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Colonel Leland D. Bartlett  
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Place of Interview: Denton, Texas  
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello  
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Oral History Collection

Leland D. Bartlett

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: September 13, 1972

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Colonel Leland D. Bartlett for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on September 13, 1972, in Denton, Texas. I am interviewing Colonel Bartlett in order to get his reminiscences, experiences, and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Colonel Bartlett was captured on the island of Corregidor and subsequently spent the rest of the war in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps. Colonel Bartlett, to begin this interview, would you very briefly give us a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education, things of this nature?

Bartlett: I was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, August 27, 1899. I lived in Springfield and right around the area there until I was four years old. I had a little first grade schooling, and then my family moved to

Texas. We went to a little town named Iredel, and it still is a little town. It's in Hamilton County. My father was a carpenter and he was working there, and my mother had been a schoolteacher most of her life, so she took over in the first grade, and I went to school with her. We stayed there in that for one year and then went back to Massachusetts. I went to school there and I was indolent as hell in school! In 1909, my father went to western New York state. I finished school there and we followed him . . . finished there that year in school and then we followed him. We then visited relatives in Rock Island, Illinois, and then we went and landed in Dallas in about 1910. I went to school there in grammar school and my first year of high school. I worked at odd times in a department store, W. A. Green. In 1914, we went to El Paso. I went to high school there. They had a cadet corps there, one battalion. I joined the cadet corps. That was my first military experience.

Marcello: Had you at that time decided that you wanted to enter the military eventually?

Bartlett: No. It was just a credit in school. Then in 1916, they had the trouble with Mexico . . . Pancho Villa. And Uncle Sam brought all the National Guard, I think,

in the United States down on the border there. (Chuckle)  
And those eastern officers didn't know that western  
country. I had been there awhile. And they were  
getting their outfits in an awful jam. So they  
shanghaied about fifteen of us, young high school boys,  
and attached us one to a battalion as scouts.

Marcello: Did you actually get to go into Mexico?

Bartlett: No. We were on the north side of the border. Pershing  
was down into Mexico. I shouldn't bring this out, but  
we knew about it and he didn't. Pershing went  
through and marched his whole column of Seventh  
Cavalry through the town of Parral in Mexico looking  
for Villa. He went through there looking for Villa,  
very much so. And it happened two friends of mine--  
Mexicans and such as that that I knew real well--Villa  
stood on the street corner in Parral and watched him  
march by! (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did you ever see Pershing personally?

Bartlett: No. That was after Villa raided Columbus. Of course,  
I being a young buck kid I was in and around all over  
in northern Mexico and such as that. That was in 1916,  
and then I quit school afterwards and went to work.

Marcello: I gather that you did not particularly like school.

Bartlett: I did not. (Chuckle) I was flunking all the time,  
and almost all subjects. Then in '17, war came out,

and I tried to enlist, no use. Everybody had to be drafted. Then they had the eighteen to twenty-one year olds register for the draft, but they didn't draft anybody. They stated if you wanted to go, and if you could find an outfit of a military nature that would accept you, and bring a letter from the commanding officer, they would draft you and send you to him. Well, that's when they started this SATC, Student Army Training Corps, at the College of Mines. You had to have college entrance to get it. So I went out and took the University of Texas college entrance exam and passed with a grade of 85 and went in. They put us through the mill, and then the Armistice came. And naturally, we were the first ones out.

Marcello: When you entered the Texas School of Mines to take part in this course, were you in the Army as such?

Bartlett: Yes, it was SATC.

Marcello: You were considered a part of the Army.

Bartlett: Yes. This is on my service record.

Marcello: It was the same as enlisting in other words.

Bartlett: Same as being drafted! (Chuckle)

Marcello: Right!

Bartlett: Let's make the distinction!

Marcello: Okay.

Bartlett: Then I went out and bummed around while all the soldiers were coming out and there was no work, so my mother digs up the finances and sent me to West Texas Military Academy in San Antonio. Well, I had kind of settled down, had a few bumps by then, and I started to work. I completed eight courses in a year, both by time in and examinations. I graduated with a 95 per cent average grade. I was cured! (Chuckle)

Marcello: In other words, this was equivalent to your high school diploma.

Bartlett: Yes. After that I went back to El Paso, bummed around some hunting work. Then a friend of the family's, a chemist--he was an \_\_\_\_\_ chemist for the mines-- offered to teach me chemistry there. The agreement was I would work in his place one year with no pay, and he would not \_\_\_\_\_ me on the educational side. While I was working with him, he sent me over to apply for a chemist's job in Arizona. There was nineteen of us who applied, I was the only one of us that wasn't a college graduate. I got the job.

Marcello: How did you manage to do that?

Bartlett: Because of the reputation that this man had and what he said about me. The funny part was that they boosted my pay twenty-five dollars a month more to start than

they had planned. I went to Dos Cabezas, Arizona. I stayed there three years, got married, but my wife didn't like it there, so I left.

Marcello: Why didn't your wife like it there?

Bartlett: Too high an altitude. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: Oh, to go back a little there, while I was with this chemist, Critchett and Ferguson of El Paso . . .

Marcello: What was his first name?

Bartlett: It was two people. Critchett was one man, and Ferguson was the other. They were representing ore shippers at the smelter. I applied for a reserve commission. I got it in '24.

Marcello: Why did you decide to go back into the Army?

Bartlett: I liked the military by then. I'd been to a military academy and all that. I had developed a liking for it. And I was in and out of the service as a reserve until the Depression came. Before that, before the Depression hit, why . . . when I quit there at Dos Cabezas on account of my wife, I went to work for Nevada Consolidated Copper Company, a Kennecott outfit, and it was called the Chino Mines in Santa Rita, New Mexico. I worked there as chemist until '32, and they shut down . . . the Depression. I went to El Paso, and I drove a "dime" taxi.



Marcello: (Chuckle) What is a "dime" taxi?

Bartlett: Well, they were private owned automobiles. A group went in together for a phone, advertised, and we would go three miles for a dime.

Marcello: That was called a "dime" taxi?

Bartlett: Yes, ten-cent taxi. I was still at that when they started the "Tree Army" or the CCC. I was ordered out as junior officer there. You see, I was right beside of Fort Bliss. I got a lot of duty out there, and I became a first lieutenant with the CCC up in Magdalena, New Mexico. While I was there, I landed in that camp . . . it was good for me, but it was awful hard. While I was there, there wasn't an officer in the camp, and they had run out the two officers that were there before I was.

Marcello: Why did they run them out?

Bartlett: Just meanness! I was the first, and I just walked around there and walked by the barracks, and out the window of the barracks I heard them talking: "We got a reputation for being tough, and we'll be tough!" I walked around and walked in the front door, walked right down the middle of the barracks. Now this is not your language, but I just looked at every man in there, and I says, "Now ain't that hell! Not a tough son-of-a-bitch in here!"

Marcello: What was the reaction?

Bartlett: I turned around and quietly walked out. I don't know what it did, but they never bothered me. The captain came in and took command, and I was junior officer for about four months, and then I took command. I took the company into Wyoming, and then I came back and went to work. It was in a civilian status but with Army duties.

Marcello: All this time you're service time was accumulating.

Bartlett: Accumulating. It was mingled with duty. When anything happened at the post, why, I was there.

Marcello: You had gotten out of the CCC, and you were more or less intermingling civilian and military duties.

Bartlett: Yes. While in the CCC itself, I had accumulated knowledge of Army property and government property, so they put me in as a civilian, as property man, on building CCC camps. I went to that, and when it was over with, why, the Depression was beginning to ease off. I worked a short time back on the "dime" taxi again. (Chuckle)

Marcello: What did you think of the CCC?

Bartlett: Wonderful organization. If the commanding officer knew what he was doing, it was wonderful. I know the men fell behind me a hundred per cent. As an

illustration, they gave a dance in the adjoining town, and I was in there and a drunk came in and challenged me. Well, I put him off and when I finished talking, I told him to go on outside and I would be right with him. When I started out the door, there was no formation, but there was at least five CCC's between him and me in every direction. I was really mad! I just heard one boy say, "He's just my size. I believe I'll take him!" Well, anyway, I jumped the boys about that, but they said they didn't want their commanding officer in a common street brawl.

In '37, I went back to where I left off, to work for Kennecott when they reopened. I had become a captain by then. Incidentally, I got my captain's bars by a fluke, an odd thing. In the CCC one officer there, a general, gave me an efficiency report that was the most rotten thing I ever saw.

Marcello: This was when you were in the CCC that you got this . . .

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: . . . bad efficiency report?

Bartlett: Yes. I endorsed it that the remarks on it constituted charges. I demanded to be tried on those charges. I shoved it through channels back through him, but he

interrupted it through channels and sent it back to me. I just re-endorsed it and said, "Insomuch as this is interrupted in channels, I am using my prerogative to send it direct." I got my court-martial. I was a first lieutenant then. The finding of the court-martial was: "Unsatisfactory entries not sustained. Recommendation: recommend this officer for any and all duties for an officer of his grade or the next higher that he may be called upon to perform." Well, of course, I got my captain's bars right away! (Chuckle) When I was with Kennecott back in Santa Rita, in '37 or '39, I believe it was--my dates now are hazy--I was called to duty back into the Army again.

Marcello: This was '39? The country was beginning to gear up a little bit for the coming war but I guess not too seriously yet at this time.

Bartlett: No. I went to Fort Sam Houston and was post chemical officer at Fort Sam Houston. I think it was in April--I'm not sure--that I relieved an officer there that had got out of line, and he was bumped right out of the service. I took his place. They ordered him to the Philippines. Since he was no longer in the service, Washington decided to send back the officer that replaced him. That was me.

Marcello: So you were on your way to the Philippines. What did you think about being sent to the Philippines?

Bartlett: Well, I was sent there just as duty. See, they had ordered this officer over there before he was bumped out of the service. They had issued orders for him to go to the Philippines. When he wasn't there, I took his place since I took his orders.

Marcello: Well, what did you think about going to the Philippines? Were you happy to go there? Were you looking forward to it?

