time we were given a number, a different number, but I don't recall exactly when or the circumstances there.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the non-escape pledge. How much talk was there of escape at this time?

Hard: Oh, we evaluated the situation as best we could. Of course, the Dutch told us that on Java escape was out of the question because there was, I believe, at that time a population density of 1,200 per square mile, and all on the west end of the island were hostile to whites or European personnel. The Dutch said that there was not a place on the island that

a white man could survive for twenty-four hours without being seen by a native. To be seen or observed by a native meant that his freedom was gone because he'd be turned in.

Of course, we talked about it a lot. There was a group of us that pretty well hung together. Ol' "Windy" Rogers, Archie Fitzsimmons, a couple of Navy officers, Hamill and Hamlin, and I hung together pretty closely after we were combined with the Navy. We talked about it. The Australians did quite a lot of talk about it. We all pretty well agreed, if we could ever get aboard a ship, we'd have a chance to make a break for it, maybe. We took every step possible for the circumstances. Some of the Navy crowd that qualified would volunteer to go down as stokers in the engine room on the ship, so they could see how much fuel we had and be in position in case we ever tried to take it.

The only time that we ever had a remote chance was on the ship from Singapore up to Burma. We were attacked by our own planes, but we'd already ascertained at that time that there wasn't enough fuel aboard the ship to get clear even of the Andaman Islands, let alone get across into friendly territory off India, across the Indian Ocean. We would have run out of fuel well within the Jap-controlled territory. At the time of the attack, had we been satisfied that we had the fuel, we could have taken over because there was strictly chaos aboard the ship except for their old skipper.

Marcello: Talk about the first encounter with the survivors off the USS

Houston.

- Hard: The first one I met was Ensign Nelson. We hadn't gotten inside the gate until we met him. He was from Orange, Texas, and when he heard there was a Texas outfit was coming in, well, he greeted us with open arms. I remember very distinctly Johnnie Nelson. The Navy . . . well, some of the officers and particularly the enlisted men had already grown sizeable beards and were kind of a curiosity. But we got in with them all right, I think. I enjoyed . . . made good friends with a couple of warrant officers. One old warrant officer from Arkansas, "Red" May, was an engineer off the Houston, an old-time engineer, and being a grease monkey by profession, almost, I never tired of talking with him about the engineering and power plants aboard the various vessels he'd worked on.
- Marcello: They were a pretty scruffy outfit, were they not, when you guys first came into camp?
- Hard: Oh, yes. Of course, they went into the water, a lot of them, with nothing but their skivvy shorts on, and they had nothing except themselves, just about. They were in pretty rough condition. We were still . . . we were in better condition physically than they were, and we still had, as I say, all the clothing we could carry, and that sort of thing . . . mess gear, blankets, bedding. So when we joined them, we became a group of American prisoners, so we split up everything we had--clothes, equipment, money, whatever we had. An American

was American. We didn't draw any line between soldiers and sailors and Marines.

Marcello: And this was all done spontaneously and voluntarily, was it not?

Hard: Right, right. When we got into Bicycle Camp and met this Navy crowd, well, it was just within a matter of hours or, at the most, days when you had a hard time telling one American from the other.

Marcello: In other words, you officers did not have to order the enlisted men to share with the Houston survivors.

Hard: Oh, no. In fact, they probably set the example--no problem there at all. No, there was no orders. To my knowledge, there was none. Hal Hamlin was the senior American present, and he got together with Colonel Tharp and Captain Fowler, and whatever organizational details were necessary were worked out, and that was all there was to it, as far as I know.

Marcello: I would assume that those Houston survivors would have been a resourceful bunch, considering that they had come off a ship where all sorts of skills would have been necessary.

Hard: Some of them were. But actually, you didn't get the diversity, I don't believe, in the regular service personnel that you do in the civilian components because we had so many straight from civilian life, practically speaking, who had been in various professions. But the Australians were the ones that were never-ending in surprises in their capabilities. They were the most resourceful individuals

that we met anywhere.

Marcello: What was the food like here at Bicycle Camp? And I guess at this stage you would have to compare or contrast it with what you had at Tanjong Priok.

Hard: Well, it was much better than Tanjong Priok because we set up our own mess, our own kitchen, and the food was much better. We were allowed . . . I don't know . . . after a certain period of time--I don't know how long it was--we were allowed to establish the local purchase. For example, we bought pinto beans and supplemented our ration with them. This black market scrounge that we made was sufficient to give a man a big tablespoonful of jam. That was one of the main black market items, was strawberry jam or cherry preserves and that sort of thing. There'd be enough for breakfast to serve a spoon of that--a pretty good portion of it. For dinner and supper, the rice and stew would be supplemented sometimes with these red beans. Then we'd get some extra vegetables which we could buy. But their rations . . . the rice was better, a better grade of rice. Everything was better at Bicycle Camp than we'd had, but, of course, it was the best we had at any time.

Marcello: So your basic ration was still rice and then whatever you could scrounge to supplement that rice.

Hard: That's correct; that's right. I've forgotten what our . . . they told us what ration we were entitled to--so many grams of rice per day--but I've forgotten what it was. But it was

a pretty good quantity. I don't believe we ever got that amount even.

Marcello: Now were the Japanese responsible for the initial distribution of the rice? In other words, would you draw a rice ration everyday from the Japanese warehouse, or how would that work?

Hard: I'm not sure. I never was a mess officer, and I'm not sure exactly how the rations were handled. I know that a ration truck would come into the prison compound, and it would be issued out to the various nationalities of the various compounds.

Marcello: When you went through the chow line, would the officers be fed first or last?

Hard: Most of the time we were fed separately. The Navy had their mess boys. Now that's something I didn't agree with, and I remember one little bit of a rift I had with them. See, in the Navy the officers are kings aboard ship.

Marcello: And they have the Filipino mess boys, usually.

Hard: Yes, well, they had Chinese, and the ranking one, the captain's boy, Su, carried the rank and pay of a first class petty officer. I think there was four or five of them, but I've forgotten--Su, Yu Kun, Chu Tsoa, Chun Kei, Ah Chie . . . I've forgotten some of them's names now. They would draw the rations from the mess and bring it over and serve it to us separately.

Marcello: But were you still getting the same chow that the enlisted

personnel were getting?

Hard: Yes, yes, we always had the same chow. It all came out of the same pot, as far as I know.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit more about how food was purchased on the outside. I guess, once again, we're talking about those company funds to which we had been referring earlier, and, as you mentioned, there were perhaps several hundred thousand guilders altogether. To the best of your knowledge, how did the company purchases work?

Hard: I'm not sure who went out with the truck at this time. I don't know whether Captain Fowler went out with it or Taylor or Lieutenant Elton Schmid. I'm pretty sure that there was an American who went out with the truck, but there were other nationalities. They'd go out all on one truck, as well as I know. They would buy certain things like these beans and sugar, sometimes canned milk. They even bought a few books. Somebody got hold of Culberson's Bridge and brought it in . . . and possibly some limited medical supplies, drugs of some kind . . . I'm not sure. There, again, things that took place at headquarters, I'm not aware of. I wasn't there; I wasn't close enough to know exactly what was happening.

Marcello: Where was this food then stored?

Hard: Our black market chow was stored in a room, and Sergeant Schmid slept on it (chuckle) in the area of that little ol' building that we set aside for it there in the compound. The rest of the foodstuff was taken over around the cookhouses,



and, frankly, I was never in the cookhouses at Bicycle Camp, so I don't know what the physical set-up was over there for the storage and handling. Let's see . . . I don't remember who our mess officer was. Hamill was the mess officer part of the time . . . oh, Keithley, I believe, Oscar Keithley, was our mess officer while we were at Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Do you remember anything about the court-martial of Sergeant Jack Shaw?

Hard: No, I don't.

Marcello: I have heard stories about this, and I'm not positive as to exactly what took place. But it seems to me that it had something to do with his being caught in the area where the food was being stored and so on, and he wasn't supposed to be there.

Hard: I've heard something about that, I believe, but I don't recall it. In fact, I can't even recall him as an individual. I don't know who he was; I don't know what unit he was from.

Marcello: Did you still have Japanese guards in this camp?

Hard: I believe it was here at Bicycle Camp where they brought in the Koreans.

Marcello: What were they like?

Hard: They were giving us trouble; they started giving us trouble. They were the ones that . . . see, they didn't even carry the rank of a full-fledged Japanese soldier. They had a rank insignia of their own. We were of the opinion that they had a pretty inferiority complex, and there was nothing that they

liked any better than to show what little authority they had by roughing up the prisoners.

I might as well state it here that I only knew, well, I would say, two good Japs. One of them didn't amount to anything. He was a little ol' work supervisor up in Burma. He wore an International Boy Scout belt buckle. We called him "Joe," for lack of a better name. He never harmed a prisoner, and he made the work as easy as possible. In fact, he'd get in trouble with his sergeant sometimes for not getting enough work done. Then the other one was a sergeant, a master sergeant, Murita, who was in charge of one of our work details that went to Burma--the group that we referred to as the Fitzsimmons Party. He professed to be a Christian, and apparently was, and he never abused a prisoner or allowed one to be abused when he could prevent it, and the party that was with him fared better than any other work party that we had the whole time.

Then we had one old Korean named Hirano--somebody said that meant "farmer" in Korean--that mustered the work parties out every morning up in the jungle on the railroad. He saved my neck one time, and I guess that's the reason I'm partial to him. That's the only members of our captors that I had anything good to say for.

Marcello: It is, of course, a known fact that they resorted to physical punishment at the smallest provocation. What forms would this physical punishment usually take?

Hard: The more mild was open-hand slap, and from there it would deteriorate to rifle butts and hobnail kicking and clubs. Then for special punishment they would stand a person up at the guardhouse for hours and hours on end or make him kneel on his knees with a bamboo in the bend of his knees.

Marcello: Did you detect that physical punishment was a way of life in the Japanese army, too?

Hard: Oh, yes, yes. It was the same as our verbal reprimand. They would do it; they would practice it. I got to the point where I was willing to accept it. It was terribly humiliating and infuriating to tolerate at first, of course, but after getting to know their way of life, as we did, later on, I didn't get too upset as long as they did it in a formal sort of way.

If the person being punished . . . sometimes they'd asked for it, a little bit, I'll admit. One example involved an English officer. I think it was in Thailand. He would continuously, persistently, move around in rank when we was out in formation to be counted, just like an aggravating recruit that didn't want to be disciplined. We had this old sergeant that was real rough. He was an old-time China soldier, and he was real rough. But he'd always been fair with our people. As far as I was concerned, he'd been quite fair. He was in charge, and I kept watching him keep his eye on this British officer. I managed never to stand by this officer in rank because I knew that something was coming sooner or

later. When this ol' Jap started getting mad, his eyes looked just like a mad pig's--they turned red--and you could see him looking down the ranks at this officer that was misbehaving. So one day he let out a scream . . . and he carried . . . when they were checking the ranks for a count, he carried his sword encased in his hand. He let out a squall and swung that sword scabbard--two-handed sword--and hit this officer across the arm and broke it just like pie crust.

That's not the way to do, but I couldn't get too upset because that officer was supposed to be an intelligent, designated leader in the army, and he knew better than to provoke. He accomplished nothing by his lack of discipline in rank and by provoking such an act. That sort of thing, I didn't blame the Japs as such.

Marcello: Were you ever personally physically abused here at Bicycle Camp?

Hard: I think I got bashed one time because I didn't bow in time for one of the guards. Yes, I did one time in Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Were the work parties here at Bicycle Camp similar to those at Tanjong Priok?

Hard: Yes. It was the same area, same orders, and the same word.

Marcello: Again, I gather that nobody was really being overworked here.

Hard: No, nobody. We thought we were sometimes, like, loading that gasoline or taking on that 100-kilo bags of tapioca or sugar. Backpacking it up a gangplank was hard work, but nobody was hurt there.

Marcello: Is everybody still in fairly good physical shape here at Bicycle Camp?

Hard: Oh, yes. We had a boxing bout there. The officers played a lot of volleyball. Some of the enlisted men did, too.

Marcello: I think there were stage shows offered here, too, weren't there? Weren't there stage shows offered here?

Hard: Yes. I never did go in for the entertainment side, but there were some. Some of our people were involved in that.

I spent a lot of time with this old Navy warrant officer, May, the ship's carpenter, Beichelin, Ensign Hamill, and Ensign Clark, a Supply Corps officer from Harvard. We did a lot of "batting the breeze." We planned boats. We made a wood-turning lathe out of an electric motor and parts that we stole off of old junk cars and so forth, and we turned out various kinds of woodwork. It didn't amount to anything, but it was something to do--to see if we could make the thing work and make the chisels and so forth to work on it with.

We played volleyball. Captain Cates was the captain of the volleyball team. We played a real good brand of volleyball. Cates, Heinen, Heiner, Hamill, myself, C.D. Smith, and, I think, Preston Clark played volleyball. But, anyway, we had a team that . . . we took on all comers. It was a real hot game with the Australians.

Marcello: Did the Japanese ever participate or spectate at these games?

Hard: Not much. Occasionally, there'd be one to come by and watch

it a while but not often.

Marcello: What were the bathing facilities like here at Bicycle Camp?

Hard: We had running water and outdoor showers. Let's see . . . we had a . . . it seems to me that we had a little oil building in the officers' quarters area, but I think over in the barracks area there was just an open shed with some showers in it, as well as I recall.

Marcello: So you did have fairly easy access, then, to showers and water here.

Hard: Comparatively speaking, it wasn't bad at Bicycle Camp. A person could stay clean and healthy there without any real problem.

Marcello: Did the Japanese supply any toiletries such as soap?

Hard: Yes, they issued some soap--little oil yellow bars of soap. That was some of the things they bought on the market there when we had our local purchase privileges, was soap.

Marcello: Incidentally, did the men ever seem to feel that the officers were getting fatter than they were or were getting more to eat than they were, since the officers controlled the money that was buying this food and so on?

Hard: I think some of them thought that--a few of them, maybe--but I don't think it was a common thing at all. I wasn't aware of it.

Marcello: In terms of bashings, do you feel that here at Bicycle Camp, at least, the officers were getting just as many as the enlisted men?

- Hard: I think so. Nobody got a lot of bashings at Bicycle Camp. They were just beginning there.
- Marcello: Okay, I guess it was October of 1942 when the first contingents began to leave Bicycle Camp.
- Hard: That's correct.
- Marcello: When did you leave?
- Hard: It was about October, also.
- Marcello: The Fitzsimmons group was the first ones that left, is that correct?
- Hard: I believe it was the technician party. Ziegler and that crowd went to Japan. I believe they were first. Then the Fitzsimmons group moved out and then the main group. I think it was about October 11th when we left Bicycle Camp to go up to Singapore.
- Marcello: Was it rather upsetting to have to leave Bicycle Camp? After all, that wasn't a fairly bad place, was it?
- Hard: That's right. We didn't relish going anywhere. We were afraid of . . . I was afraid of mines . . . of fixed prisons. Like I say, I didn't like that barbed wire. I didn't like the confinement and anything that smelled of closer confinement. I also didn't want any kind of constructive work for the Japs. I was "allergic" to it.
- Marcello: I guess if you could have stayed at Bicycle Camp for the duration of the war, things would not have been too bad, that is, assuming you could have stayed under the conditions prevalent at the time.

Hard: Oh, yes, if we could have stayed under those conditions, but from what I heard, they didn't remain that way in Java. I think food got short.

Of course, see, we only had one or two men that stayed in Java. Our battery clerk, Robert Cobb, stayed there, I believe, the whole time, and I never did get to talk to him after he was released. Frankly, I don't know what the conditions were in Java later on in the war.

Marcello: Okay, so describe your departure from Bicycle Camp.

Hard: Well, of course, a party was formed, and I don't remember the details now of how we got to the docks--whether they hauled us down there or we walked, marched. But I remember very vividly the conditions that we encountered at the docks. They'd made up a party referred to as the Java Party--about a thousand-something Dutch and 300-and-some-odd Australians, and, I think, 500 . . . it seemed like it was 556 Americans. These groups made up this party of about roughly 2,000. Also, this was the party that became Group 5--fifth work group--up in Burma. Anyway, we got down to the docks, and they started loading us on that little ol' rusty tub.

Marcello: Do you remember the name of it?

Hard: Dai Nichi Maru. The hold was double-decked like a cattle car or like a sheep car, and there was not quite enough room for a man to sit up cross-legged and hold his head up straight if he happened to be under a beam. If he wasn't under a beam or a stanchion of some kind there, he could get his



head up.

So they started marching us in, column of files, like you'd wind a line into a hold, back against the skin of the ship. When it was around that time, they went inside of that group. When they got it all the way to the edge of the decking, we thought, "Ha! Well, now they're getting us all in there, so then we'll get spread out, out in the hold." Well, we were mistaken. They called one layer out in the hold, too, that way. We sat down, cross-legged, and the man in front of us was right against us. I don't know . . . some of the guys that were statistically inclined or mathematically inclined figured that if we had a full-fledged, civilized coffin, we'd have more room, more cubic space, than we had aboard the ship. So that was a real shocker.

Marcello: What were some of the other conditions you experienced after they packed you into that hold?

Hard: Well, there was the heat, shortage of water, the sanitary facilities.

Marcello: How long does a canteen of water last under these circumstances?

Hard: I think they had to last twenty-four hours on there--about that. I think if we got a canteen in twenty-four hours, we were doing pretty well.

Of course, the possibility that we might have friendly forces in the area, when you're bottled up that way, doesn't give you a good feeling. We went up inside the Bangka Strait from Batavia up to Singapore. The water's shallow and the

waterway is narrow, and it was cluttered with sunken vessels. As soon the darkness had come, they had dropped the hook, and we lay there right on the equator. It was hot.

Marcello: I'm sure that hold must have stunk to high heaven, didn't it?

Hard: Oh, yes. Some of the people got sick, real sick.

Marcello: Fortunately, most of you didn't have dysentery yet.

Hard: No, no, we were still in good shape then. At that time we were in good shape, comparatively speaking.

There's one incident that I'll tell as a story. You hear these stories about people that rebel or revolt against the Japs. Well, I got involved in one in Singapore Harbor. Old Marshall Hamill, the Navy ensign, and I had become close friends. He was quite ill, and I guess it was a heat stroke of some degree. We got there in Singapore Harbor, waiting to get off or to go on in where we'd get unloaded, and he was ill. So we made a trip on deck. We were going to use every pretense we could to get some fresh air. We pretended we were going in what we referred to as the benjo line, and it was the sanitary facilities. Then we'd swept the waterline, and we'd get through with one, and we'd double back and go again.

Well, the Japs spotted us and jumped us out about it, giving us one of their talking-to in a language we couldn't understand. One of them got real rough, and I kind of . . . Marshall was real sick, and I thought I'd intervene a little

bit and take some of the abuse off him. This little Jap was talking real loud and started to shove Marshall with a rifle butt.

Well, I lost my temper to an extent and proceeded to give him a good Texas cussing and shoved him back. He showed signs of fright; he got on back out of the way. I thought to myself, "Boy, I got it made now. I got even with one of them." I didn't see the tall character on the hatch behind me. He "lowered the boom," and that ended my moment of domineering the Japanese (chuckle). It came to a real quick halt.

Marcello: When you say he "lowered the boom," what did he do?

Hard: He swung his rifle butt on me.

Marcello: Where did he hit you?

Hard: Across the shoulders and the back of the head. He got my attention, and we went back down in the hold (chuckle).

Marcello: How were you fed while you were on the Dai Nichi Maru?

Hard: They'd have . . . let's see . . . I believe they formed a line, and we went up on deck and got rice in our hands. I think that's all we had, was just boiled rice. That's what the Japs feed their troops in transit for a more or less field ration. They'll go by the pot and just give them a handful, and they'll ball it like a snowball and eat it. I believe that's what we had. It seemed like one time we had a curried soup or a stew that went with it. But we didn't eat much. I don't remember much about the eating. I think

we only ate once or twice.

Marcello: You weren't on that ship too many days, were you?

Hard: No, I think it was . . . I'm not sure now how many, probably just three or four days, I believe, was all.

Marcello: Under these circumstances, is it a good or a bad thing to think about your home, family, things of that nature?

Hard: Up to a point, yes, but not to dwell on. Other than plan for the future . . . as I say, some of us lived either in the past or in the future. About the only time that I thought of home is every night when I'd go to bed. I'd kind of take inventory to see whether I was ahead or behind for that day, and I would think about home momentarily. That was about it.

Marcello: Okay, so you get into Singapore. Actually, you off-load there at Singapore, and you're on your way to Changi Village. Now on the way to Changi Village, you pass Changi Jail, don't you?

Hard: Right.

Marcello: Given your aversion for enclosed spaces, I'm sure you didn't want to stick around there too long.

Hard: No, those high walls didn't look a bit good, no. But we went on past.

Marcello: Did they march you from the ship to Changi Village?

Hard: I believe we went in trucks. Of course, it was quite a ways, and I think we went by truck.

Marcello: What did Changi look like from a physical standpoint?

Hard: It still looked somewhat like a westernized, that is, a

garrison-type post, as far as the building structures were concerned, except the area had been criss-crossed with barbed-wire compounds. But there was a barracks building and various facility buildings that you'd find on a military post. It was still pretty much intact.

Marcello: What were your quarters like here?

Hard: The enlisted men were in a two-story, tropical barracks building up on the higher ground, which was nothing but just open floors--a roof and two floors--with the sides built up kind of like a balcony-type, not a full wall, and those overhanging eaves. The officers were put down in what had been non-commissioned officers' quarters. I don't remember now how many . . . I know that . . . let's see . . . there was five of us in one room, not much larger than this. We were in one room; Ensign Stivers, a pilot off the Houston, was mess officer then, and the Chinese mess boys were in another room; and I've forgot now who occupied the other rooms, but there was about four or five people to the room, and they weren't large, but it was shelter.

Marcello: Describe the role that the British play here at Changi.

Hard: They still didn't quite know they were prisoners, in a way. They still had their chain-of-command. They ran the camp internally, that is, the entire Changi fortress area. Now it was cut into various compounds; I don't know how the divisions were made. The British Sikh troops had gone over to the Japs. These compounds were separated by double-wire fences, and

the Sikhs patrolled between the fences and the cross-fences between the compounds. Now we never saw a Jap inside the Changi proper at all. In fact, we saw very little of the Japs there, outside of one review or so that we'd made.

The British were, as I say, were strictly in charge. We got cross-ways with them there. There'd been some Red Cross supplies, International Red Cross supplies, issued there, and they said since we were transits that our supplies had been shipped on to Burma, and they wouldn't divide with us.

They also gave us a wicked work detail there. We had one real touchy situation that, I guess, was there for quite some time. They had an old bombed-out, damaged rubber grove that they wanted turned into a garden. They put a British volunteer, a Malay volunteer, officer that knew tropical agriculture down there to supervise the construction of the garden. They used American labor to prepare it.

We went in there by hand with old beat-up chunkels and axes and what-have-you and cleared out . . . I've forgotten how many acres of that rubber grove. We cleared it completely and made it into a beautiful garden. This officer in charge-- I've forgotten his name--had a transit or level, and we had to get those trees out by the roots and till the soil with chunkels, the old eye hoe that's a universal tool in the Far East. We first cut drainage ditches, graded properly for drainage. That was the problem, was to get the moisture

out of the area. We cut major drainage ditches and then laterals into that, and then each individual seed bed was something like a meter wide and rounded up with a little drainage ditch between them to let the air get in and keep the soil from souring.

Our rations was real poor there. We'd get a little boiled rice, just soupy boiled rice, for breakfast before daylight. We'd get up for this work party, and we'd go out through some of the British area--I think there was about four kilometers out to the garden spot from our area--and here would be the Britishers still nice and healthy and sleek. They were eating breakfast cereal like Ralston or cream of wheat or . . . I've forgotten what they call theirs. They were lined up and eating, and we'd come dragging in about sundown that afternoon, and they'd be out playing soccer or having a good time, taking showers and washing. Their clothes were clean, and they were well-fed looking, and our people were dragging in their tracks.

They had one incident there. The American party and a small British party happened to get to the tool rack at the same time, and some words were exchanged and pick handles came into play, and the situation got pretty serious but got by without any Japs seeing it.

I wasn't on that detail, but that led to mine and Marshall Hamill's being on a permanent work party. Marshall got along with the Navy crowd real well, the enlisted men, and I'd

always prided myself with having a lot of friends with ours. After that trouble, Colonel Tharp and the British got together and decided we needed to be more careful about who we sent out in charge of the work parties and to be more careful, to have better control over the men. But the only way we could get past these British areas was to order the work party to quick-time and march by at attention. We had enough friends among the non-coms within the ranks that we could enforce it and keep down the catcalls. As long as nobody started talking, we didn't have any trouble.