Bartlett: It was good duty. I guess I am truly a military man because it was orders, is all. In fact, I could have gotten out of them.

Marcello: Well, the Philippines were considered pretty good duty in peacetime, were they not?

Bartlett: Yes, but I couldn't take my wife.

Marcello: Was there any reason for that? Was it because it was so far away, or were they still thinking about the possibility of a war with Japan at this time?

Bartlett: Well, I'd have to be a mindreader to answer that. I think they were thinking of it. And later instances that I will state will show that they were. But I didn't think of it at the time. Well, I went there, and if I remember right, I left April 9 and I landed in the Philippines on May 8.

Marcello: Of 1939?

Bartlett: Well, I was there five months before the war started.

Marcello: So that must have been 1941, then, when you went to the Philippines.

Bartlett: Yes. I was assigned as officer of the 4th Separate Chemical Company.

Marcello: 4th Separate Chemical Company? You were connected to what division?

Bartlett: Philippine Division.

Marcello: The Philippine Division. What exactly was this Philippine Division?

Bartlett: The Philippine Division was a division composed of both Americans and Filipinos. But the Filipinos were American soldiers. They kept them separate, but they designated them as Philippine Scouts.

Marcello: Oh, these people were the Philippine Scouts!

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Now these were strictly volunteers, and I gather that these were pretty good soldiers, were they not?

Bartlett: The best! They beat us a hundred per cent! The 45th and 57th Infantries . . . when the young Filipino made his first enlistment, his papers said for three years. In his mind it was life! They never got out. They never quit until they had their thirty years in.

Promotions were slow, and actually they were better soldiers than our boys were, better fighters than our boys were.

Marcello: Well, I gather that they were considered as being a part of the American Army, but their duty kept them in the Philippines, is not that correct? They were not to serve outside the Philippines.

Bartlett: That's right. I was second in command then and . . .

Marcello: That is, you were second in command of this Separate Chemical Company.

Bartlett: Yes. Well, it was a case of feeling my way in the Philippines--new country, new all that.

Marcello: Where were you stationed in the Philippines initially?

Bartlett: Fort McKinley.

Marcello: Fort McKinley. Which is located where?

Bartlett: About fifteen kilometers from Manila.

Marcello: I assume that it must have been a rather old post.

Bartlett: It was a very old post. Captain Petty was the commanding officer. But he came back on the Republic, the next ship over.

Marcello: If you got there in April or May of 1941, five months prior to the war, what sort of preparations for an eventual war did you see taking place at this time?

Bartlett: Lots of it! Of course, I was at first given a cook's tour of the entire island, with troops, and then I got acquainted to Manila and such as that. At first it was to get me acquainted with the country. I had lots of time to myself.

Marcello: I gather that the typical workday in the Philippines at that time only lasted until about noon or shortly thereafter.

Bartlett: Oh, we didn't work that long! We didn't work any overtime! (Chuckle)

Marcello: (Chuckle) Sounds like you only worked half time!

Bartlett: Well, the usual procedure then was that you'd make the . . . I'd make the company headquarters about eight o'clock. Eleven o'clock, I was gone!

Marcello: The rest of the day was your own? Did this routine continue right up until the time of the war?

Bartlett: No! When Captain Petty went back on the Republic . . . the Republic brought the New Mexico National Guard, and there were quite a number of officers in the outfits there that came in then. And they brought some Air Corps troops and \_\_\_\_\_. That was the first thing I saw what looked like a buildup. And they no more arrived than they started organizing ostensibly the Philippine Army.



Marcello: This was separate from the Philippine Division.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: The Philippine Army was conscripts, draftees.

Bartlett: Not strictly draftees, they were volunteers, most of them, but they were strictly under the Philippine government. They were not American, but we were training them, and they brought them in from all over the islands there. The officers organized schools--a chemical school, the signal school and all like that. I guess there must have been a couple thousand officers. They were new. I was put in charge of about 300 of them who were chemical officers, to teach them chemical warfare. Also, I gave defensive lectures to each one of the other outfits. That was going on when Pearl Harbor happened.

Marcello: What was the calibre of the officers you were training here? What was your own opinion of the Philippine officers you were training here?

Bartlett: High. Don't sell the Filipinos short.

Marcello: Even in this Filipino army.

Bartlett: Yes. Don't sell them short. All they lacked was training. Fact is, they held a good, big share of the line on Bataan.

Marcello: I gather, however, that they were rather ill-equipped. Isn't that correct?

Bartlett: We were all ill-equipped. While I was in there, right after Captain Petty left and before MacArthur came into the picture, the general had us write a new plan called Plan Orange. I had the job of writing the complete Plan Orange. I gave them the locations and places to guard in case of war against sabotage and such as that.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what was Plan Orange? You might explain that record.

Bartlett: Plan Orange was the plan that was to be carried out in case of an attack by a foreign force or, in other words, war.

Marcello: Was this the plan that more or less designated that the troops were to fall back and hold a defensive position on the Bataan Peninsula until help came?

Bartlett: Yes, it did have that in there. There is a little kink in it. We wrote this . . .it wasn't that we had a helluva lot more to do there than that. I had nine places that my company was supposed to guard. Well, before Pearl Harbor hit was when MacArthur came over, took over, and our general went back to the States. The first order we got was that Plan

Orange is out. It will not be used. Everywhere, no plan. The Japs came over there, and I did get a rifle shot off at the first plane that came over.

Marcello: Well, let us go back a little bit here, very briefly. What were you doing when you heard about the news of Pearl Harbor? Can you recall that event very vividly? What was your reaction when you heard about the attack?

Bartlett: Well, I more or less expected it. I didn't think they would hit Pearl Harbor, but I thought that they would hit the Philippines.

Marcello: Did you think we could defeat the Japanese in short order?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: Why didn't you think we could defeat the Japanese in short order?

Bartlett: We had no navy, nothing to get anybody over there with.

Marcello: I understand that a great deal of the armament that the Philippines had were antiquated.

Bartlett: Definitely. Our own. Now this will sound peculiar. The ammunition that was issued me for my pistol and the ammunition that was issued for the rifles came out of the boxes that had been sealed . . . all dated 1918. I tried one shot out of my pistol--I qualified

as expert with my pistol--at a target thirty-five yards off and saw the ball hit the ground half way between me and the target. We will get more of that later!

Marcello: I have heard that some of the anti-aircraft ammunition was so old that it couldn't reach the Japanese planes. Other times, it would explode as soon as it came out of the gun barrel, and it was almost like suicide ammunition, really!

Bartlett: Yes. As soon as Pearl Harbor happened, why, there were fifty of my chemical warfare men, and they dispersed almost immediately.

Marcello: You were still at Fort McKinley?

Bartlett: Yes. That was just off the post, the school was. They went out on USS Corregidor--they were from the southern islands--to go back to their posts.

Marcello: The USS Corregidor. Was that a ship?

Bartlett: That was the courier ship between the islands.

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: They don't want to talk about that.

Marcello: How come?

Bartlett: Well, they mined the harbor as soon as Pearl Harbor happened.

Marcello: "They" you are referring to the Americans.

Bartlett: Americans.

Marcello: Right.

Bartlett: Then they ordered these fifty from my group to go down South there. There was others from other groups there. I don't know how many. There was a shipload of troops. It wasn't a large ship, but there were quite a few people. It was enough to take care of the South Pacific waters. I sent them. The Corregidor hit one of our own mines going out of the harbor, and out of my fifty--I don't know how the casualties were among the others--there was nineteen of them alive afterwards. The barracadas and drownings got the rest.

Marcello: Describe the day that you had your first contact with the Japanese. I gather that your first contact was through some sort of an air attack.

Bartlett: The first I contacted the Japanese was the morning after Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Describe exactly what happened.

Bartlett: They came over. I wasn't around where they were bombing, but they had fighter escorts, of course, and I was in the backyard in my residence in Fort McKinley, and they came by there. I had a Springfield rifle. I shot it one time at him, missed him, but I got his range, and I threw the bolt back, and the

floor of the magazine fell out of the bottom of the gun.

Marcello: Which is more evidence of the antiquated weaponry that the Philippines had.

Bartlett: The floor of the magazine, when I jerked the bolt back, fell out.

Marcello: Did they do very much damage to Fort McKinley?

Bartlett: No, they didn't damage it at all.

Marcello: I gather that this was only a minor post. It wasn't a very big post.

Bartlett: It had a division.

Marcello: Oh, it was big enough to handle a division?

Bartlett: My sergeant was my assistant teacher over there, Sergeant James Stroe, and he was a University of Arkansas graduate, and he came from Stuttgart in Arkansas. He was with me when I made my shot at the Jap. When I got through, he just looked at me and he says, "Captain, that was the most beautiful piece of cussing that I ever heard of!" (general laughter)

Marcello: You really gave that Japanese plane hell, huh?

Bartlett: My cuss words. I couldn't throw anything else at him! Well, of course, we were firing around then. We were scattered all over. I inducted a number of outfits with the Philippine Army that they had recruited as Filipinos into the United States Army. I went down

with these men to the headquarters, and I found my nineteen men who were in . . . of course, of the 31st Infantry, all had moved out of there. In the sheds down there, they were in there with no clothes, no food, no water, no nothing--just as they came out of the water. I blew up! I actually had them assign those men to me.

Marcello: Now these were all officers, isn't that correct?

Bartlett: Yes, from the Southern Islands. Then there was a group of non-commissioned officers that had been there, oh, a good-sized company, and I was counting them off. They didn't go back to school because the school broke up.

Marcello: I assume that there was mass confusion at all these Army bases in the initial stages.

Bartlett: Well, nobody was acting right. I wouldn't say that it was confusion. You had so many things to do. All of them needed to be done. The only confusion was getting the time to do them. At that same time, they had built three warehouses just off from the post of McKinley--chemical warehouses. Stuff coming from the States was being loaded in there. When Pearl Harbor happened, why, they immediately started in and hauled cans of gasoline out to a kind of a

boondocks area by the post. And I had that warehouse in my hands, too.

Marcello: And this was filled with oil?

Bartlett: No, that was chemical weapons and such as that and gas masks and all like that.

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: It was quite a bit of confusion. I didn't do much more with the school. Colonel Hamilton got in and took it over, and then they broke it up. He was the chief chemical officer in the Philippines. He was on the general staff.

Marcello: Up until this time had you ever met MacArthur? Had you ever had the opportunity to see MacArthur?

Bartlett: I saw him at a distance. Don't ask me to say anything about MacArthur. That's a raw subject with me.

Marcello: Okay.

Bartlett: I need to get myself oriented again.

Marcello: Okay, you were back at Fort McKinley, and you had been assigned this warehouse with the chemicals, the gas masks . . .

Bartlett: I had that assigned me before Pearl Harbor. But as soon as Pearl Harbor happened, they started hauling gasoline out in five gallon sealed tins and started stacking it around. And right next to that was a



place where they had put these refugees from the school and the Philippine Army . . . well, what they had there is . . . of course, they had a small standing army to start with. In there I had about a good-sized company of them. I put these officers that had been rescued from the water . . . I had already outfitted them and put them in there with that bunch. I was running around all over hell! (Chuckle) I had the 4th Separate Chemical Company on my hands, too. I couldn't give them much there. I had a damn good first sergeant, and he was taking care of it. Then the proposition was that they started enlisting Filipinos for our army.

Marcello: Now these were raw recruits.

Bartlett: Raw recruits. And that was one of the worst set-ups that we had. We don't hear anything about it. I was about a quarter of a mile from it when it happened. They had a big . . . oh, I guess it must have been about what we would call about a five-acre block of land there and the recruits were in there signing up. I was about a quarter of a mile or a third of a mile away at what they called the Philippine . . . they had a little military post there . . . and they had a company of chemical men that were there . . . depot

company and the whole works all. I swore them into the United States Army. While I was there, we were interrupted. We hit the dirt, you might say. Jap bombers were coming over.

Marcello: Now this was your second encounter with them?

Bartlett: Yes, bombers.

Marcello: Was this the second day?

Bartlett: No, this was about a week later.

Marcello: About a week later. You hadn't seen bombers since that initial attack.

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: We had seen fighters but not bombers. Well, they went over and they dropped . . . I don't know how big it was . . . they dropped a bomb right in the dead center of that crowd of about 800 men. They were Filipinos. It was a slaughterhouse. They interrupted my swearing them in. When we got the warning, we hit our protection and then came back out and finished swearing them into the United States Army.

Marcello: I would gather that as a result of this bombing attack, the realities of war more or less hit home to you.

Bartlett: Well, they had hit home to me before that. I knew what a war was. See, I lived on the Mexican border. I knew the Mexican Wars. We were not completely

civilized back there in 1914, you know, on the Mexican border. See, we had three or four bandits in Mexico, and they raided across the line, and they raided . . . hell, I was packing a gun! I packed a gun just as consistent as you please all the time! And I just was a kid, but all of us had them. So I got pretty much of an initiation before this.

Marcello: I'll bet!

Bartlett: I took these boys and put them in this group I had just outside McKinley because I could feed them all at once and handle them better than I could in this post because there were no cooking facilities or anything there. My chemical company had drawn out with my junior officer. He had taken that, and they were way out in the woods somewhere. MacArthur was in by then, and he put priorities into effect. Every damn place that I was supposed to protect was nothing but rubble. The Plan Orange! And then I took over another setup. Colonel Hamilton was in charge of a lot of supplies at Corregidor. But I was on the mainland, though, the main island. They shipped out a whole string of freight cars from . . . the regular infantry and all had gone up to the front. They had been up there quite a little bit. A couple of divisions

of Philippine Army troops were out there. These supplies were shipped out and designated for three different divisions. They called me about dusk and said, "They are all shipped wrong, by rail." So they had me go out and catch them, and they gave me a list of the . . .

Marcello: He said they were all shipped wrong?

Bartlett: Yes. The designations on the railroad were not where the divisions were. So I chased out that way, and I caught up with them and redirected them. Then I sent messages to the different divisions as to where their cars would be on the . . . railroad track so they could unload them. I spent the night up at the north end of Bataan at the bay there. I had a Philippine Army officer with me, and he could speak English. There is another thing I wanted to mention, but memory fails me at the moment. Well, I'll probably think of that later! Oh, yes! I know what it was. That's why I say it belongs in there. Coming back, we went by Clark Field. That is, we were headed there. I headed off down a road for about a mile and a half, a road that would go out from the highway to it. I started out there, and the Japs came over--bombers. I had gotten pretty close to the strip, and when these things

came over, of course, we had to hit the bar ditch. I pulled in there, and it was the maddest bunch of Air Corps boys I ever saw in my life!

Marcello: Why was that?

Bartlett: Now this is going to hurt somebody. Their entire bombardment group was bombs loaded, gas loaded, on the runway to hit Formosa. Two bomb groups got off, were in the air. MacArthur radioed them that they would not leave, that the planes in the air would land! They'd already got a warning that the Jap bombers were on their way. Any damn fool knows the only place for an airplane in a bombing raid is in the air! One of the groups got on the ground from MacArthur's orders. The others didn't have time.

Marcello: What was the reasoning behind MacArthur's orders?

Bartlett: I don't know! I know we lost our entire bomber force that way! Well, this one, it circled until after it was over. There wasn't enough of a strip left that it could land! And there wasn't a plane that could fly!

Marcello: And they all had to go to Mindanao then to land.

Bartlett: That one group . . .

Marcello: That was left, yes . . .

Bartlett: . . . that was in the air had to go to Mindinao to land, and there wasn't a ship left of our bombardment group.

Marcello: And that put an end to the Air Corps.

Bartlett: That put an end to the Air Corps! And it was done by a direct order of Douglas MacArthur! And maybe you don't think those pilots and men on that post weren't up in arms. It was hot!

Marcello: Now did you actually witness the attack, or did you get there after it had taken place?

Bartlett: I heard the bombs. I didn't witness it because I had my nose stuck so damn deep in the bar ditch! (Chuckle)

Marcello: Right! (Chuckle)

Bartlett: Well, we could have been a helluva lot better off if we could have had that bombardment group. We could have retaliated, and they couldn't have brought in their high pursuit jobs from their ships close enough to hit us if we would have had a bombardment group to hit their ships with! It would have been an entirely different story.

Marcello: So what happened when you were on your way to Clark Field and you saw the results of that bombing raid?

Bartlett: I just turned around and went back out because there wasn't even a coca-cola available! Then we got orders

to go to Bataan, and all of a sudden we put Plan Orange into effect and went to Bataan. We didn't have equipment for hauling. They headed out helter-skelter, and it was a quick setup. Half of the soldiers were on liberty in Manila. And it was an awful mess of traffic.

Marcello: Everybody was heading for Bataan.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: This included civilians as well as military, did it not?

Bartlett: No, not civilians. They couldn't go. Colonel Romer that was assistant there. "Sax" Romer! (Chuckle) Yes, that's what we called him, "Sax." He didn't make it back. He took the Filipino Army setup and took them out. He got trucks from department headquarters, and we got a bunch of crippled trucks from the post and we loaded up. I helped him get these Filipinos out, and my first sergeant loaded up everything. I told him to get all the equipment and move all the company out, and I joined him as they were going out.

Marcello: What did you think about going back into the Bataan Peninsula to establish a defensive position?

Bartlett: Why it wasn't anything to think about. It was about the only thing we could do under the circumstances. It wasn't a brilliant idea. It was just a last stage!

Marcello: At this point, did you think that help was on its way, that the Navy would come to take you off the island?

Bartlett: Personally, no. The boys were all looking for the Navy to come.

Marcello: Did you realize the extent of the damage that had been done at Pearl Harbor?

Bartlett: I didn't realize the full extent of that, but I realized more than the rest of them did. It was worse than I thought it was! I knew that with that Pearl Harbor setup we couldn't do anything because we didn't have the ships to do it with. No use telling the boys though. I started that night for Bataan. I only had two trucks that wasn't labeled "not to go off the post." The rest were in such bad condition that they were not to go off the post, but we had to use them. We went into Bataan. I had one of those, and I bumped into the ditch when we were just getting into Bataan. Since I had the grub, I parked and camped.

Marcello: What did the Bataan Peninsula look like to you? Can you describe it from a geographical aspect?

Bartlett: It was a mountain, Mariyeles Mountain.



Marcello: That's Mariveles Mountain, right?

Bartlett: Yes. It got pretty steep as soon as you got away from the bay, and it was just a big slug of mountain there.

Marcello: Was it covered with jungle?

Bartlett: Yes, big trees and brush and everything. Of course, at Mariveles, a town along that roadway there, there was a little strip on each side there that was fairly open. That was the town of Mariyeles. We went in . . . I stopped there and spent the night there, camped out. The whole outfit threw a camp because I didn't want to lose the grub. Then we transferred it onto additional trucks we had there. Then we went on. We just left the truck there. It had been bumped into a ditch.

Orders were then given to make camp . . . the one I got was "Kilometer Post 158, Mariyeles Cutoff." That's the distance from Manila. I pulled up to that place. There was a straight upshot like that on the inside and a straight down shot that way on the other side for a mile in both directions! It was right on a sharp curve. I pulled over, and I had to hunt . . . finally I found that when they gave me my list, they transposed the five and the eight. I went 85 instead of 158! I finally got there and that was the

next day. I unloaded the trucks, and I took the two best trucks I had and started back for Manila. I was the only one that did that.

Marcello: Why did you start back for Manila?

Bartlett: Well, to get one more load. MacArthur had declared Manila an open city. Well, I figured that the Japs were suspicious and it would take them longer than that before they would even start moving in. So I went back, went to the warehouse, and I put 800 gallons . . . one truck broke down, broke the drive-shaft going in just before I had hardly got out of town, so I went with the other one. It was a beautiful truck, an eight ton prime mover.