But we became permanent work party on that garden detail. No matter who the enlisted men or how many we had, well, ol' Hamill and I caught the detail going out with them. But that was a real touchy thing; however, some of the British were real friendly there, too.

Marcello: But it was almost strictly the Americans who worked on this garden detail?

Hard: Right. We were, yes.

Marcello: And this was done at the orders of the British, who were nominally in charge of this camp.

Hard: More or less. I guess the Japs . . . at least it was done with the Japs' concurrence. Who initiated the idea, I don't know. I understand that that garden was a lifesaver literally for the civilian internees and the people that stayed in Singapore. They got tons and tons of vegetables off of it.



Marcello: At the same time, I understand that the Americans had a fairly good relationship here with the Scots.

Hard: Oh, yes, they took us in as long-lost cousins. Particularly the enlisted men, they shared food with them and . . . well, everybody was friendly, and when we left there, we marched down to the train station. We left Singapore on a train and went up to George Town, Malaya, and they piped us out of Changi. We were the only non-highland unit that was ever piped out of there in the history of the fortress. We were proud of that.

Marcello: Battery E also moved through Singapore on their way to Japan, did they not?

Hard: During Christmas of 1942, they came through there on their way to Japan.

Marcello: Did you have a chance to have any contact with Battery E?

Hard: Just the few days that they were in Singapore. I don't remember how long they were there, but it was just a very brief contact there--enough that we heard about their action and that sort of thing in Java. I don't recall how long they were there, but not long.

Marcello: Did you ever have any trouble with bedbugs in the officers' quarters here?

Hard: (Chuckle) Yes, there was bedbugs in all the camps to my knowledge.

Marcello: How did you get rid of them?

Hard: Burned them . . . hot water or just plain physical cleaning.

Marcello: In other words, didn't you have to take apart the beds here and actually boil the slats and so on?

Hard: Oh, yes, or pour hot water over them. After we got up in Thailand . . . this is out of order, but when they went into Thailand, I'd stayed over in Burma after most people had left. They finally hauled me out on a litter. I was pretty sick when we got over in Thailand, and I was in a barrack or hut with a bunch of Britishers. I heard them talking about something. They were always fighting the bedbugs. I heard them say something about that "bloody Yank" wasn't doing anything. Well, I was so cotton-pickin' sick, I didn't want to. When I got into the camp, old "Shorty" Ingram and somebody else had made a litter, and they picked me up off the truck, and they just laid it across the floor joists in the hut, and I'd been sleeping on this several days since I'd been there.

When I got up and got a chance to get out, I took that thing out in the alley between the huts. It was hotter than Hades over there, and I bounced it on the ground, and literally the ground was black with bedbugs. It was so hot that their life was only a matter of about twelve inches. They could crawl about twelve inches on that hot ground, and they'd puff up and die. I made some life-long friends out of the Britishers when I finally got off my bed and cleaned up the bedbugs (chuckle).

Marcello: I assume that the food here was not nearly so good as what

it had been at Bicycle Camp.

Hard: Oh, nothing like it, no. It was very poor.

Marcello: Was it mainly rice?

Hard: Mainly rice and some local vegetables--scant for a ration. Practically no meat at all.

Marcello: Not even mutton?

Hard: No, none. One time there they had some mutton they were afraid was going to spoil in a freezer there somewhere, and they issued it, and, oh, it was good.

Marcello: By the time you get to Changi, are small cliques beginning to form among the men? When I use the term "clique," I'm not using it in a derogatory sense, but I'm referring to a group of men, three or four, maybe, who get together and kind of look out for one another.

Hard: That's right.

Marcello: Share their food with one another and anything else they happened to come across.

Hard: Yes, that was the case with the officers, too, particularly at Changi, and it followed almost through the jungle. Three Navy officers, particularly two, Hamill and Hamlin, and ol' "Windy" Rodgers and I and "Fitz" . . . well, "Fitz" was separated from us, but after "Fitz" left, "Windy" and I were always close.

Marcello: And this is going to be one of the keys to survival, isn't it?

Hard: Yes, it is. That's where the Australians fared so well. They

looked out for each other even better than we did, I'll admit. We even had some people that got real low . . . and we all got low, for that matter, but as an honest fact, we had . . . and I don't recall the details, but I remember in principle that we had a man that got down to where he'd lost the respect of most of our crowd or he'd lost his buddy or something, and he went over to the Australians, and they took care of him when he couldn't get care or attention in his own outfit. They were good. That Jacksboro crowd, they held together. That bunch of ol' farm boys out there, they really stayed together. They still do, for that matter.

Marcello: That brings up an interesting subject, I guess. Was it an advantage in terms of your survival to have a group of men who all essentially came from the same area? In other words, just about everybody in this 131st Field Artillery was from West Texas, were they not?

Hard: Right. Yes, I think it's an advantage. I think it's an advantage in a lot of respects. It's rough in a way, like the time when we went through Lubbock, and these mothers and so forth would say, "Oh, Lieutenant Hard'll take care of my boy for me." But I'll guarantee I made every effort possible to do it, where if I hadn't known them and their mothers and everybody, I might not have made the effort.

The best example goes back to the old British name regiment. There's an esprit de corps. I remember one of the Coldstream Guards. A young captain was talking about

his early days when he was first commissioned. He went out before a regiment that had been commanded by his grandfather and his father, and there were some old warrant officers there that had served under both of them, and he knew they were sizing him up for measurement beside his father and grandfather. There was no way that he wouldn't make every effort possible to be a soldier and live up to the reputation of his family.

That's true among friends or people that are close. You're not going to let them down like you would somebody that you hadn't met before. That's my opinion. The psychological side, that's like in the medical thing. The more enlightened doctors everyday put more value on the psychological side of medicine all the time. I think that's definitely true in the military. The more adverse the condition, the more obvious it becomes.

Marcello: Okay, you arrived at Changi around October 11, 1942, and you left sometime around January 6, 1943. Describe your departure from Changi.

Hard: Well, they told us then that we were going up to Burma and build this railroad--the Japs did--and told us exactly what ration we would get, that we'd be paid for working on it. Everything was going to be . . . after Singapore, it sounded good.

Marcello: I guess you were all pretty glad to get out of Singapore.

Hard: Yes, we were. I don't believe anybody regretted leaving

Singapore. Of course, being piped out by the Scots was a real good feeling. We got another little bit of a shock when they started packing us in those boxcars to move up the peninsula. It was real close.

Marcello: Describe what conditions were like in those boxcars.

Hard: Well, it was just almost as tight as it was on the ship. They just packed us back in there and closed the doors except for just a small crack. I've forgotten now how they had that arranged. They had a block in there where a door wouldn't completely close, but yet it wouldn't open. There wasn't enough room . . . the crack wasn't wide enough for a man to get out. We were shorter on food and water on that than we were on the ship, and it lasted a little longer, I believe, too. It was quite a ride up there.

Marcello: In other words, you were on those boxcars for several days?

Hard: Yes. I think we left George Town on the 11th of January. Yes, we did. I believe that we departed . . . I didn't remember when we left Singapore, but we sailed from George Town on the 11th of January of 1943.

Marcello: Now up until this time, you still really haven't lost anybody yet, have you? Or very few people?

Hard: No, just the few that we'd lost back in Java. We didn't bury anybody at . . . I don't believe we had anybody die in Java in the prison camps.

Marcello: Did the Japanese ever give you a chance to get off this train any on your way up from Changi up to George Town?

Hard: It seemed like we did--one time. It seemed like one time we were unloaded and allowed to move about some, but I'm not sure. I don't remember the details of it.

But we were off-loaded, and we walked quite a way from the train down to the ship when we got into George Town.

Marcello: How did they feed you on the train?

Hard: I think that's when we unloaded. We got off, and they fed us. They had a chow line, and we ate, I think, just once a day on there, if I recall it right.

Marcello: Okay, so you get on another ship at George Town. What is this one? Do you recall the name of it?

Hard: Dai Moji Maru, I believe. It was like a pleasure cruise compared to the Dai Nichi Maru.

Marcello: Why was that?

Hard: We had much more room on it. We had much more room. The Americans were up forward, and the Australians were aft. Part of the Dutch, I guess, were . . . I'm not sure which . . . let's see . . . they were on the other ship, I guess.

Marcello: Yes.

Hard: We were north of the equator, a little farther away from the equator, and the season was cooler than it was--much cooler than it was--when we come up from Java to Singapore. They kept a saltwater hose running up on deck, and you could go there and bathe in the saltwater. The restrictions weren't nearly so great. We were allowed to move about on the ship. The food was better. That barley soup we had today reminded

me . . . they fed us barley stew or barley soup aboard there, along with the rice balls. It was pretty good food, relatively speaking.

Marcello: Was the food passed down into the hold, or did you get up on deck?

Hard: I believe it was passed down. It was passed down into the hold on that one.

Marcello: Did it take a certain amount of discipline to distribute this food once it was passed down into the hold?

Hard: Yes. Somebody had to decide on which group went first, and that was usually between Ira Fowler and the senior Australian or Australian adjutant.

Marcello: In other words, each person in the hold would file by the food and get his ration.

Hard: Yes, that's right, yes. In fact, in all cases I know, that's the way we were fed--go by unit.

Marcello: I guess while you were on board the ship, you didn't have a chance to exercise the usual sanitary precautions that you did when you were ashore, did you?

Hard: No, we didn't. We had to be real careful there because we didn't have the cleaning facilities. We just had to be as careful as we could with our mess gear. We tried to keep it away from the files. That's where . . . usually somebody gets pretty sick on a move like that, and probably that was the cause of it.

Marcello: Okay, when you're about four days out of George Town you're



attacked by a group of B-24's. I think this occurred on January 15, 1943. Describe that incident. Go into as much detail as you can remember because I think it's a rather important incident.

Hard: My first sergeant and I were on deck. We'd been taking a saltwater shower. It was right at noon, or just after that. There were very few people on deck at the time. Most people were down below because it was cooler. The hatch was open, and the air would circulate, so it was cooler down in the hold actually than it was on deck, unless you got in the shadow of the superstructure or something.

I don't remember exactly the sequence of happenings now, but there was a little bit of a commotion on deck, I believe. We looked up, and I saw a four-engine plane and remarked to Jones, "Oh, we got an escort," because the Japs had some four-engine flying boats. I felt that's what it was at first. He remarked that he didn't think it was.

Just about that time, they dropped the first stick of bombs, and about that time the old ship . . . the Japs had a little ol' gun forward and one aft, and their troops went berserk. They swung the gun around, and the first thing they did up forward was shoot their own antenna away on the ship. There was a lot of squalking and commotion.

Marcello: Meanwhile, you're up on deck watching all this.

Hard: Right, and trying to get in the scupper, which was about so wide (gesture).

I know they dropped this stick off the port bow, and they dropped some back aft. At that time I didn't know how close they were, but actually it was close enough that they set fire to some of the ammunition back aft. The Jap crews panicked, and they deserted the guns, and the Australians had to put the fire out. Up where we were, despite being scared, it was actually amusing to see those Japs panic so aboard that ship.

The only Jap I saw on that ship that wasn't in a state of panic was the old skipper. It was some character--I guess it was the skipper--who was up on the bridge. He never did move. He stayed right there on that bridge through the whole operation.

But these troops that's been up forward on this gun, after we got some close ones, they deserted and they headed back for the superstructure. I remember them--it was actually amusing--running at port arms, clomping back down the deck, a metal deck with their hobnails on. They hit the passageway at port arms, and they piled up on the deck there almost on top of me and Jones. We were just forward of the bridge on the deck over on the starboard side. They just looked like a bunch of wild animals. The one time I saw the Japs just go completely berserk was then. That's about all that happened.

Then they came along and laid this stick right across us. They had the lifeboats swung out in davits, and there was

nothing left but the stubs on one side. One went right through a lifeboat. The fragments just riddled the superstructure. As it turned out, that's where all the Japs were. We never lost anybody. Colonel Tharp got a little bitty ol' fragment in his back.

It was funny . . . one guy out of the crowd that pretended to be an infidel, an atheist or infidel--I can't remember which is which--but, anyway, he was a college boy, and he could explain everything through science. He didn't believe in any hereafter or so forth. But I heard him talking out loud while the bombs were falling (chuckle). I had the pleasure of asking him, after it was over, who that was he was talking to during the bombing raid. I never heard anymore about his infidelity after that.

Then after the bombing . . . I don't know how many bombs fell. As I say, I know the first stick that I observed fell just off the port bow. I could see an indication of some falling back aft, and I know they straddled us on the run across the ship. That's all I can . . . I think we got some more . . . I think we got another one off the bow.