Marcello: Did you have any trouble getting back into Manila?

Bartlett: No. I went in and right on up to the warehouse just off McKinley, and I put 800 gallons of gasoline in the bed. They were in five gallon cans. I loaded up some other stuff and WHEEeeeeee! There we go down the road when we spotted a Jap observation plane! I just hollered, "We're through!" (Chuckle) I said, "Lieutenant, let's go!" Instead of taking the normal route out, I cut straight back up through Fort McKinley. I knew that whole setup there. The parade ground was lined with big acacia trees. Instead of going in right

by what they called the South Gate, we went right down under the trees and out through the North Gate. Just as we got out of there, we saw them coming way off there--nine of them . . .

Marcello: You mean nine bombers?

Bartlett: Not bombers. They were strafers! Pursuit planes! We run the truck under into a big grove of trees for the heavy coverage. Everybody got out and kept out of sight. I says, "Nobody shoots unless I do!" Then everybody shoots! (Chuckle) I guess they stayed around for about a half hour, and then they had to go back to fuel up. They couldn't find us. Then we got out of there and went straight down to the dock area into what was the quartermaster . . . they had the commissary and the quartermaster there, and when I got there, the doors were wide open. I said, "Drive her right on in." We drove right into the commissary, loaded with food . . . and this other company were all equipped with tennis shoes. Well, that was no good for the field. So I had them go into the quartermaster and I told them to bring out about 300 pairs of shoes of all sizes, and we loaded them on. And we loaded food on. While I was there, why, three or four stragglers that had been left behind came running in

looking for a way to get out. Three of them were from my own outfit, and one was from another outfit. They had been caught . . . the move had caught them in town drunk! (Chuckle) We headed out there. I went straight down through the center of Manila on my way out.

Marcello: Well, it was an open city, and I gathered that you figured it would be safe at least temporarily.

Bartlett: Yes. We drove about twenty miles to where there was this little Philippine Army post where I had mustered this company in. Well, I pulled up in there, and I broke into their armory . . . had to break the lock.

Marcello: It was still there but had been abandoned.

Bartlett: Been abandoned. Even left locked. I hauled out enough rifles for two complete companies! They were the old Enfields. And ammunition. I loaded it onto the truck. All my chemical men had a pistol, but they hadn't been issued ammunition. By the time I got back . . . they were surprised to see me back. Colonel Hamilton was over from "The Rock," and I say, "Colonel, what do you want to do with this 800 gallons of gasoline? He almost fell over! Boy, he was happy about that! There was no more argument! I had done fine! I was technically in command of the 4th Separate

Chemical Company, but really I had a junior officer there, and he wasn't around. So I left that with the men, and he showed up.

Marcello: Now was this 4th Chemical Company actually behind the lines, the actual front lines of Bataan?

Bartlett: We were on the front lines! Not at the start, no, because the line wasn't in Bataan. The 31st Infantry was caught . . . they came in, oh, as faraway as up towards Manila. These little towns such as that little barrio there constituted delaying action.

Marcello: Now at the time that we are speaking here, however, the Japanese have not really hit the Bataan Peninsula yet. Is that correct?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: They are on their way.

Bartlett: They were on their way, and there was a delay action . . . the 31st put on a delaying action to delay the gooks so they couldn't go faster and catch up with us and catch us . . . give us time to get set.

Marcello: I see. Right.

Bartlett: I went back there . . . this officer . . . the Colonel told me to go down and find out if he'd been drunk the night before with the men, you know. He'd be bumped out, fraternizing with the men, you know. I

told him, "Colonel, I can't do it!" He says, "Why not?" I says, "Hell, I was drunk with my men last night! And I furnished the whiskey!" (Chuckle)

Marcello: (Chuckle) What did he say about that?

Bartlett: He called them over, and he says, "I'll give you twenty-four hours to find some other outfit that will take you!"

For about three weeks there, while there was the delaying action going on, I gave the men the rifles and spread them out there. And I armed the depot company that Colonel Romer had with bullets and ammunition. Romer taught his men how to use the guns, and I had my first sergeant teach my men how to use the guns. See, it was a different gun they had. It wasn't the Springfield. They just got an Enfield.

I got organized and Hamilton sent me . . . they had a bunch of young officers there hadn't been tried out--second lieutenants. He had them over on "The Rock." He sent a man over to me and said, "See what good he is!" He came over, I just told him, "He ain't worth a damn as a fighting man. He'd make a damn good office man." So he took him to the office, and he sent another one. I told him what to do with him;

he wasn't a fighting man. The third one he sent over came in there, and I said, "I'd like to keep him. He is a damn good fighter and knows his stuff. He's a fighting man, and he has got the guts." I says, "I'd like to keep him as permanent junior officer." And he says, "Alright, you can have him." And he turned out to be one of the . . . he was a Lieutenant Miller. I brushed him through.

While we were doing that shells from Corregidor they went right over our camp. The only time the guns were fired from Corregidor the shells went over the camp. You could hear what sounded like a freight train and hear that boom way off in the distance. We were pretty far into Bataan where I was camped.

And then I wrote the defense . . . they came to me to . . . most of them down there were service officers, service outfits, and I was ranking in the combat line, so they had me write out a defense plan in case they did come from that direction. About that time, the 31st was moving back into Bataan, and me and the company was sent to the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry.

Marcello: Now where was this outfit located?

Bartlett: They were in the front line.

Marcello: They were on the front line.

Bartlett: See, they had done a delaying action. See, there was an open plain, kind of, there. When they hit where there was trees and such as that, then they could make a stand. They'd make a stand there. So I took my men over there. They had quite a number of casualties, and so my company was . . . I had a group attached to each company in the battalion. I took over as executive officer of the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry. The commanding officer was a regular infantry officer. We stayed on that. They didn't push us back much. We got to the point there where we were pretty stable. It was known as Pilar-Bagac Line. Well, we were out on the Pilar end, where it bumped into Manila Bay. It was up at the other end of Mariveles Mountain, and our line went along the edge of the mountain from Pilar to Bagac. The 31st was on the Pilar end, and then they had the 57th, the 45th Scouts, some Marines, and some Philippine Army all the way through there.

Marcello: Can you describe any of the fighting that took place on the front line while you were there?

Bartlett: Mostly all sniping. I missed the last battle, the breakthrough.



Marcello: At your end of the line it was mostly all sniping?

Bartlett: Yes. Hit and run. One boy I had by the name of Sherman, who was a wizard. He'd crawl through those goddam Jap lines. He'd crawl through there and do damage back of their lines and get back through himself. I know one time he went through there right into their camp. When he came back, he had all his pockets full with bolts out of their rifles. Well, that was a good job because they were all hand fitted bolts. The bolt from this rifle wouldn't fit that rifle. They finally got him. We found him just shot to doll rags! It was just sporadic fighting there.

Marcello: How did you eventually get back to Corregidor?

Bartlett: Well, that's where it comes in there. I came down with malaria.

Marcello: I would assume that probably everybody sooner or later came down with malaria there on Bataan.

Bartlett: They sent me back to a hospital. I was unconscious for three days with it. When I came out, Colonel Hamilton was sitting there when I came to. He was sitting off to the side there by a big slab of rock that he was using as a desk. He was just sitting there. I saw him over there, and I got up and walked over to him. He looked at me kind of funny, and he

stuttered and he says, "Do you know what this is?"

He pointed at this paper. I says, "No, Colonel, I don't." He said, "That's your burial certificate!"

Marcello: You had apparently come that close to death.

Bartlett: I says, "I'm a lively corpse, Colonel!" (Chuckle)

Marcello: What was the food situation on Bataan while you were there?

Bartlett: Short rations! As far as that goes, when out on the front, you never saw anything. You didn't see anything to eat. We only ate two meals a day, two servings a day.

Marcello: Did these meals come up by a chow truck or something from behind the line?

Bartlett: A chow truck after dark, no lights. You know the chow truck is there, and you get in line. You feel around until you find the truck with your mess kit open. Something would hit it, and you'd get through with it. You didn't even look at it; you just ate it! No questions asked!

Marcello: I gather then that officers were eating the same kind of chow as the enlisted men.

Bartlett: That's right. We were eating the same stuff. There was no difference. I never found any place that there was any difference, unless possibly there was in the

headquarters. Maybe the brass hats were eating better. But I brought a helluva slug of food back.

Marcello: That's when you raided that warehouse. Was this food still with your company?

Bartlett: Yes. Well, it was left with the depot company, and we used it there. When we moved up and joined the 31st, it went right up with us.

Marcello: Well, I gather that it was while you were on Bataan that MacArthur received the name of "Dugout Doug." Is that correct?

Bartlett: Oh, no. He got it a long time ago. He didn't have the name of "Dugout Doug" for a long time. MacArthur only came to Bataan one time. One time when I was on the front there, the order came out for all the field officers to come up and meet him at the little dock there. They came out with written orders. When we went there, you couldn't get in without an order. You couldn't get within twenty kilometers of that town without an order. And everybody that was in there was chased out. Those were the orders. It was midnight. He came over, stepped ashore for about ten minutes, didn't say anything, and went right back to Corregidor!

Marcello: Did you manage to see him when he was there?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What were your impressions of him? I assume that this is the first time that you had ever seen him up close.

Bartlett: Oh, no. I had seen him when they had that Philippine Army School. Before they left, they had a graduation of all branches. It was their own shindig. It wasn't an American . . . it was all the Philippine Army shindig, all officers. They had what they called a big Chinese dinner for the select field officers, their field officers, and had a big ball or dance in the Manila Hotel. I went there, and my sergeant was there. They gave these special ones in the higher ranks a Chinese feast. Douglas MacArthur was at the dance, but it was by invitation only. My sergeant and I were there! Douglas MacArthur wasn't invited! Did you ever see one of these Chinese feasts?

Marcello: No, I sure haven't.