Marcello: Now there just was one American plane, then, is that correct?

Hard: No, I think there was more than that. I think there was four. In my opinion there was four planes.

Marcello: Now they did a pretty good job on one of the other ships in this convoy, didn't they?

Hard: Yes, the first stick they dropped landed right in the hold

of the larger ship. There was a large ship with a bunch of Japs in the forward hold, and the bomb went right in the forward hold. It went down . . . it seems to me like it was less than twenty minutes from the time it was hit until it was under. Then there was one little escort vessel that wasn't hit; they didn't even drop any at it. But this old Jap skipper on our ship stopped . . . either that or some of the sailors that were down in the engine room said all of the stokers panicked and nobody fed the boilers, that we lost pressure and we couldn't move. I don't know what the story was, but, anyway, we didn't move there for quite some time. We stayed there from the raid that afternoon, which was somewhere around two or three o'clock, the best I could remember . . . we stayed there until the wee hours of the night. That little escort vessel searched those waters and even picked up some corpses and brought them aboard. They picked up every survivor they could find and brought them aboard.

Marcello: So that simply made your ship more crowded.

Hard: Oh, yes, we barely had good standing room on deck after that.

Marcello: What was the attitude or the conduct of the Japanese in the aftermath of this air raid?

Hard: They were quite subdued. We didn't hear anymore out of them on the trip, to speak of, at all. They had heavy losses.

Marcello: On the other hand, who were you rooting for during this bombing raid?

Hard: That's a good question! I really don't know (chuckle)!  
It's a real unusual situation. You want our side to hit, but if they had hit, well, I wouldn't be here.

Marcello: On the other hand, I guess you were glad that you were on deck rather than down in the hold.

Hard: I liked to be in the open. In fact, I stayed on deck from then on. In fact, ol' Hamill and Hamlin and "Windy" and I got together, and we raked up . . . I had two canteens . . . we had some rations we had stashed away. Everybody had that at one time or another. We got everything we had together, and we bivouacked, more or less, right up forward. There was a big ol' winch up there, and there was a stack of hatch covers slashed on deck nearby. We had our minds made up--not only our mind--and we had agreed that, if they came back and hit our ship, we were going in the water together. We were going to cut that lashing loose and throw those hatch covers over, and each one of us would grab a hatch cover, and we were going to head for the shore and stay together. Between the four of us, we had, I think, six canteens filled with water and a few cans of food of one kind or another. I know I had a can of Argentina corned beef that I'd acquired on the black market in Singapore. I think some of the others had some stuff, and we gathered up some life jackets that the Dutch had dropped when they were picked up and brought aboard, and we latched onto them and kept them handy. In case we got in the water, between the

life jackets and those hatch covers, we planned to get to shore. We could just barely distinguish the shoreline on the horizon.

Marcello: Okay, now on January 16, 1943, I believe you went into Moulmein, Burma, is that correct?

Hard: That's correct.

Marcello: Okay, what happens at that point?

Hard: We off-loaded. Naturally we kept an eye on the sky all the time, and we marched to an old civilian prison there. That was a kind of a low point, particularly. We just knew, of course, that our side thought that they had intercepted a Japanese troop movement, and they'd be back to finish them off.

Marcello: Describe what that civilian prison was like there in Moulmein.

Hard: It was just as much of a storybook-type of an Eastern prison that you can find--high walls, iron bars, filth. It was nothing but masonry and steel enclosure.

Marcello: Were you actually put in jail cells?

Hard: The cells weren't locked. There were cells there, as well as I recall, but they just put us in what would correspond to a tank bordered by cells, and it was all open. The guards were all on the wall, perimeter, of the thing.

Marcello: I understand you saw some civilians that had the balls and chains, is that correct?

Hard: Oh, yes, they were walking with . . . well, two things were unusual there. One was these civilian prisoners with a

ball and chain, and then in the shipyards there, they were building some wooden vessels, and they were using elephants. It was a sight to watch those elephants pick up a big heavy timber and put it in place and hold it while the shipwrights spiked it in place. Those civilians . . . again, that's the thing that you read about--what Kipling talked about, wrote about that country over there. It's the thing that you read about.

Marcello: The Moulmein pagoda?

Hard: Right. It's something you hope you'll never see, but it's a sight to see a human with a shackle forged on his leg and the sores and results of it and carrying that ball when he was moving.

Marcello: I know some of the people here were also put in a leper ward, were they not? Do you recall that?

Hard: I remember hearing of it, but I'm not sure just what the details were.

Marcello: Fortunately, you didn't stay here too long, did you?

Hard: No. How long, I can't recall, but it was just a very short time--a matter of a very few days.

Marcello: And then I believe you are taken from Moulmein, and your next stop is at Thanbyuzayat, is that correct?

Hard: I'm not sure whether we stopped at Thanbyuzayat or not. My next recall, clearly, is moving into the 18 Kilo Camp.

Marcello: How did you get from Moulmein to either Thanbyuzayat or the 18 Kilo Camp?

Hard: We were moved by truck from there.

Marcello: Let me kind of refresh your memory again, assuming that perhaps you moved through Thanbyuzayat. Do you recall the speech that was given by Colonel Nagatomo in Thanbyuzayat?

Hard: I remember his making the speech when we first got to Burma, but I don't remember where it was.

Marcello: Okay, he made his speech, I think, at Thanbyuzayat, which was more or less the base for that railroad.

Hard: It was the base. It was the Burma base, yes.

Marcello: Actually, I guess this contingent of prisoners, or this section, was referred to as Branch Three, wasn't it?

Hard: No, we were Branch Five.

Marcello: Branch Five?

Hard: We were Branch Five. See, Branch Three was ahead of us. It was mostly Australians. Let's see . . . it was Colonel Williams and . . . I can't remember the other colonel that . . . they were awarded the only Victoria Cross that was awarded in the Malayan Campaign--wonderful person. They were in Branch Three, but ours was Branch Five. We should have been . . . see, the original branch, I believe, amounted to about 10,000 people or something like that. The rest of our branch, who were additional prisoners to bring it partially up to strength, at least, was caught by a submarine attack off Sumatra. My old sergeant, Miller, machine gun sergeant, was in that group. He'd been injured in a railroad yard accident down at Batavia just before we left and couldn't



come with us. But we only had the 2,000 in our branch.

That's the reason the work was . . . I'm not sure now whether the branch was to have been 10,000 or 5,000--that's a great difference--but, anyway, it was short in the thousands of men.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you begin work on the railroad at 18 Kilo. Describe what 18 Kilo looked like from a physical standpoint. I assume when we talk about one of these kilo camps, we're talking about any number of them. They're all kind of built alike, were they not?

Hard: Yes, other than at the 18 Kilo . . . of course, the kilo designated the distance from the one end or the other of the railroad, in this case, the Burma end, where the road branched off of the Moulmein-Tavoy Line, where it began there at Thanbyuzayat. It was built out in a rice paddy, what had been on a level plain.

Marcello: You were not in the jungle yet at 18 Kilo.

Hard: No, not in the true jungle. We were still in the rice paddy country--pretty flat. The huts generally were all bamboo structures. They all consisted of just a roof and two tiers of flooring with an open hallway down the middle. The large huts were large enough that the floor on each side was roughly four meters wide. In other words, two men could sleep head-to-foot across the floor. In the small huts, what we referred to as single-bay huts, there was just enough for one man on each side. We were assigned space there of about a meter per man when things were good. At other times we

was cut down to about a little less than a meter . . . the equivalent of about thirty inches . . . about seven-tenths of a meter, I guess. We were given a space, and that was our living space, and we put our bunk there.

There was a cookhouse, central cookhouse, and some kind of a water source. The cookhouse was nothing but a hacked-up, covered skeleton. We'd build fireplaces out of mud brick or mud to set the wa jong, as we knew them--over-sized, wok-type vessels. That was used for everything. It used to cook the stew with the rice, boil the water. That was the only utensil we had. Of course, they were fired with wood that we'd cut nearby.

We started there during January. It was right in the latter end of the dry season, or over midway in the dry season, and it was hot and dry.

Marcello: It was very dusty, was it not?

Hard: It was very dusty. The prisoners marching back and forth, going back and forth along the right-of-way, would build up just a flour-fine dust. At night it would be cold because it was so dry there--not as much so as it was farther up in the jungle, after we got up into higher country. The nights were cool, but the days were real, real hot.

Marcello: Describe the kind of work you were doing here at 18 Kilo.

Hard: Well, that's when we started living by the meter. We went out on the right-of-way, and an ol' Jap counted the number of men in each work party, and he measured out a square meter

on the ground for each man and designated the area. They outlined it with stakes. We'd taken tools with us, I guess, and in very simple language he told us that was for every man to dig out that meter and put it on the railroad grade that had been staked out. When we finished, we'd go back to camp. We started at one man, one meter. We thought that was an awful big day's work, and it was at first until we got hardened to it. They had Number Two Baldwin shovels, and I forget who made the picks. They were American stuff that had been shipped over for use on the Burma road. They'd captured them and confiscated them. Fortunately, we had good tools to work with, but that dirt was dug by pick and loaded by shovel into . . . we called them "yo-ho's," a rice bag tied with the four corners, like, made into a hammock, slung on a bamboo pole and two men carrying it. We'd load the "yo-ho" with the dirt, and two men would carry it over on the right-of-way and dump it out. When they got it up to grade, they'd smooth it out, and we could move on to another hole. Sometimes with a shallow grade, we'd only go a half-meter, but we'd have two square meters--a half-meter per man. When we would get to a little bit of a grade, well, sometimes we'd go . . . I've forgotten now . . . we've gone as deep in places as two meters and possibly two-and-a-half or three meters deep and have to leave a ramp to come out of the hole because of the distance, depending on the Japs' frame of mind--how far he wanted us to carry it, how close

he wanted to stay to the grade. This determined how deep we'd go to get the amount of dirt we needed.

Marcello: Now what role do the officers play on these work details?

Hard: That's where we were broken into work parties and kumis. The battalion commander assigned us to each group. As I mentioned this morning, I caught Number Seven. Number One was officer personnel--doctors and so forth, battalion commander. Well, we were all in that kumf, but the seven of us were assigned as regular work party officers in charge.

Some of us worked, and some didn't at first. Sometimes a Jap wouldn't let us work. We were allowed only to supervise the thing. Other times, particularly later on when the men started getting weak . . . particularly if the Jap counted the officer. It all depended on the individual Jap. Sometimes he would count the officer, and sometimes he wouldn't. If I were counted in on the party personally, I figured I had to move my share of the dirt, if the Jap would let me.

There were a few times that they would actually put the Number One Kumi out, made up only of officers. They'd go out and do some work. They would never get a whole lot out of them. They didn't get as much out of them as they did the enlisted men frankly because most of them never were physically able, fit, to do the work like the ones that had been going out regularly and working (chuckle).

At that time they were fairly generous in leaving us with a sanitation detail to take care of the latrine and

the grounds cleaned up and cut firewood and keep a water supply on hand, if it had to be dipped out of a stream or hauled up or hauled out of a well or what.

The medics didn't have to work--the ones that had a medical card. They established a sickbay.

But they didn't last long. It started up . . . that's one of the times we had a difficult time, a basic problem, with the enlisted men. The Japs would . . . at first, when we'd finish that one meter, they'd let us go in. Well, we'd go by a stream there and take a bath in the creek and go on back in, and the men would play cards or goof off or rest. As they kept getting more proficient and hardened to the work, the earlier they'd get through. Well, we thought we could see the handwriting on the wall. In fact, they did before they actually took any action. We got out there one morning, and the Jap says, "One man, 1.1 meter." The same thing was true when we started getting out pretty early in the afternoon.

I don't remember when it took place, but, anyway, they'd play nationality against each nationality--Australians and Americans against each other, and the Dutch. They'd play one kumi, one work party, against the other, trying to get us to get more work done.

Some of us could see the light, so we started telling them to hold back and put in the whole day and pretend that that is our limit to our physical capability because the better

off we're going to be. But I had bitter words with some of the people in my group because they would kind of goof off in the early part of the day. Then when they could see the end in sight--and we'd be saving a little island out in the middle to piddle away the rest of the day--they'd say, "Oh, the hell with this! Let's get through and go on in!" They'd "tie in," and it took . . . I won't say when it was used, but I needed physical restraint to prevent it. There was some bitterness over that, but I proved to be correct. I've had some of the people that I had some pretty bitter words with that thanked me later on because they just kept adding, in spite of it.

I remember one day very distinctly, and this was after we'd left 18 Kilo and we'd moved on up to 80 Kilo, I guess . . . I'm not sure whether we went to 80 or 100 Kilo first, but we moved on up. I remember on May 5th . . . that's when they got word that the convoy had been . . . we weren't going to get any additional troops into Group Five, that the convoy had been hit down off Sumatra. So they came around, and first they broke out the International Red Cross cards. The ones that was working that day were given an International Red Cross card to send home. That's with the pre-printed phrase, "I am well," "I am working for pay," "I am happy," "I'm with friends," or something like that. That same day they came around and said, "One man, two meters." That was the beginning of the end for a lot of them. That's when they

really started . . . that's more than a human can do. We did as much, I believe, as two-and-a-half meters.

Marcello: In essence, what you're doing here on this railroad is making cuts or fills most of the time, isn't that correct?

Hard: Oh, yes. They had surveyed the road and part of the Group Three people that were ahead of us had cleared the right-of-way, and the grade was all surveyed and staked out. Our job was simple--to pile the dirt and build the grade that was required.

Marcello: When you came to a hill, you made a cut; if you came to a valley, you made a fill.

Hard: That's correct. When we came to a stream, we built a bridge.

Marcello: When we talk about these cuts and fills, how large could some of the largest ones be?

Hard: I believe we made cuts as deep as three meters and fills about four meters. I believe we went as high as four meters with some fills. Our bridges, we referred to them as . . . I've forgot . . . it was usually a one-, two-, or three-story. We'd drive the piling, build a scaffold, and put our pile-driver, which was a manual, hand-driven thing, out on this scaffolding, and we'd hoist the piling out there that we'd cut out of the jungle. We'd drive it as deep as we could, and we'd cut the top off, even. Depending on how high the grade is, how deep the gorge at that point, we'd make a trestle-like structure. I think each section was two meters high . . . maybe three . . . I've forgotten. Anyway, there would be a beam with four or six upright vertical members mortised into it and then another

cross beam. We'd skid that out onto the . . . and we'd put a beam across the top of the piling, and we'd set this trestle up on there and pack it in place with a peculiar breed of tool that the Japs used, a great big overgrown staple-like thing. That was . . . saplings . . . we'd make the scaffolding or bracework where they would intersect, and you'd drive a staple in that. We'd use either wire or what we referred to as stringy bark, a tie material that we got off of trees there. Anyway, we'd hold that trestle in place, brace it, and then we'd set another one on top of that. The highest that we built was three trestles high, or we referred to it as three stories. We had the pilings and then three of these trestles, and each trestle was two or three meters high, stacked on top of that.

Marcello: Normally, when would the workday begin?

Hard: Well, we'd get up before daybreak, and we'd have our roll call, work call, just after good daylight . . . just about daybreak . . . a little after . . . barely after daybreak. We'd finish when we completed the work that was assigned.

Marcello: Normally, did you take your lunch out on the job? In other words, was the rice or your rations brought out to you on the job?

Hard: It was brought out. Sometimes they'd haul them out on an ox cart, and sometimes we'd have to send a detail in, and they'd carry them on "yo-ho" poles. We'd line up by kumi with somebody keeping track of the roster and mess officer



or mess sergeant telling who got to eat first and who was first in line for the "back-ups."

Marcello: And I guess it's after you get on the railroad, then, that the rations really start to become rather sparse, do they not?

Hard: Well, right at first they were fairly good there at the 18 Kilo. Well, they were not too bad until the rainy season set in. That's when we started to hurt. They weren't good, but, I mean, after we started starving, when the rainy season set in in May and the bridges were washed out behind us, there just wasn't any rations to be had. What did come through, the Japs had them.

We had only one real redeeming factor there, and that was that cholera broke out ahead of us in the native work camps. Their oxen came loose. This same ol' Korean that I said was one good one, Hirano, he was out and around all the time at the camp, and when one of those oxen would stray by, he'd . . . well, one of our butchers was named Jones, and he called him "Joneso." We had one American and one Australian and two Dutch. The Dutch were a couple of brothers in the Dutch regular army that had been top wrestlers in the army, and they were big "geezers." They did the butchering. Well, ol' Hirano would start squalling for "Joneso," and that meant butcher. They'd fall out, and he'd shoot this work oxen that had been released up ahead, and they'd butcher it right on the spot. Jones and the Australian would come in with a forequarter apiece, and the two big Dutchmen would come in with the hindquarters,

and that was meat. Had it not been for that, I doubt if any of us could have gotten out of the jungle, out of that side over there.

Marcello: Incidentally, you talked about the required number of cubic meters of dirt that you had to move earlier. Is it not true that from time to time the prisoners would try and cheat, that is, move the stakes and so forth?

Hard: Oh, we did that consistently. I did. We had one officer one time that said that he wouldn't cheat the Japs even for for his own men, but that's beside the point. But, yes, they'd come out and mark out the area for us to dig, and if we started on an old surface, if we had a face where we left off the day before, and we'd go out from this face here that was a meter deep or more and measure off an area on a square area to get the work assignment. Then they'd drive the stakes back there. Just as soon as we'd break this old surface where we had nothing for a reference point from the day before, well, soon somebody'd start trying to distract the Japs, and we started moving the stakes back in. It was always a great deal of satisfaction when we'd build a grade up to a bridge, and the abutment there and the grade would lack a meter or two of being as high as the abutment of the bridge. The little Jap would get out his notebook and start counting the meters, and he couldn't figure it out since we'd dug enough meters for the grade that was supposed to be that high, but it wasn't. He couldn't figure the problem--why

he didn't have the grade the proper height.

Marcello: I gather, then, that you would take your evening meal back in camp.

Hard: Yes, whenever we got back in.

Marcello: And did you follow that procedure that had been established in Bicycle Camp, that is, you would first dip your mess gear in the hot water before you actually got your chow?

Hard: Yes, generally, we did. We always tried to keep the mess gear washed.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you have nicknames for the Korean guards or the Japanese?

Hard: Oh, yes, we had the obnoxious ones named. The one I had my most serious trouble with was "Magen." He was a chow hound, and that's where he got that name. Then we had "Liver Lips" and "Snake Eyes" and "Hollywood" and "Pock Face" and "Black Shirt." That was the main ones I recall.

Marcello: And, of course, I guess most of them got their names from physical characteristics or from some peculiarity that they exhibited.

Hard: Right. That's right. This old "Liver Lips," we figured that his parentage must have been a cross between a prostitute and an African Negro--where he got his liver-lipped parents. "Snake Eyes" got his name simply because that's what he looked like--little beady eyes. "Hollywood" thought he was a real goodlooking character--quite vain, egotistical. "Pock Face" had a bad . . . either the pox or eczema or something, acne.

Marcello: In May of 1943, the so-called "Speedo" Campaign began.

- Hard: Yes, on the 5th of May that I mentioned, when they evidently learned that the additional people to fill up Group Five weren't going to get there. See, our ship was the last ship that came into Moulmein, and evidently they had learned that we weren't going to get any more help on that end of the road, so that's when they said, "One man, two meters."
- Marcello: And it just so happened that the monsoon season and the "Speedo" Campaign started around the same time.
- Hard: Right. You can almost make a calendar by the monsoon seasons during the two years I was there--when it started. It started about mid-May and ended about mid-November, almost exactly.
- Marcello: At which camp were you when the monsoon season and the "Speedo" Campaign started?
- Hard: It was either the 80 or the 100 Kilo. Now they were both rough camps. We were in both of them during the monsoon seasons.
- Marcello: I know some people were at the 100 Kilo Camp around May 29, 1943.
- Hard: I think that's correct. Wherever we had the major cemetery built across the railroad from the camp, well, that's the one.
- Marcello: Describe what it was like to work during the monsoon season. What are the monsoons like?
- Hard: They arrive in the form of a real wound-up Texas thunderstorm--lightning, wind, rain, downpour. It's kind of frightening. You'd be out in the jungle there, and the timber . . . in the dry season all of the underbrush and everything withers and falls and dies away, what the natives don't burn. The ground

is very porous, loose, due to all this vegetation withering and roots in there dying and leaving the void. Then comes this downpour of rain and the hard winds, and some of those huge trees were blown over, and you can hear them. It's awesome to hear a huge tree three or four feet in diameter fall that way in the jungle. It just shakes the ground. That happens once or twice, and then it'll just set in and rain. It'll rain for twenty-four hours sometimes and never even let up.

We could bathe regularly--take a split bamboo and hang it under the eaves and make a bamboo grillwork to keep out of the mud. You'd come in from work and just get under the eave of the hut and pull off our G-string and scrub ourselves, and that was it. We could take a bath right off of the run-off water from the roof.

Working in the mud, it seems too futile to try to move dirt under those conditions. You dig the stuff and move it, put it in the basket or the "yo-ho" pole . . . one time it got so bad . . . we were building a grade through a swamp, a pretty high grade, and we couldn't climb the grade with the "yo-ho" poles, and we put it in baskets and passed it up, like a fire bucket, and dumped it. By the time you got to the top of the grade in the rain, you'd dump it up there and have only a good shovelful in the basket.

Marcello: Obviously, you're spending more and more time out on the railroad at this point, are you not?

Hard: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Because the Japanese are behind, for one thing.

Hard: Yes. From the 5th of May . . . I've forgotten the exact days now, but it was something like 127 days there that I remember working. I don't think I missed a day. Quite a few of the other people did the same thing. When we started on the 5th of May, we had 315 men working out of the job that day. Some 120-odd days later, we had forty-some-odd people that could pretend to get out the gate and do a day's work. That's what we were winding up with.

Marcello: Of course, what's also happening is this: the monsoons have washed out the road that parallels the railroad, hasn't it?

Hard: Yes.

Marcello: And you're not able to get supplies.

Hard: That's correct. As I said, the Japs didn't have . . . what few rations came through, they latched onto them, and very few rations were coming through simply because the bridges had washed out in back of us. Had it not been for this cholera outbreak up ahead that led the release of these oxen, that this ol' Hirano killed for us, we wouldn't have made it out of there, I don't believe.

Marcello: Of course, it's also around this time that you're really hit with all sorts of various illnesses. Dysentery becomes rampant, does it not? It probably has even before you got to the 100 Kilo Camp or during this monsoon season, but dysentery hits a great many prisoners, does it not?

Hard: Yes, at least the diarrhea. A lot of times we didn't have lab facilities to tell exactly what it was, but it was a severe diarrhea, and no doubt it was amoebic dysentery. That went with, well, oh, fever, but I don't know what kind.

We had some cases of pneumonia. We had vitamin deficiencies, and pellagra results, I guess. I believe it's what they said it was. Our mouths would crack in the corners, and sores would form in our noses. Sometimes sores would form, or there'd be irritations on the scrotum. Beri-beri, we had two kinds; we called it wet and dry. Some would swell and others would lose weight and just wither away.

Tropical ulcers . . . we started breaking ballast for the railroad, breaking the rock by hand, and the chips or sharp fragments would fly and break the skin. Any kind of an opening became infected, and this tropical ulcer would take hold.

Marcello: Did you personally have any tropical ulcers?

Hard: I had one small one, one very small one. I was very, very fortunate.

Marcello: How did you treat it?

Hard: I'd just soak it with hot water at night. That was all I ever had--just one very small one where I had my run-in with "Magen," and he tore up my leg with his hobnails, and just one spot became ulcerized.

Marcello: How did you have this run-in with the Japanese guard?

Hard: Right at the beginning of the monsoons, there was a storm cloud coming up, approaching, and at that time they let us

quit, try to get into camp and out of them. That was before we had gotten used to them, you know, and them pushing like they were. So the work parties all fell in. We had to wash our tools, and there was a water hole on the opposite side of the grade where we had water to wash the tools. One of the men in the kumi went over with the tools to wash them. We fell in and everybody else got ready to go, and this one man wasn't there. I thought he'd show up any minute. Ol' "Magen" was my guard, and I didn't want to irritate him if I could avoid it, so I reported the kumi ready to go with the rest of them. But about that time they started to move out, but there was still no tool washer. He wasn't back. So I called to "Magen" and told him I made a mistake--one man short--because I didn't dare go any farther with it.

Well, he went into a tantrum; he accused me of helping the man to escape. So he called back a buddy of his . . . and I made the mistake. I was carrying a meter stick--just for a walking cane. I made one and marked it off in 100 centimeters, so we could measure out the groundwork we were doing. Well, he very promptly had his other guard keep me covered, and he took that stick away from me and made splinters out of it. Then he took his rifle and went to work on me--that and his hobnails. About that time the boy showed up that had the tools, but he still wasn't satisfied, and he worked me over very thoroughly. We got into camp, and he did what they liked to do. He was going to turn me over to the guards at the



guardhouse.