Bartlett: You get a platter, a good sized meat platter. It comes out and is served. It has about an inch of rice, dry cooked, just crumbled to pieces, all over the bottom. They start in about nine o'clock in the morning. The food comes and you place the food on the rice--the rice is your bed--and you put it there, and you eat it. It's course after course, and

it'll last well into the night. You are eating all the time, and the speakers are speaking all the time. I feel right proud of it. Myself and the medical officer and my sergeant were the only Americans at that! The only Americans invited! Well, I feel I must have done something good with them! (Chuckle)

Marcello: But, anyhow, you were on the Bataan Peninsula, and you had just recovered from malaria. I think that was what we were talking about.

Bartlett: I recovered there, and then I spent two more days in the hospital to pick up a little strength. Then they shoyed me back just to the cutoff above Mariveles at what was a chemical depot. Colonel Romer was there with a small detachment of Philippine . . . it was supposed to be a company . . . it was a depot company. They had chemical weapons and such as that. I had furnished them the rifles at the first there, along with ammunition. I pulled in there about mid-morning, and about, oh, I guess three or four o'clock in the afternoon, they got orders to hit the front lines. They took everybody but me. He says, "You can't go on duty. You take the telephone watch." Well, I sat there on the telephone--no sleep and nobody with me--for thirty-two hours.

I hadn't had any sleep at all, and Colonel Romer came back in . . . they came back in. It was, oh, about ten or eleven o'clock in the evening. The only words he said to me, he says, "The jig's up." I hit the sack. At four o'clock in the morning he came around and shook me. He says, "The trucks are loaded and headed down there with all our white phosphorous airplane bombs and this special equipment." All of us started down there, and the word comes back that the road is blocked. He says, "Get it through!" That's all he said, "Get it through!" All that was left of transportation was my own private car that I had gone to Bataan in, and I took the runner that they had sent in down there. Well, there was an Army truck stalled, wouldn't start, right there. And the road wasn't wide enough to go by. It was stalled there. Right behind him was an ambulance. Just in front of it was wide enough for cars to pass. I pulled over and then I saw coming down the hill a group of engineers. They were leaving and I went over and borrowed a platoon of them. Their camp was up above there. It was a dynamite storage camp. They had fused it all up and was leaving it to explode. We were out of range of the explosion, for that matter. I took the platoon . . . we couldn't . . . there wasn't

enough men to move the trucks, so we ripped out a section wide enough so that we could squeeze by . . . our trucks could squeeze by. Then we drove the ambulance down into the canyon. I got in my car, and I just took it and started the motor and put it in a low gear. Then I just stepped out, slammed the door on it, left it in gear, and it drove itself over the cliff! My own private car! I got in the truck and went down to Mariveles. Oh, gosh, it was a job getting through. It was just a mess. I had to use lots of rank and lots of cuss words to even get into the line, and then I had to tell an MP major to go to hell at Mariveles! I was on a barge. I had a couple of sergeants that had been with the truck, so they sent the trucks back because they couldn't go on the barge. They told us to get on the barge and go to Corregidor. They had a little pissy-assed tug that couldn't move that barge over but about three miles an hour, and there it was broad daylight.

Marcello: You were a sitting duck, huh?

Bartlett: It was about, I would say, right around eight or nine o'clock in the morning. The only arm we had on the damn thing was my .45 with what ammunition, and the

air was full of Jap planes. We didn't get to Corregidor until one o'clock!

Marcello: In other words, how many hours did it take you?

Bartlett: It must have taken about . . . pretty close to six hours.

Marcello: And Corregidor isn't that far from Bataan, either.

Bartlett: It isn't very far . . . well, at three miles an hour, you know . . . that was maximum speed! Well, sitting there with those Japs flying overhead there and shooting everything in the country, sitting out there in the open barge, and the . . . oh, besides the white phosphorous there, they sent down . . . they had already loaded the barge when I got there with powder cans and projectiles for the old guns that had been in the bay at the other end of the island, you know. They had their little Corregidor up there, you know. And they were loaded on there--machine guns but no ammunition.

Marcello: Had you ever been to Corregidor?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. I had been back and forth several times at one time or another. It was quite a bit before that. See, I was the only full-fledged chemist over there. When the Jap bombs hit around Fort Hughes--that is the other island out there--their bombs exploded in



the reservoir, and the water turned just about the color of your yellow shirt! There was supposed to be 3,000 men on that island. There was no water. They didn't know if it was poisoned or not. They drug me from the front lines back there to go into . . . they had a little bitty laboratory in Corregidor. I was assigned to find out what the hell was in that water. Well, I went in there . . . you know a laboratory will stink. Well, it was a place about like this, maybe a little larger, and the wall there was just flat boards. On the other side of the wall was Mrs. MacArthur's quarters. It was about five times our size. I had been busy there, and I had just got the solution of it--it was picric acid, perfectly harmless--and a runner came in from Mrs. MacArthur and says that that would cease! The fumes were annoying Mrs. MacArthur! Now I was trying to see about the water for 3,000 men, and Mrs. MacArthur couldn't stand a little smell! Do you know, Douglas MacArthur never went out of that tunnel in daylight?

Marcello: That's Malinta Tunnel, right?

Bartlett: Malinta Tunnel.

Marcello: Did you feel pretty safe in going over to Corregidor?

Bartlett: No, not with those Japs in the air! When I got there, why, I was safe in the tunnel. That was all.

Marcello: What did you do in the tunnel? Now you were in Malinta Tunnel, isn't that correct?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: That's where you were assigned. What did you do in the tunnel?

Bartlett: Just outside our quarters was what they called the mine casemate where they charged the mines for the harbor and all that stuff. We had a little chemical office there, and being the only chemist over there, we had a big problem of the defense. First, I was given my sector to defend in case of attack at that place. I had to write the plan for it. They had a helluva plan. I think they must have had some screwy ones that didn't know any military tactics. I changed that and then I went in there and I seen what they were. The beachheads had cliffs on each end--there would be a beach and a cliff on each end--so in case of a night attack, I was down there putting together from airplane flares and those something to give a flare light to throw them in the light for us back in the defensive position. I was down in there doing that and nearly lost my ass in doing it, too.

Marcello: What happened?

Bartlett: I don't know. I thought it was well hid. I put off a couple of trial mixtures, you know, just small batches. I thought I had it hid, but that afternoon there, I was down there alone . . . none of the guys would go down there and help me at all. It was out in the open. It was just a tunnel. It was kind of a valley right across the island. I went down in there and was working there, and they started a barrage. That valley was about a half mile across and not quite a half a mile wide there out in the middle. They started a barrage. Nine and three quarter inch guns! I counted fifteen guns, and they just went back and forth with a rolling barrage in that whole area for three hours, and I was right in the middle of it. Those goddam big nine and three quarter inch shells! And all I had for protection was this little building that had about two-inch cement walls and boiler plate doors. Well, the doors were closed. They weren't locked, just swung-closed. When they were through over there, all the doors were open, and there wasn't a damn one of them that you could close. They were bowed like the bow of an arrow. I leaned against the wall like that. There was a hole right above me there about that big around where it was hit. I got .

the concussion of it, but all the fragments went on. I was shook! I imagined it was about a half hour after they quit before I could get organized enough even to get on my feet.

Marcello: What was this Malinta Tunnel like? I assume that you were in there innumerable times.

Bartlett: Oh, yes!

Marcello: What was Malinta Tunnel like? Describe it as best you can.

Bartlett: I can draw it pretty well for you.

Marcello: Well, that's not going to help us on (chuckle) the tape recorder though! Just describe it as best you can.

Bartlett: They had sandbags here at the Mariveles end. The tunnel goes straight through from the Mariveles end to the other end.

Marcello: Now Malinta Tunnel was wide enough, was it not, that two trucks could pass in there?

Bartlett: A bit wider than that. I would guess that by actual measurement it was about sixty feet.

Marcello: And then off the main tunnel there were several lateral tunnels.

Bartlett: There was lateral tunnels. One side was the hospital. Then the first one in, which is about a hundred feet, was a little tunnel that went back there that connected with other tunnels. There was just a whole bunch of

them in there, but this one was MacArthur's quarters. We had a field generator that ran on the inside of the tunnel to get electricity throughout. Then the third tunnel went straight through to the outside again into another smaller tunnel known as the Navy Tunnel. And then back of the hospital on the other side, there was another airshaft and an entrance where you could go out.

Marcello: Now were your quarters in Malinta Tunnel?

Bartlett: My quarters were in Malinta Tunnel. I was off on the second tunnel in, and it jogged back so that this first tunnel--MacArthur's tunnel--deadened in it, but they put the partition in there. They gave us a space about the size of this room other than the partition.

Marcello: And that's where your laboratory was--on the other side of that partition. And that's where you had the trouble with the fumes and MacArthur's wife and so on.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Well, what was it like living in Malinta Tunnel?

Bartlett: Same temperature the year around, day and night. It wasn't bad.

Marcello: Now while you were on . . .

Bartlett: The bunks weren't too good, but they were bunks.

Marcello: While you were on Corregidor, I assume that you were subjected to both artillery bombardment and also by air raids.

Bartlett: Air raids.

Marcello: Obviously both of them were bad, but which one did you find the worse?

Bartlett: Artillery.

Marcello: Artillery? Why?

Bartlett: You're like a bull's-eye, and a bull's-eye from the air is a pretty damn big thing, you know. With artillery you are sighted, you might say, for a given square foot of ground! And that's where Batangas came in. They did move those guns out on Batangas and they were firing from there on us.

Marcello: Other people told me the same thing, incidentally, but I just wanted to get your opinion, too; and you have corroborated what they have said. Also, on talking to enlisted men, they have mentioned that at least in many cases they could see the bombs, you know. The planes came over and you could actually see the bombs dropping, but you couldn't do so with the artillery.

Bartlett: No. It's a little faster moving! (chuckle)

Marcello: What were conditions like on Corregidor? You were being subjected to bombardment every day. What was the food situation like on Corregidor?

Bartlett: It was good food but skimpy. They were conserving it. But it was adequate. It was a lot better than it was on the firing line. But, of course, naturally it would be.