Well, this ol' Hirano, the good Korean I talked about, happened to be sergeant-of-the-guard, and for some reason I'd got on the good side of him through no fault of mine except I always tried to have good behavior in ranks, always tried to be lined up when he'd come by to count. He had asked Ira Fowler my name. He learned my name, and in the morning he'd speak to me--call me by name. Well, he not only wouldn't let "Magen" turn me over to the guard, he made "Magen" and the other guard turn in their weapons at the guardhouse.

But "Magen" still wasn't satisfied. He took me down to headquarters and got his other buddy . . . I've forgotten his name. He was a Korean, didn't even have the rank of private, but he was camp commander at that time. Hirahita, I think, was his name. He boasted that he was educated in an American mission in Korea, but he'd had to learn an entirely new vocabulary when he started working with prisoners. Well, the two of them gave me a thorough working-over, but, thanks to Hirano, I didn't have to stay at the guardhouse. Usually, when anybody spent twelve or twenty-four hours at the guardhouse, they weren't good for anything after that.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you got this tropical ulcer as a result of this run-in. I'm sure that whenever you saw one of these tropical ulcers forming, it struck terror into the hearts of any prisoner that got it because you knew how serious it was.

Hard: Yes. Yes, they contributed to the loss of several of our

people. The whole thing of the fatigue, starvation, disease, either malaria, dysentery, whatever it might have been, plus the blood being poisoned by a tropical ulcer, caused his whole system to just collapse; I mean, he just didn't have the resistance to fight it off, and that would be the end. In the case of a civilized autopsy, I don't know what would have been termed the cause of death, specifically.

Marcello: Did you ever see people use maggots to try and eat the dead flesh out of the ulcers?

Hard: Yes, we tried that, yes.

Marcello: Did the soaking of the ulcer with the hot rags seem to be the best solution?

Hard: Yes, that was the best thing, was to soak it with that or go down to the creek, if there's a creek running, and just sit and let the running water run over it and clean it. Anything to clean it.

Now the old Dutch doctor, Hekking, was the one that almost worked miracles with that. He wasn't with us during that period; he still was with Fitzsimmons' group in the other work party. But he had a little silver demitasse spoon, and they'd give the guy a bamboo pole to hold on to and what we referred to as a "wog" cigarette to try to help him out a little bit, and he would scrape that bad flesh out with that spoon. If anybody could trade a watch or something or raise a little sulfanilamide . . . which Jimmy Lattimore did for that group. He traded a watch for some sulfanilamide tablets on the black market.

They'd scrape them into a powder and put it on that freshly cleaned area, and they would heal.

Marcello: Now despite the fact that there was all this illness here at the 100 Kilo Camp, the Japanese more or less had a one-track mind, did they not, in that they were supposed to have so many people out on that work detail, and, by God, they were going to have that many people on that work detail.

Hard: Yes. That was the time that old Major Mizani made his speech to Colonel Tharp and the senior officers. Ira was present, I believe, about that time. That's when they started trying to make us cut rations for the sick--give one ration to the working people and try to cut the ration to the sick. They were forcing everybody that they could get . . . they'd have a regular work call of a morning, and we'd turn out everybody we thought was half-way able to work; and then we'd have to have another work call, and all the sick that could walk would go out. Some of the Japs would determine who could work and and who couldn't. But it was during that time that we were trying to reason with him, and he made the remark, "A sick man is no use to Nippon; he's no use to himself. He's better off dead. In fact, I will help him to die." I believe the old Navy commander, Dr. Epstein, was present at that little speech.

Marcello: Well, is it not true that what happened was that you would then have to split your rations with the sick?

Hard: Oh, yes. In fact, we always favored the sick. If we had

anything special . . . one time we got a little bit of a Red Cross ration over in Thailand, and we took everything that would be of value to the sick. We only kept enough . . . we and the Australians went in together, and we had one light supper without any rice, and everything else we gave to the hospital for the sick. We never shorted the sick, to my knowledge. I'm sure we didn't; we just never did go along with it.

Marcello: It was during this period, of course, when Dr. Lumpkin really had his hands full.

Hard: Oh, yes. In fact, during that period we lost him--lost him and Hampton.

Marcello: In August of 1943, Dr. Lumpkin did die, as you mentioned. What kind of a blow was that to the morale of the troops when Dr. Lumpkin died?

Hard: It was rough. Actually, he hadn't been that effective with our people, but he did the best he could . . . the best he knew. Our medical people didn't know how to deal with those tropical diseases. Hugh made the remark one time that in his opinion any experienced Dutch doctor, a doctor trained and experienced in the Dutch East Indian Army, knew more about tropical diseases than the combined knowledge of the American Medical Association--he had more knowledge than we had. But, as I say, he did the best he could. It was a blow, not to have a doctor, but we had a young Dutch doctor in our case that took over in his place until later on, when

Dr. Hekking that had been with "Fitz's" group came in and took over.

Marcello: You mentioned the death of Lieutenant Wade Hampton, also.

Hard: They died very close together. Both of them were in the same cubicle with me at the time they died. I think we was in one of those double-bay huts, and Hugh and Wade and "Hud" Wright, "Windy" Rogers, and I, I believe, were in the cubicle where they died.

Marcello: Describe what the burial details were like. Did you ever attend any of the burial details here at the 100 Kilo Camp or any of these camps during monsoon season?

Hard: Very few because I went out to work all the time. Ira Fowler and some of the kitchen people, and "Ike" Parker . . . some of the ones that didn't go out on the work details attended to most of them. I made some, but I don't remember how many. But it was a matter of the deceased being wrapped in a straw mat, and a hole was dug big enough and deep enough for adequate burial--four, six feet deep. With a very brief reading of a format, they were buried, and a marker of some kind was placed on their grave. Fowler kept up a detailed sketch of that site--good enough that when the burial group went back there after the war, they were able to make recoveries. They used the trestle on the railroad and, I think, a tree or something for a reference point.

Marcello: Did you ever see men literally give up and die?

Hard: I knew some that did; I didn't see it--witness the death--on

any of those occasions. There was a Marine first sergeant, for one, that everybody considered that he gave up. For example, one time I had a sergeant, Ed Worthington, who was terribly sick with a fever and ulcers at the same time when Sergeant Dupler was ill. Dupler was a picturesque Marine first sergeant, had everything going for him, and when he became ill, everybody was concerned. I know I split some rations I had stashed, a can of Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk I'd stolen on the dock at Batavia. But other people chipped in, trying to get him something that he would eat. Well, he wouldn't eat; he just wouldn't do anything. One evening after I came in, I asked "Doc" Lumpkin the condition of Sergeant Dupler. He said if he were half as sick as Sergeant Worthington, he would have already been dead. The next thing I knew, he was dead, and Sergeant Worthington survived.

But not many of them gave up. There was one real important point in their existence, and that was the point between the time a man could hobble out and pretend to do a day's work and when he had to give up and go to the sickbay.

Marcello: Nobody wanted to go to that sickbay.

Hard: Nobody wanted to go because very few came out. I've seen that fight take place on many of the fellows.

The closest I ever came to seeing a man actually in the act of dying was the one as a result of whose death I swore out an indictment against one of the Japs. I've already

forgotten now which one it was . . . Petty Officer Trim, a Navy petty officer. He was extremely weak, but he was still going out to work, and he had to stop to relieve himself on the way in. I asked the guard for permission for him to stop, and he agreed to it. Here this one character--I don't know whether it was "Magen" or . . . I've forgotten who it was, which Jap it was now--he came up on this petty officer who'd stopped to relieve himself because he had dysentery. He used that as an excuse that he was trying to escape, so he beat him until he died that night. We got him into camp. That's the closest I ever came to being . . . because I'd sat with him, and I was there when he died.

Marcello: During the "Speedo" and monsoon period, how late would those working parties stay out?

Hard: We put in twenty hours one day. They had a very simple term there: "No finish, no come back." It was something like two or three o'clock in the morning when we got in, and we had to get up at four or five o'clock. We got less than four . . . I think that night we only got three hours in the bunk from the time we tried to eat something until chow call the next morning.

Marcello: Is it not true that the cooks always tried to have something ready for the men when they came in, regardless of the hour?

Hard: Oh, yes, yes, we always had some form of an evening meal when we got in. That was when we had supper. We didn't eat in

between. We had three meals a day, and that's when we got our last meal, was when we got back to camp.

Marcello: I guess you were always looking for excuses to find jobs that would get people off that railroad.

Hard: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Anything was better than working on the railroad.

Hard: Anything was better--sanitation detail, digging drainage ditches around the huts, improving or building new latrines, cutting firewood. If the Japs had any special details, helping with their supplies . . . anything to get them off the railroad.

Marcello: Were you as officers allowed to have the so-called "batmen?"

Hard: Yes.

Marcello: Again, it wasn't that you needed batmen, but it was still a way of getting somebody off that railroad.

Hard: In fact, it was authorized, and we took advantage of it. We'd try to pick somebody that was weaker than the others. We tried to pick somebody that was younger, weaker, smaller--just not up to working out. We would have as many as the Japs would allow us to have. I think the American officers got down to where they only allowed us to have one. Anyway, we had whatever they would allow.

Marcello: How much of a problem were lice or bedbugs or rats in these camps?

Hard: To my knowledge, those bedbugs that I mentioned over in Thailand . . . in most places they were pretty bad. But



generally speaking, the climatic conditions were such that we fared much better in that respect than we would have if we'd have been in a temperate climate. I always said if I had to be a prisoner, I'd take it in the tropics because we didn't wear any clothes to speak of, our huts were nothing but skeletons, our beds were light, and we could scrub with whatever water we could get. We didn't have trouble with body lice and things of that sort like they do in a temperate place.

Marcello: By this time, what is the condition of your clothing?

Hard: Just about all gone. I know I made myself a couple of G-strings out of the ground-cloth from an old mosquito net. I had one pair of shorts and a shirt left that I saved for liberation day, that I was hanging on to. I divided . . . some of the other fellows had G-strings made out of my ground-cloth, the old-time GI mosquito net with a big, generous herringbone weave ground-cloth. It was a good material.

Marcello: Do you have any way to supplement your diet?

Hard: Very little at times. I made one real good trade there. In one of those camps during that rough season, a little ol' Jap was going home, and he . . . they liked luggage, anything in the way of luggage, and he asked Captain Fowler if anybody had a suitcase or bag, any kind of a handbag, that he could trade for or buy. I had one of these, what you refer to as an "AWOL" bag, that I'd been carrying all the time, so I negotiated this trade through Ira Fowler to this Jap that

was going home, and I traded him this little, old worn-out zipper bag for a twenty-five-pound burlap peanut bag full of dried fish. There was five or six of us that that helped over the hump. Ol' "Hud" Wright was there then, and "Windy" Rogers, several of us . . . we'd take that old dried fish--some of it was shark and would cut like rope, you know--and we'd take a piece of that and cut it off and stick it in the coals to clean it, you know, get it hot enough to kill the bugs that might be in it, and it was good eating. It helped, but that was about all. One time some of the enterprising Dutch got hold of some dogs, and we were getting some dog stew. The market became so competitive we lost out on that (chuckle).

Marcello: How about snakes or anything like that?

Hard: The only snake that I helped to eat was a big ol' snake about six meters long. It got into the sickbay one night--got up in the roof. There was poor characters in there that hadn't walked for a week that got out of there (chuckle). When we finally got him down, they killed him and chopped him up in sections and skinned him out and then passed him out, and people roasted him and ate him. That was the only . . . even a decent snake wouldn't stay around us.

Marcello: Describe your condition at its worst during this period.

Hard: Well, toward the end . . . well, actually, my worst condition was after the railroad was built. I stayed over in Burma. Like an idiot, I believed the propaganda they were dropping

on us--leaflets--that they were going to re-invade and re-occupy Burma. I was still in pretty good condition physically, and I wanted to get loose and get back in the war. So I volunteered . . . not for the sake of the Japs, but the Japs said there'd be so many men to stay and cut firewood for the locomotives and repair the bomb damage. So I raised a ruckus with Colonel Tharp to have him let me stay. So I stayed behind, and malaria hit me in April of 1944 when I was still in the jungle.

Marcello: So you were still working on the railroad in April of 1944.

Hard: Right. Yes, I was at the 105 Kilo Camp.

Marcello: I think most everybody else got out of there between October of '43 and January of 1944.

Hard: Yes, most Americans did. There was a few of us that stayed there. I don't remember now whether there was any more Americans there when I finally got hauled out or not. I was so sick, frankly, by June, when they hauled me out, that I don't remember a great deal about who was with me.

Marcello: Did things kind of get better after you got on the woodcutting detail and when the railroad was finished?

Hard: Yes, it wasn't the grueling, long hours of work. The planes would come by and knock out a bridge or something, and we'd go repair it, or we'd go out and cut some firewood for the locomotive. But it wasn't anything like the building of that grade during the monsoons.

Marcello: Were there very many of you engaged in this woodcutting?

Hard: No, it was only about a couple hundred who stayed back there in that camp.

Marcello: And did they have certain areas along the railroad where you would stock this wood, so to speak?

Hard: Yes. I guess the quality and the location of the timber would determine the location. We'd cut it by the meter, also, in half-meter lengths and stack it in the stacks, so many meters in the stacks.

Marcello: What were you using? Axes and saws?

Hard: Saws and axes, right.

Marcello: Would you be supervising these work parties, or were you actually out there chopping and sawing?

Hard: We were out chopping and working. I got pretty sick one time before we finished the railroad, but never too sick to go out. As I mentioned before, every night I'd make a tally of whether I was ahead or whether the Japs was ahead. If I felt a little better than I did the night before, I'd mark one up on my side; but if I felt a little worse than I had the night before, I'd mark one up on the Japs' side. That was the biggest, the roughest, decision I had to make.

Well, there was a period in there of a month or so that I didn't know whether I was going to make it or not. You know, we were losing people rapidly. Well, I still wasn't satisfied, and I didn't want to become so weak that I was helpless and just to lie down and die.

If I could see that coming, I wanted to get out in that

camp and give an account of myself, which I could have done. It would have brought reprisals on other people, probably, but I could have taken quite a few of the Japs. That was a big question in my mind for about a month there when things were the roughest during the monsoons, was whether to go ahead and try to survive or go sell out at the best price possible and call it quits.

Marcello: Well, describe how bad your condition got during that period when you were on the woodcutting detail.

Hard: Well, I don't know what I weighed, but we had a semblance of an Australian doctor with us and a great supply of quinine. His prescription or cure for malaria was these great big pills. I don't know how many grains was in them, but we'd turn in with the malaria, and he'd dish them out--nine a day for nine days and six a day for six days, which was fifteen days' treatment. Well, at the end . . . I went up in April, and I went through that routine. In fifteen days it hit me again, and I went back and went through the same routine. I did that in May and June. In June they hauled me out on a litter to Thailand, and that's when little "Shorty" Ingram, and I don't remember who else, met me. They got word somehow that people were coming in, and they met me with a litter and hauled me into the hut. I was real sick then. From then until . . . I don't know . . . it took me two or three months to start picking up again.

Marcello: Where did they take you in Thailand?

Hard: I was at Kanchanaburi, the one over by the rice mill over on the southeast of the bridge over the river.

Marcello: Well, now things were a lot better over there at Kanburi, weren't they?

Hard: Oh, yes, that was a utopia there. They were buying pork and selling it through the canteen. You could get pork sandwiches--rice bread and fat pork--bananas, eggs. About that time was the period the Japs had a change of heart and decided they were going to try to take care of the ones that were left, I think.

Marcello: Well, I guess they'd probably gotten about as much work out of you as they possibly could.

Hard: Yes.

Marcello: If they wanted to use you anymore, they were going to have to ease off for a while, weren't they?

Hard: Right, but I think they had a change of mind that they wanted some of us to survive. I'm convinced there in the jungle that they meant exactly what they said--they didn't care whether any of us survived the jungle or not--because they were still winning the war. They never thought they'd have to answer to anybody for anything, even as late as, well, June, July, and August, the rough months in the jungle of '43. They were still winning the war.

Marcello: Did you always believe that we were ultimately going to win the war?

Hard: Oh, yes, yes, I never doubted that. It was just a matter of

time. You see, we were very fortunate that there was hardly a time that we didn't have radio information on the news somewhere in the vicinity, and we'd get it eventually. We kept a pretty close track of what was happening and where. By mid-1943 we could see the tide beginning to turn.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were talking about the various types of food, and you mentioned eggs. I assume eggs were a very highly sought food.

Hard: Oh, yes! Oh, yes! They were a dream food--duck eggs. I have one tall story. I had a real good friend, an Irishman, a captain in the British Army. He'd gone up from a boy in the army to a captain in the Royal Artillery. He was left behind. He was in this work party in Burma that I was on, and he stayed there after I left. He was still there the next Christmas, I believe, Christmas of 1944. He saved his money and sold on the black market and scraped up a few pennies somehow, and for either Thanksgiving or Christmas he was going to celebrate. He gave the equivalent of about two-and-a-half dollars for one egg. He very carefully put it in his billy can and boiled it, and when he broke it, it was spoiled (chuckle).

But they were a dream food. We said we were going to build a monument to a duck when we got home.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned pork sandwiches. Did you actually have bread?

Hard: They ground the rice, and we built the ovens--made bread and

baked it at the canteen.

Marcello: In effect, you were never to see bread, as we think of bread, from the time you were captured until you were liberated. Is that not correct?

Hard: That's correct, yes. This was a coarse rice bread that we baked in the camp out of rice flour.

Marcello: Describe your life here at Kanchanaburi during the time that you were here. What did you do with your time?

Hard: That's where I became a cattle herder. Most of the time that I was there, I herded cattle.

Marcello: Did this occur after you recovered from your malaria?

Hard: It occurred after I recovered from malaria, yes. I would have attacks, but I'd still go out. I continued that until things got tight--the situation--and the Japs were getting beat by then.

We were having trouble getting the news about that time. A Dutch work party . . . I don't know what they were doing, but there was Dutch officers on it. They were bringing in a Bangkok Chronicle--Thai paper--that had good straight news in it. Well, they completed this work party, and the only party going out was my cattle herding detail. I had a couple of Americans and two or three Australians going out with me.

Marcello: The Japanese were allowing you to go out on your own? You were not guarded or anything?

Hard: No, we had a guard go with us; they'd send a guard out with us. I guess I'm prejudiced, but I guess he was a country or farm



boy, and he was pretty easy to get along with. Sometimes we'd leave him in the local brothel, and we'd go on about our business, and he'd show up later on in the day. Anyway, we'd have one "roughly" with us.

Well, they started pressuring me to put one of these Dutchmen on the cattle detail so he could bring in a newspaper. Well, I knew it couldn't work because we just had enough experience that one small party that way couldn't get by with any contact with the natives regularly and bring in any contraband like a paper. I kept refusing. I had some good friends among some of the officers, and they put the pressure on me. So I had another attack of malaria, and that gave me the excuse, and I told the Jap that I was sick and couldn't go out with the cattle herd. So I let this Dutch officer take my place, and he went out, I think, about three days until they caught him. That led to quite a ruckus, and there was a "clean-up" there in camp. Several Dutch officers . . . I think "Windy" Rogers got involved with it, and "Ike" Parker, and it caused a lot of people a lot of trouble.

Marcello: Now by this time you were also getting paid, weren't you?

Hard: They paid us some in that period in there, and I can't recall when. It was a very irregular, inconsistent sort of an operation. But at times we did get paid.

Marcello: What were you doing in terms of shaving, toothbrushes, dental hygiene, and things of that nature?

Hard: I ran out of toothbrushes early.

Marcello: How did you substitute?

Hard: Fingers, was about all. With a toothpick I tried to keep some of the crud off of them. I'd whittle the toothpick.

Believe it or not, in Singapore we had a black market source there, and I ordered a set of . . . I had a Schick injector razor, and there was a "Black" Dutchman going through the fence there, black marketing, and he brought me in a whole package of Schick razor blades. We shaved with them. At times, I let my whiskers grow until I couldn't stand it. Then on up in the jungle, somebody threw away the blade of a Rolls razor, and somewhere along the line I picked up the handle off of one that had broken. Anyway, I fixed it. I'd carried a carborundum stone, and I had a piece of leather that was part of my pistol scabbard that I had. I was the last one . . . I kept the one pistol that was authorized in the unit for a few days after things started folding, and I kept that. So I'd sharpen this razor, this old Rolls blade, on a carborundum stone, and a piece of pistol holster, and there were four or five of us who shaved with it up until the end of the war.

Marcello: How long did you remain at Kanburi altogether?

Hard: I got there in June, and I left there in . . . I guess it was July. It was just a short time before the war ended.

Marcello: You were there from June of 1944 to July of 1945?

Hard: Yes, that's correct.

Marcello: Were you there when any of the air raids occurred?

Hard: Yes, when all of them occurred, I think.

Marcello: Describe some of those air raids.

Hard: It was exciting just outside of camp, and everytime the Mosquito . . . they used a Mosquito bomber for reconnaissance over there, and everytime he'd come over there, the air raid alarm would sound, and everybody'd take off. They had just the one little ol' engine, and they'd run it up on this siding out behind the fence by the camp until the warning was over, and then they'd take off again. Well, one time in particular, the B-24's came in, and they spotted this little ol' engine out there. They hit everything but the engine (chuckle). They hit our canteen and broke our water pots. They hit some Dutchmen. We didn't lose any, but they lost some Dutch. They scattered bombs all over the area and strafed the camp.

It was a common affair.. They'd come in and bomb at this bridge over by Tamarkan.

Marcello: This was the concrete and steel bridge?

Hard: Right. They'd cannabilized it down in Java and brought it up there, and they put the three spans out in the middle of the river and built wooden trestles out to meet it. They'd come in there and bomb it and bomb at it.

Marcello: Now how close was Kanburi to Tamarkan?

Hard: Oh, two or three miles, I guess. We didn't catch any of the flak from the Jap antiaircraft guns up on the hill, but the people in Tamarkan did. The antiaircraft guns was in line with the bridge and Tamarkan, and when the planes would come

in on a level run on the bridge, the antiaircraft guns would fire on them, and their misses would go over into the neighborhood of the camp over in the background.

Marcello: Did the Japanese allow you to dig slit trenches and things of that nature?

Hard: No, but we sure did make . . . we made deep drainage ditches around the huts. One reason I volunteered to go to a new camp in 1945 . . . they dug two huge holes in our camp, about two to three meters deep. They were about like a room, about that deep. Two of them were supposed to hold the three or four thousand people we had in camp, I think.

I had one guard . . . one of the guards that went out with me on this cattle detail that told me that if the planes ever come and paratroopers come out, and they tell us to go get in those holes, don't, because the camp guards would take machine guns to us. He told me to come to him. He had a foxhole down by the cookhouse. When the Americans landed . . . it was always the Americans that were going to land in their mind--airborne. They were scared of airborne operations there, too. If the Americans ever came in, I was to come to his foxhole, and he'd give me his gun and surrender, and I was supposed to tell the Americans that he was a good Jap.

Anyway, when I got a chance . . . I heard they were building a new camp. They were building a new camp up north of Bangkok for the officers. Now I don't remember the name of the area up there, but I volunteered to go up there. I

wanted to get out of that Kanburi with those two big holes out there. Anything for a change--I'd been there too long. We hadn't much more than gotten up to this new camp until the war ended.

Marcello: Describe the events surrounding the end of the war.

Hard: In our case, we had a mixed nationality group digging a Jap latrine up there in that new camp. One day there some of the people that were working outside came in and said that the Koreans was giving the Japs a hard time. Normally, I mean that just didn't happen. The Koreans just didn't bother the regular Japs normally, but this day they were. They said they were pushing a Jap sergeant around and getting by with it.

Rumors started and that was the one time we didn't have any news. I've learned later that the Britishers that provided most of the radio information, a couple of brothers in the Malay Volunteers--they were decorated for it by the British later on for their contribution to the well-being and morale of the people--had moved the stuff. They'd also dismantled the Jap officer's radio to move up there and moved it along with theirs and hadn't been able to make contact and get batteries for theirs again. So we didn't have any accurate news at that time. But the people coming in from outside knew something was up.

Well, we went over the next morning to go to work on this officers' latrine pit we was digging on there for the Jap

quarters. We was fixing to build their quarters first. It was out in the paddy field, and it had grown up a great, high bramble there, higher than your head.

We were discussing the situation, hoping that something was happening, and it was time for a smoke. Well, we weren't supposed to smoke out on the job, but we could still take a chance. It was my time to go get some fire, so I took off for the cookhouse and got my old pipe fired up, and I was just "fogging it" in going back to the work detail I was on. There was a New Zealander and a Canadian and a couple of Britishers and I working on it.