Marcello: Now what did you do during the daytime at Corregidor? Obviously you weren't back in Malinta tunnel all the time. Were you constructing your beach defense?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What did you think when you heard the news that MacArthur was leaving the island or had been ordered to leave the island?

Bartlett: Well, it wasn't a surprise to me. MacArthur, as I have seen him . . . of course, I have seen him in Manila, and I have seen his actions, and I know how he acted . . . yellow . . . yellow as hell! He proved that over in Korea.

Marcello: What did it do for the morale of the men when MacArthur left?

Bartlett: It boosted it. They were glad to be rid of him.

Marcello: I would assume that Wainwright commanded a great deal more respect than MacArthur.

Bartlett: Wainwright was as much of a prince as MacArthur was on the other side! We all liked Wainwright.

Marcello: Were you ever around him very much?

Bartlett: Yes. When I first went over, he was commanding officer of Fort McKinley . . . the Philippine Division. I know he chewed me out once so horribly! It was when I first got there. I had a group out of the chemical

company training them--that was before the Philippine Army started--in decontaminating an area that was supposedly contaminated with mustard gas. Of course, I was doing that in a sloppy arrangement. I had one-third out in airtight uniforms, coveralls and that all the way through, and the rest of them were just lolling around. Well, he came by, and he just tore me right open. He just spent three or four minutes there just raising hell with me. When it ended up, he says, "What the hell are you trying to do?" I told him, "Well, we are simulating decontaminating a mustard gas area and getting the men accustomed to wearing the suit that a normal man can't stand more than ten minutes in without getting out in the fresh air." He says, "Carry on." I got a letter of commendation the next day through the mail from "Skinny."

Marcello: Is that right? Well, getting back to Corregidor again, did you realize that the situation was hopeless by this time?

Bartlett: Hell, I realized the situation was hopeless when they told me about Pearl Harbor! See, they hit us almost immediately.

Marcello: Sure.

Bartlett: I knew it was hopeless. We didn't have the troops, and the troops we had didn't have the training. We



had the New Mexico National Guard's anti-aircraft artillery without a damn shell to fire! (chuckle)

Marcello: Well, describe the day, then, leading up to the capitulation of the island and your capture. Take it from the beginning to the end as best you can from the time of the initial Japanese landing until you were captured.

Bartlett: Well, they came in there at night. Well, actually, the cease fire was during darkness. As soon as daylight came, why, the Japanese they came in while all the officers were in the main tunnel and all the enlisted men were out of the tunnel.

Marcello: The Japanese landed and you got the word that the island was to surrender, that you were to capitulate.

Bartlett: Well, we fought them.

Marcello: This is what I want to know. The Japanese landed and you did put up some resistance.

Bartlett: Oh, we put up quite a resistance!

Marcello: This is what I want you to talk about.

Bartlett: I was not on the beach at the time the Japanese were landing. Colonel Hamilton came to me because I was the most experienced officer and second in command and such as that. The others were young officers and hadn't had much training. He told me to go out to the south

entrance--that's where they came in--and take a position of, you might say, a gas sentry in case they use gas. Someone would detect it immediately. I went out there, and the Marines had found one of our chemical mortars somewhere, I don't know, and they had the thing set up, and I went out there to do something with it. There was a squad of Marines. It was an absolutely strange gun to them. Well, I went over there, oh, I guess about 150 feet from the entrance to the tunnel to one side, and I went to give them instructions on how to use the gun. I had just finished and had turned around, and I heard Colonel Hamilton hollering my name up there. I went up there and he turned around and started back in. I said, "Are you looking for me, Colonel?" He says, "Yes. Where the hell was you?" I said I was showing those Marines how to use that 4.2. He looked at me and said, "You're just going to get killed out there!" I says, "Colonel, you can get killed any goddam place!" (chuckle)

There was quite a parade of soldiers going in that entrance for awhile there--wounded and such as that. I think the Japs had some flamethrowers out there. One boy looked to me like he got hit by a flamethrower. Wainwright surrendered it before they got into the

tunnel. They was right up there. They didn't enter the tunnel. Nothing at all happened out there. There was no shooting or anything.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that the island was surrendering?

Bartlett: I guess I was numb. I don't know. I didn't realize . . . I knew it was coming. It was just like you see a baseball heading for a window. It hits it, but you have no reaction. You know it is coming.

Marcello: Did you know what to expect? What I am trying to say is that on several occasions I've heard that there was rumors that the Japanese never took any prisoners. Did you ever think about this?

Bartlett: Yes. When we headed for Bataan, I didn't ever think I would come out of there, and it didn't worry me very much. I still have that attitude toward death. It wouldn't worry me in the least to know that when I step out that door I would drop dead. Not that I am looking for death, but I'm a fatalist. (Chuckle) I don't believe there was . . . I can't think back on my . . . any point where fear entered into my system. I don't know, maybe I am a nut, but I can't fear anything. Fear is a normal reaction. Maybe I'm not a normal human being. I had no worry about it.

Marcello: After you had received word that the island was to surrender, what did you do next?

Bartlett: I was afraid they were surrendering. There was no pre-warning at all.

Marcello: What did you do after you had received the word that the island had surrendered? You were to stop fighting.

Bartlett: I stopped fighting and went to my quarters and stayed there. I stayed there until the call came out for us all to go out to the lineup.

Marcello: In other words, the Japanese were lining up all the officers and all the enlisted men?

Bartlett: All the officers. I went out there on that, and they wanted the enlisted men outside. Well, I was nearest to the entrance where the enlisted men were, and I was about the lowest rank there was there so I headed them out. I got caught in the rush of the enlisted men going out. They carried me right along on out with them. I started to go back in, and one of the Jap soldiers there turned me around and tried to stab me a couple of times in the back.

Marcello: Now explain this again. You had herded these enlisted men outside . . .

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: . . . and then you had turned around to go back in the barracks?

Bartlett: No, back into the tunnel.

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: See, they were separating the enlisted men outside the tunnel--that was according to Jap instructions--and the officers inside of the tunnel. Well, being lowest ranking officer, I was herding the enlisted men out.

Marcello: And then you were going back into the tunnel with the officers.

Bartlett: I was going back to where the officers were. This Jap guard probably through ignorance just thought I was going the wrong way and slammed me. He made two stabs at me, and one went through my legs and knocked my tailbone out and one went higher and hit me in the sacrum.

Marcello: Now you mean he hit you with the gun butt.

Bartlett: Gun butt.

Marcello: Right.

Bartlett: And he shoved me back down with the enlisted men. I stayed with the enlisted men all that night.

Marcello: How seriously were you hurt as a result of him doing that?

Bartlett: Well, at that time, I didn't feel it so much as I felt it later. That's what I am retired on.

Marcello: How much later did you feel the effect of what happened?

Bartlett: Well, I didn't know the effects until I got released.

I knew it hurt back there and all like that during the whole prison setup, but as far as knowing what it was, I didn't.

Marcello: Did you have any pain at the time that he did it and when you were herded in with the enlisted men?

Bartlett: No, it was more of a numbness.

Marcello: But you knew something was wrong back there at that time?

Bartlett: No, I didn't. See, there was so much hardship and so much bumping around and jostling around that you couldn't lay anything like that to any particular setup. By the time that got around, why, I had forgot all about that hit in the back, and I just knew I hurt. It wasn't until I got where, you might say, I more or less got to relax and such as that that . . . well, it wasn't until I got to Zentsuji. I knew something was wrong, but it was too far back to connect up.

Marcello: So what happened then? You spent the night with the enlisted men, and they were out in the open, were they not?

Bartlett: There was a paved road or street, you might call it, and they lined them up on that in a column, and we

stood there and when it came night, why, we slept right there. A man would straddle his legs out here, and a man would lay his head here, and the next one would do the same.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, did the Japanese continue to harass you in any way?

Bartlett: No, not while I was in that column, no.

Marcello: Did they loot you or anything . . .

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: . . . like that? Take watches, rings, things of that nature?

Bartlett: No, no. They were as considerate, I guess, as an American soldier or any soldier would be. Next morning when they started getting us up, why, I presume . . . he looked like what we would call a warrant officer in the Japanese Army. He came along and I patted my bars on my shoulder, you know . . . see, I didn't take my major's leaves there because my promotion came out about the time of Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: This was your promotion to major?

Bartlett: Yes. I had got verbal word, and we all had, but I couldn't give order number or paragraph number. I just said I would not wear the leaves until I could give order number and paragraph number. It was a War

Department promotion. So I just pointed at my bars, and he understood it, and I was sent up to the tunnel. That was the next morning.

Marcello: Then what happened?

Bartlett: They kept the officers in those same tunnels, and there was no food. Oh, I guess it must have been three, maybe four, days or maybe longer than that. It didn't take it that long. I can explain it to you on this drawing. This tunnel here . . . there is another tunnel here . . . and there . . . and from this was another tunnel here that was connected in here. Here is where we were, where my outfit was. There was an "L" there. These tunnels were all filled with our own food. This was a blank and a shower bath here. And this one led to the Navy tunnel. They had a guard walking back and forth and this was the food, and we were in here.

Marcello: How long were you kept in those tunnels?

Bartlett: I would say about a week and a half, maybe two weeks.

Marcello: Did they ever let you outside?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. Then they moved us out onto the Federal Beach, a beach there. It wasn't sand; it was just rocks.

Marcello: Well, did they move you out there in the daytime and then move you back in the tunnel at night?



Bartlett: No, they just moved us out there.

Marcello: Oh, I see. In other words, you weren't in the tunnel really that long. Couple of weeks?

Bartlett: Well, I had two spells in the tunnel. See, they moved us all out there. That was shortly afterwards. Then we were out there, and practically no food was issued. It was a very little bit and such as that. And in one instance there the officers and enlisted men both were out there. In one instance, an enlisted man was there, and he was walking along, and his officer told him something. I don't know what it was, but he told him to do something. The surrender was already made, so he turned around and told the officer to go to hell! He shouldn't have done it. There was a Jap officer standing right by there. He just called his guard to take this man out and shoot him. He refused to obey his officer. They took that boy out about a couple of hundred yards, dropped him there, backed off a couple of yards, and shot him for not obeying his own officer.