On the way back out there on this narrow trail, I met the worst Jap we ever had--the one we called the "Undertaker." That character was a big ol' tall bucktoothed character that'd learned a bunch of profane names and profanity that he used--about all the English he ever spoke. He liked to abuse Americans. They called him the "Undertaker" because he was reputed to have bayoneted people. I never did see any of it, but, anyway, he liked to work people over, and he liked to cuss Americans. I thought, "Uh-oh, I've caught it this time." Well, that character stepped aside and bowed and said, "Good morning, sir."

When I got past him, I made a beeline for the work detail and told the gentlemen the war must be over and what happened when the "Undertaker" stepped aside and recognized me as an officer and bowed to me. Sure enough, that night the news

came into camp that the war had ended.

Marcello: How'd the news come in?

Hard: I believe a Jap courier of some kind came in with the information.

Marcello: And then did one of the Japanese officers announce the news, or what?

Hard: Yes. He called some of the senior officers together and told them that it was over, that the war had ended, and that we would pick . . . in fact, they brought out some armbands from the colonel in charge of the prisoners in Southeast Asia there, out of Bangkok, to identify us. Our guide was this ol' Sergeant Samojo, the one that broke this Britisher's arm. I picked him for a guide to go in with us.

We had a camp of enlisted men between us and Bangkok. We hitchhiked and rode trains and trucks and got into Bangkok. Well, the first day we were out, the underground contacted us. We didn't know it, but they were in strength up in the hills only about three or four miles southwest of us. We were in a corridor between where they were and where the Japs were building up their fortifications northeast of us. This is all hearsay--that had the atomic bomb not been dropped, they had planned where there was going to have to be an attack on the main island. They planned to come in quietly on the 27th or 28th of August, I believe, as quietly as possible, and just at daybreak or prior to daybreak, with their leadership we'd take over the camp, or try to, and there'd be airborne

reinforcements come in. Anyway, they contacted us, and we passed word that we thought we could be in Bangkok and ready to go in about ten days.

Anyway, we got in there, and in the meantime Colonel Tharp and what was left of our main group had gotten as far as Bangkok, and we met them there. Let's see . . . we got the word on the 18th of August that the war was over, and I don't know whether it was the 29th of August when we got evacuated out to Calcutta. I believe it was.

Marcello: In the meantime, when you received the news of the surrender, what was your reaction? And what did you do?

Hard: Not much. We didn't have much to say. Some of the guys got together and put together a very crude flag that night after we got the word on it, and we had a flag-raising ceremony.

Marcello: Was there any celebrating at all?

Hard: We tried to sing our national anthem. The British did a good job, and they helped us. In our crowd it was very quiet.

Marcello: Were there very many Americans in your group?

Hard: No, there's only two or three of us. I've forgotten now . . . Oscar Keithley and Hank Froelich (?), I think, were the only three of us that were there at that time. The Canadians, as "second cousins" or something, helped us. In fact, they helped with the flag that we had.

Some of the guys went pretty berserk and got into the Jap "white lightning" and suffered for it. There was some violence, I guess. I don't know.



I know in my case, I kept my fingers crossed and smiled very politely until we got on the plane and got off the ground on the way out of there.

Marcello: When you say some of the guys got hold of the Japanese "white lightning" and suffered for it, what do you mean when you said they suffered for it?

Hard: Some of them got sick. Some of them . . . I don't think there was any Americans who died, but I think there was some British troops that did. I don't know whether the Japs had sabotaged the stuff or not, but some of the guys got pretty raunchy. I don't know . . . this is all hearsay because I wasn't around any of them. I don't know exactly. I've heard that some of them pushed the Japs around some, but I don't know.

I know our group, as I say, very quietly and politely eased our way into Bangkok and out without making any waves because the Japs were still under arms. They didn't turn in . . . they were given until September 15th or something like that to go up into French Indochina in the Saigon area and turn in. So when we took off from the airport at Bangkok, they still had armed planes on the ground, and their troops were under arms. In fact, on the way in there, we went through troop concentrations--armed army troops, of a pretty good concentration. There was much bowing and scraping on the part of this Jap sergeant and him pointing to the armband, so we were passed on without any problems. But it was a very tightrope-walking situation.

Marcello: Where did you get your first square meal?

Hard: Actually, the square meal was served in the hospital at Calcutta.

Marcello: This was the 142nd General Hospital?

Hard: That's correct. Now we got into all kinds of C-Rations and K-Rations and canned fruit and what-have-you aboard the old C-47's on the way out. We were served some little sandwiches and hot chocolate in Rangoon when we changed planes there. But the first meal in a mess hall was in Calcutta.

Marcello: What sort of medical treatment did you undergo in Calcutta? In other words, what care did they take of you?

Hard: All kinds of de-worming. Intestinal parasite clean-up was about all I had.

I got my first taste of post-war administration. Everybody else shipped out, and a first sergeant and a chief aviation machinist's mate, Harris, and I were still in the ward looking at each other after we had lectured a lot of the guys about how they should behave themselves and take their treatment and get out early, you know. Well, they'd all gone, and we were still there.

Finally, a sergeant in the administrative office at the hospital and in the ward that I was in suggested I better go to headquarters and check because something was wrong. A little ol' administrative officer there had given me nothing but a bad time and said that our turn hadn't come or our treatment hadn't been completed or something of that sort. Well,

I got the doctor and the nurse together and confronted him that we'd completed our medical care treatment. I come to find out that, so far as they knew, we'd never been entered, and we'd never been evacuated to the hospital. We were just sitting there marking time when our names weren't even on the roster. So we shipped out that afternoon.

Marcello: How did you react to this first square meal?

Hard: I didn't have any problem.

Marcello: Do you recall what you ate?

Hard: No, I don't. I think it was roast beef and gravy and green beans, I believe. It was pretty much a typical GI meal.

Marcello: Do you recall what particular food you seemed to crave the most while you were a prisoner-of-war?

Hard: Bread. Bread and meat.

Marcello: Of course, for all of you, this was your first encounter with WACs, and I understand that was a surprise to a great many people.

Hard: Oh, yes. Yes, I was surprised. Everything was a surprise, for that matter--seeing the guys wearing their rank insignia on their collar instead of on their shoulder tabs; warrant officers flying airplanes. My first bad social mistake I made . . . I got aboard this ol' C-47, and we'd been hearing about the Air Transport Command, the wonders that they had worked, you know, so I said, "So this is the ATC!" They threatened to throw me off the plane. They said, "No, this is the Combat Cargo! When you get to Rangoon, out of the

combat zone, the ATC'll pick you up. That's what that means: 'Allergic to Combat.'" So I soon learned to differentiate between Combat Cargo and Air Transport Command (chuckle).

Marcello: When did you give the depositions against the various Japanese and Korean soldiers?

Hard: The night they got into Calcutta. The British had some people there working, and they were taking dictation on that. They wrote out the dispositions, and we signed them.

Marcello: In other words, did this simply consist of identifying the Japanese soldiers and then describing the things they had done?

Hard: That's what that amounted to, just state that . . . fortunately, the Dutch and the British took care of that over there, and we didn't have to put up with the stuff that went on in the Philippines and Tokyo. We would describe . . . in the case of this ol' petty officer, I stated that so many kilometers or approximately so many kilometers from the 100 Kilo Camp, on the railroad, sometime in the latter part of August, I described the action that a Jap known to me as . . . I think this was . . . I think this was ol' . . . I don't remember whether it was "Pock Face" or "Hollywood" that beat him to death. Anyway, a Jap known to us as "Snake Eyes," for example, did without cause beat a prisoner until, in my opinion, it resulted in his death incurred so many hours later.

As I understand it, the way they conducted their trials over there, the Australians formed a board, and they would . . . and it was in the agreement there, incidentally, in Thailand that the prison camp guards would remain in Thailand. The Thais, I guess, took charge of them--them and the Australians and the Dutch. They were retained in Thailand, in the Bangkok area. They'd call in this individual . . . they'd have this stack of depositions, indictments, or whatever you want to call them--statements--and they would . . . say, for "Snake Eyes." The president of the board would call a witness: "Do you know this Korean or Japanese, or have you seen him?" They'd say, "Yes." "By what name?" "Snake Eyes." Usually, the president of the board would say that this Japanese is known to members of the board also by that name. They would read two or three or whatever number of those statements pertaining to "Snake Eyes," and they would make a finding and pronounce a sentence. That's the way they handled them.

You didn't have to give a . . . you know, what would suit American law . . . kind of a legal or official description of the location or the name, rank, and serial number of the accused and that sort of thing. You spoke in generalities. We didn't know the exact date; we didn't know the exact location. In no case did we ever know a full proper name and military designation of the individual. That was the way it was conducted.

Marcello: After you got all through this experience, what made you

decide to make a career of the Army? For the record, I think it should be known that you did pursue a career in the Army.

Hard: Yes. I got out. I wanted to stay in. As I say, ever since I'd . . . I'd always wanted to go in the military. As soon as we mobilized, I intended to stay. Well, after we were released over there, we never heard anything but to come home and be discharged. I talked about wanting to stay, and everybody told me I was crazy, and I thought maybe after the four years, I was.

I had a good offer of a business position. So I thought, "Maybe I am crazy," so I agreed to get out. The day I was being separated down at Fort Sam Houston, I learned that even if I didn't stay as a commissioned officer, I could go back to a master sergeant with a permanent warrant. I decided I'd do that. I tried to . . . I was going into business with my brother in Washington, D.C. I went to a telephone and tried to call him, and the cotton-pickin' telephone strike was on at that time. They had a big strike, and that was in January of '46. I tried to sit down and write out a telegram to send to him, and it looked so ridiculous, after I'd already made a trade fair and square with him that I was going to be separated and come up and form a partnership with him in a business, that it was already established and there waiting for me. So I backed out and went ahead and very tearfully, I'll admit, accepted the separation from the

Army, and I went up to Washington and was in business there with him.

I still liked the Army, and I tried to apply for recall. I'd been promoted, very graciously then, to captain after I was released. I wasn't accepted for recall to active duty because they didn't need anybody.

Then I heard about a new regulation out that permitted ex-servicemen to make application for re-enlistment. The Adjutant General would make a determination on the grade that he would give them, and if the applicant were accepted, he could go to the branch and post of his choice. Well, I'd thought about the service a lot, so I decided I'd take that and make a stab at it. So I went down to the recruiting office and told them who I was and where I'd been. I told my wife that--and she'd agreed to it--that if I get a staff sergeant rank, we'd have to think about it; if we get a "tech" sergeant rank, we'll accept; a master sergeant, we'll grab it.

I wanted to get back in the Army, and I wanted security more than anything else. My health had acted up on me, too, working hard in business. I'd gone through Georgetown Diagnostic Clinic up there and had been told that I'd probably have trouble from then on.

Anyway, she came to work one afternoon with a letter from the Adjutant General, offering me a permanent warrant as a "tech" sergeant, so I signed up for the Ordnance Corps at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. I was always interested in mechanical

activities. I went through "retread" in Fort Knox and went into Aberdeen.

Somewhere the good fortune broke my way. I went to work there in the Development and Proof Service with a bunch of the best automotive maintenance and mechanics and test-drivers in the country. There wasn't but two other military in the whole division, and that was Operation Maintenance Branch chief and one ol' corporal. So they decided they needed an assistant branch chief and shop officer and asked that I apply for recall for detail to the Ordnance Corps. I did and they sent me to the Pentagon, and I was accepted and detailed to the Ordnance Corps and stayed there five years. It was just what I wanted. I proved this to myself.

I could have stayed in, I found . . . I could have gone before the board down at the 3rd Army, I guess, the 3rd or 4th. General Wainwright was president of the board that was screening officers. Some of our officers went there--Eldon Schmid and Ira Fowler and some of them. All you did was swap war stories, and you're back in. But what I'd heard of staying commissioned, it was supposed to have been a highly selective, competitive selection. It'd be three years of highly competitive trial before you were granted a regular commission. At that time I knew I wasn't physically, mentally, or psychologically fit to hold my own in a knock-down, drag-out competition for three years for a position in the Army.



Well, that's the reason I passed out of it.

But when I went back and enlisted, I took the aptitude test, made the rounds, and went before the Active Army Board at the Pentagon and was selected for recall to active duty and detailed to the Ordnance Corps and served there successfully as an officer for five years.

I knew then that I was for the Army and the Army was for me, so I went ahead and served for twenty-six years.

Marcello: Well, Colonel Hard, I think this is probably a good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much for having participated. Your ability to remember detail is outstanding, and I'm sure that historians and scholars will find your comments very valuable when they use them to study this aspect of World War II.