Marcello: Did you actually witness that?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: I guess they kind of got the message home in a hurry about what your captivity would be about.

Bartlett: Well, he was shot because he refused to obey his own officer.

Marcello: Now during this two and a half week period, or however long you were on Corregidor altogether . . .

Bartlett: Oh, it was quite a little while.

Marcello: . . . what evidence of . . . how long were you there altogether?

Bartlett: I don't know. I couldn't keep track of time.

Marcello: Was it over a month?

Bartlett: I believe so. A little over a month. I would guess, approximately, all told about two and one half months.

Marcello: Before they moved you off Corregidor.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What did you do during this two and a half months period?

Bartlett: Well, on the beach there we scavenged for food and everything else. They would give you a little bit of rice, and that was all for a group. We were kind of grouped in our different departments, you know. In about a week they came out and wanted all the chemical men. We were all together. They brought me in, and since I was the ranking officer, of course, they put me in charge of it. There was no guard over me. They wanted us to clean up the battlefield of the Americans and to disinfect the grounds. See, we had chlorinated

lye in our warehouse down there and such as that, and we would go down there. Well, when they did that, I wasn't, of course, supposed to work.

Marcello: As an officer, you weren't supposed to work.

Bartlett: I went in and hit the aid stations, you know, that the Army has got all over, especially in time of war like that. I would go in there, and I ravaged those. I took all the quinine, all the sulfathiazole, all the narcotics I could find, and just a general mass of medicines. I didn't collect them all at one time. We cleaned up the battlefield and such as that, and then they . . .

Marcello: I would assume that that was a rather distasteful task--cleaning up the battlefield.

Bartlett: Oh, yes. See, our men had laid there four or five days.

Marcello: That tropical sun really plays hell with a corpse in a very short amount of time, I'm sure. Were the Americans buried in a mass grave?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Individual graves?

Bartlett: They weren't put in mass graves there. We didn't do the actual burying of them. We just cleaned up the . . . jarred them loose and got them ready to be hauled off. We don't know what they did with them.

Marcello: Did the Japanese ever interrogate you? As an officer, were you interrogated?

Bartlett: Yes. But I had a little time to build up on that. I didn't get that until I got to Japan.

Marcello: But there was really no interrogation on Corregidor, to speak of.

Bartlett: No. I was a lower ranking officer there for much interrogation. Then they moved us, a whole group, back up into the tunnel again. I don't know what happened to the others. They kept them there . . . they kept them somewhere. During this setup, they had shelled the hell out of us and hit our commissary there about a mile from the tunnel. And the punctured canned goods was stinking to high heaven! They threw out a lot of the worst of it themselves. Then we had to go down and clean it up. Well, then we were having to mix up the chlorinated lime, you see. There was six or seven in the group. You had these two and a half gallon spray cans, you know. We'd mix it up, go over into the commissary there, and spray it around where all that decomposed food was. On the first trip we made, we didn't do anything, but the next trip after that, it was back and forth. We did this so many times that they didn't pay any attention to us, you

know. None of the Jap soldiers did. We was in the same building that I had been shelled in, and a channel for pipe under the floor and a board over it in there. Well, we would go over there, and we'd go in with our sprayer full of stuff. It was built like one of these Piggly-Wiggly's, you know. We would go in there and slop up! And we would step around the corner and screw the top and be working to beat hell and keep our eyes open, and if there were no Japs around we'd take the canned goods we didn't spray. We sprayed around some, and then we'd go on and spray some more and then stop. We'd usually get about three slop-ups to a canfull. Whenever we did, we'd open it up and put canned goods into that sprayer and pack it out. We'd been out there a short time, and then they moved all the officers and everybody that was in the tunnel up to the hospital building up on top of the hill. Then we moved up there to sleep . . . for sleeping quarters only. We carried that stuff up there and put it in the mess for the whole bunch. Of course, we'd eat our fill before we took it up there.

Marcello: What sort of food did you manage to steal?

Bartlett: Most everything! No meats, of course, but . . .

Marcello; Lots of fruits, I would imagine, canned fruits.

Bartlett: Fruits, beans, and such as that. We'd steal it and take it up there. Incidentally, in that arrangement there was one boy, one officer, who was so timid, backward, retiring. When I started out in that . . . first thing, I started riding him. Oh, I rode him unmercifully! I was riding him. Finally, I got him so mad he busted loose, and he started telling me off! His name was Davis. I let him just spew it all out. I said, "Well now, Davis, I finally succeeded! I got you to bust loose. Now maybe you can be a man!" He thought of it . . . he had broken all regulations and everything! I said, "Now maybe you can be a man and have a chance to survive this hassle."

Marcello: Well, what other routines did they have you do on Corregidor?

Bartlett: That was the only one that I was doing there. We were just working on that.

Marcello: Did they ever physically abuse the officers in any way here?

Bartlett: Not there. Not in that. They did some in Cabanatuan and some in Tanagawa.

Marcello: Well, we will talk about that later on, but here at Corregidor, then, they more or less left you to yourselves.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: So you stayed on Corregidor for about two and a half months . . .

Bartlett: No, not that long.

Marcello: It wasn't that long? About two months?

Bartlett: About a month.

Marcello: About a month. And then they moved you.

Bartlett: Yes. They told us they were going to move us, and they told us to take just the things that you wanted to take with you, and they treated us kindly. You could take a suitcase or a trunk. I was skeptical of that. A lot of the boys had packed a lot of the stuff they wanted in the trunk or suitcase and put their name on it. They took them down, and we never did see them again. I put clothing and such as that in one, but the medicine and such as that, I kept on me. I had a musette bag and a red cross first aid bag--it didn't have red cross stuff in it--and I loaded that with my clothing, very skimpily, my medicines, and such as that, and hand tools that I had picked up. They marched us down to Bilibid.

Marcello: Now you went from Corregidor . . .

Bartlett: Now this was by boat.

Marcello: . . . and then across, of course, by boat to Manila. Now how did you get from Manila to Bilibid? Did they

march you through the streets?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Did they try and humiliate you in any way during that march?

Bartlett: No, not that one.

Marcello: Did the Filipinos come out to view the march?

Bartlett: No, no. They didn't come out. Very few. In fact, about the time we got there it was rather late in the evening.

Marcello: What was Bilibid Prison like? Now I know that you weren't there very long, but what was it like?

Bartlett: Like any antiquated prison you might have in the United States.

Marcello: Well, it goes all the way back to Spanish origins.

Bartlett: Yes. We didn't go very far in. They bedded us down. There wasn't a big number, you know. They bedded us down in the hallways.

Marcello: Now these were all strictly officers.

Bartlett: Yes. In the hallways. They didn't put us in cells. We just bedded down on the floors, and we only stayed there the one night.

Marcello: Incidentally, were you keeping fairly healthy at this time yet?

Bartlett: Yes.



Marcello: What was your weight when you were captured? What was your average weight?

Bartlett: My weight when I was captured was 183, even after the malarial stage.

Marcello: Were you maintaining that weight at this time yet?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: You were maintaining that pretty well. I gather that . . .

Bartlett: I don't have it now!

Marcello: Right! (Chuckle) I gather that Bilibid was nothing more than a transit station.

Bartlett: Yes, that's all.

Marcello: They sent you there to send you to some other place.

Bartlett: I think that Bilibid was devoted mostly to the nurses and female components. I don't know positively, but they talked about it.

Marcello: So you only remained there overnight, and then I assume they sent you the next day on your way to Cabanatuan.

Bartlett: Yes. They put us on a train and took us to what you'd call a fork in the railroad. Then they unloaded us, and we marched the rest of the way.

Marcello: What was the train trip like?

Bartlett: Packed like sardines!

Marcello: Were you in enclosed boxcars?

Bartlett: Yes. Well, the side doors weren't closed, but they were all boxcars.

Marcello: But you were packed in there very, very tightly.

Bartlett: Yes, you couldn't even sit down.

Marcello: What was the attrition rate at this time? Were you losing very many officers through death and so on?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: At this stage you weren't.

Bartlett: I don't know of any of the group I was with that died during that. See, on Corregidor they left us pretty much alone, and I'll say that the Japanese officers there were not sadistic at all. The fact is, he was a little bit on the other side.

Marcello: When you say a little bit on the other side, do you mean that perhaps he was a little bit too lenient?

Bartlett: He was, yes. This is an illustration of it. When we were up there, we had nothing to do, of course--the officers--and there was a piano down in the tunnel, and there was food down there. The officers talked the Japs into letting them go down and bring back one truckload of food from down there that was not on the ration setup. Some bright officer, instead of picking up food and medicine, he picked up a goddam PIANO!! Well, it made everybody else mad, and it made the Japs

mad. What we needed was essentials, and he picked up an enjoyment instrument. Otherwise, they were giving us a pretty fair ration of rice. It was rice, of course, but it was a pretty fair ration.

Marcello: What was the march like from the railhead to Cabanatuan?

Bartlett: It was a steady grind.

Marcello: How long did it take?

Bartlett: I don't know. From the way I felt, it took damn near forever, but I was tired.

Marcello: Did they push you along? Did they abuse you any on this march?

Bartlett: No, they did not.

Marcello: They just kept up a steady pace.

Bartlett: Yes. They started us early in the morning. Of course, we were all fresh as possible, and we had been eating pretty fair on Corregidor. They marched us into about a five-acre field and put us about the width of this room apart.

Marcello: This was outside the camp?

Bartlett: No, it was in the prison camp.

Marcello: Oh, it was?

Bartlett: There were no buildings there. There was just open field like a parade ground, you might say. Then they announced they were looking for hand tools and

medicines and drugs. Every man was to take off all his clothing, spread his clothing out in front of him, and everything he's got out in front of him, and be down on his knees behind it. Well, I got in the middle of the damn thing, intentionally, because I had all this medicines and hand tools. So I spread things out. I put my bottles out and put maybe a pair of shorts over it and then a little ways something else with something else over it. The hand tools I put under my knees; you had to be kneeling behind it. They came back . . . there was three groups of them . . . about a squad apiece . . . looking us over, turning the stuff over. I just stayed there and whenever one reached down to turn over a piece of clothing, I'd intercept his hand with a hand tool. He'd grab it. He'd found something!

Marcello: That made him happy.

Bartlett: Made him happy, and he went on. He didn't go any further. Well, when I got through, I lost every damn bit of the hand tools I had, but I saved all my medicines.

Marcello: What sort of hand tools had you collected?

Bartlett: Pliers, screwdrivers, and such as that. Little wrenches.

Marcello: I would assume that even in this early stage of the game all the prisoners were scavengers.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: They picked up anything that they thought they possibly could use at some future date or at the time.

Bartlett: That's right. Well, I saved all my medicines. Then they just shoved us in, bedded us down, no beds or anything.

Marcello: Well, they had you out in this open field, and then they moved you into barracks?

Bartlett: Well, they weren't barracks that time. That was big sheds and such as that, just straight, nothing in there for sleeping facilities. It was down on the floor we slept. Then is when they started to die. Major Donovan, who had been in command of the 3rd Battalion of the 31st, was there. He died. He was sitting down and leaning against the wall during the night. I laid down between him and another person, and I got up the next morning, and they were both dead. They couldn't take it.

Marcello: What was the cause of most of these deaths?

Bartlett: Starvation.

Marcello: Most of it was starvation?

Bartlett: Beriberi . . .

Marcello: Even at this early stage they were already getting beriberi?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. We didn't have a lot of rations over there ourselves, you know. See, these weren't all . . . they added a bunch of us at Bilibid from somewhere else. They weren't all Corregidor men that went off on that trip from Bilibid to Cabanatuan. It was a mixed group.

Marcello: How about dysentery? Was it rampant yet?

Bartlett: It was coming on. It was with the boys who were already in Cabanatuan and who had surrendered in Bataan, yes. They were having it bad, yes.

Marcello: From a physical standpoint, what did Cabanatuan look like? Can you describe what the camp looked like as best as you can remember.

Bartlett: It was about 500 feet wide, about 1,500 feet long. It had a little parade ground at one end. It had been a Philippine Army barracks. At the other end was one barracks area, and then the rest was a cook shack, and there was this space where we were searched. Then there were bamboo barracks-like buildings. They weren't like ours. They were built out of bamboo and thatched, and the beds were bamboo with strips of bamboo about an inch wide tacked across and spaced.

Marcello: Was there a fence around the camp?

Bartlett: Yes, when I got there there was. I don't know if there was one before I got there or not.

Marcello: A barbed wire fence?

Bartlett: I don't know . . . I couldn't get . . . nobody wanted to get that close to it.

Marcello: Well, when you got to the camp, did the Japanese commandant give you any words of greeting or instructions?

Bartlett: None whatsoever. We were herded into a barracks, and a lot of them were sick, but some of those that died were from things.

Marcello: Well, I gather that most of the deaths that did occur took place during the initial weeks or month that you arrived at Cabanatuan. In other words, the weak ones were being weeded out pretty fast.

Bartlett: Yes,

Marcello: Now as an officer, I gather that you didn't have to work on any of the burial details.

Bartlett: Certainly I did.

Marcello: You did? Could you tell us about those?

Bartlett: Yes. That was coming a little bit later in the story.

Marcello: Well, how about there at Cabanatuan? Did you work on the burial details at Cabanatuan?

Bartlett: I didn't have any burial details at any other places.

Marcello: Oh, no, I am sure that you didn't. Alright, let's talk a bit about Cabanatuan. I was under the impression that officers didn't work.

Bartlett: Why, certainly they worked on all sorts of stuff. There was one time there when there was another officer and I who were in charge of the burial detail for a number of days. The lowest I ever buried was thirty-two men all in one hole. There was the other side that they called the hospital area. It was really more army barracks. They would pack two or three on a door, and four enlisted men would pack them on the door. Their burial ground was about a little larger than this square, around four or four and a half feet deep. You'd hit underground water at about four inches. They had another crew, so we didn't do that. They were already there when we got there. We'd just walk up and dump the corpses off in the pit. They were stripped naked. There was nothing, no dogtags, no nothing or anything else. We dumped them off, and we didn't do the filling up. They were filled up. A couple of days later, we would have to go back, and there would be arms, legs, heads sticking up, floating out.

Marcello: I understand that the local dogs would get around those burial places, also.

Bartlett: Well, I imagine so but we didn't get a chance to see any of that.



Marcello: And you mentioned awhile ago that the lowest number that you buried was thirty-two.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: And how many days were you on the burial detail?

Bartlett: I alternated days there for, I guess, a little better than a month.

Marcello: You worked every other day on the burial detail, and during that month's time the lowest number that you ever saw buried was thirty-two? And do you have any idea of what the average was?

Bartlett: I would say that that would be about an average, maybe one or two more.

Marcello: And this was every day? I would assume that whoever was on the days that you were not on duty buried just as many.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What other sorts of details did the officers work on?

Bartlett: Well, the parade ground would grow up in grass, and they would get the officers down and make a string or line out of us about that far apart . . . hand mowing . . . breaking off the grass and go across the field. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did the Japanese harass the officers very much at Cabanatuan? When I say harass, I mean physically.

- Bartlett: No, because they did not come in there but very infrequently, and then just a few.
- Marcello: How would you say your life differed most from that of the enlisted men?
- Bartlett: At Cabanatuan? No difference. They were all together.
- Marcello: Well, were officers forced to work, let's say, on the prison farm at Cabanatuan?
- Bartlett: There was no farming while I was there. There were a few details, but they were just small details.
- Marcello: I gather that on most of these work details the officers in most cases served as supervisory personnel.
- Bartlett: We were not supervisory at all. Now on the first setup there on Corregidor, why, they recognized rank to some extent. But after that, the only time rank even had a bearing was in Zentsuji. The highest ranking American was supposed to be technically the American commander of the camp, and that was all. And that was an Air Corps boy that was shot down at Bougainville.
- Marcello: Getting back to Cabanatuan once again, were there ever any plans to escape from camp?
- Bartlett: No, sir!
- Marcello: Why not?

- Bartlett: We were white men. Nobody tried to escape. There was only one escape that I know of, and that wasn't voluntary. Ten men on a sheet of paper, ten names.
- Marcello: Did they divide the officers . . . what I think you were referring to are these ten man death squads. Did they divide the officers into these squads, also?
- Bartlett: Oh, yes! One enlisted man escaped, not of his own volition. He was on a working party with the guards, the Jap guards. The guerrillas attacked them, and they released him. Attacked the guards and released him. When they came back, the other nine got it.
- Marcello: In other words, the Japanese threatened that if one escaped in the squad of ten, they would kill the other nine. And to show that they weren't bluffing, that's exactly what they did in this instance. That one man went off into the hills with the guerrillas, and they killed the other nine men in his squad.
- Bartlett: Fact is, he was recaptured. He didn't go in on his own. They shot up the Japanese guards, the guerrillas did. They rescued him. I don't think he had a damn word to say about it!
- Marcello: But after this, I am sure that the message came across loud and clear that they would do exactly as they said they would do.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Do any individual Japanese stand out in your mind at Cabanatuan?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: Either for . . .

Bartlett: Neither way.

Marcello: . . . the atrocities or for the acts of compassion?

Bartlett: Neither way.

Marcello: Did you have any nicknames for any of the Japanese guards and so on?

Bartlett: I didn't, I heard one but you have already got it. I don't remember seeing him, but I've heard the nickname over there.

Marcello: What were some of the types of details that they would put officers on?

Bartlett: While I was there, there was no details other than that one I mentioned. I had the medicines. I was the medicine man for the camp while I was there. I had quite a bit of quinine, sulfathiazol, and such as that. Something I need to mention were our doctors. There was quite a few doctors there. When I got there, the boys knew I had the medicine because I came in with it. A boy would come running up to me and hand me fifty dollars. I'd say, "What is that for?" He

says, "I want sulfathiazole tablets. I says, "Well, what does that have to do with it?" He says, "Well, that is the going price!" The doctors were the only ones there that had anything, of course, and they were selling it a dollar a grain for either quinine or sulfathiazole.

Marcello: This was a common practice among the doctors?

Bartlett: Of the doctors over there! There were some of them who didn't have anything, and I don't know of any that had any that gave it away! I was a little late getting there, and I imagine that there were a lot of doctors that wasn't a part of it. But some of them . . . a big bunch of them were.

Marcello: In other words, they had a pretty profitable little racket going there.

Bartlett: Yes. I know they got wind of me being there in the camp. I know it traveled like wildfire. This Colonel Romer that was my immediate superior officer in my branch was there.

Marcello: Now what was his name?

Bartlett: Romer.

Marcello: Oh, Romer again.

Bartlett: He was in that prison camp. I met him there, and he says . . . I forget the name of the lieutenant colonel

who was there that he was talking about. He came rushing up to me and says, "I hear you have got some salicylic acid and alcohol." I says, "Wait a minute. Let me talk to Romer a bit. I haven't seen him in quite awhile." I says, "I'll see you in a minute." And Romer said, "He needs it."

Marcello: Now what was he needing?

Bartlett: He had a spot of ringworm sticking in his testicles. It was quite big! Solid ringworm! And he wanted to get rid of it. Well, that's the normal cure for it.

Marcello: Alcohol and what chemical?

Bartlett: Salicylic acid.

Marcello: Salicylic acid.

Bartlett: Yes. You mop it on with a swab, and, boy, it is hot! Imagine it on that. I says, "No, I won't put that on you. If I put that on you, me, the Japs, and nobody else could catch you! (Chuckle) I says, "There is the bottle of it, and there's the swab, and if you can put it on yourself, it's yours!" He did. Well, I dispensed what I had. Everybody had dysentery.

Marcello: What did you usually give them for dysentery?

Bartlett: Sulfathiazole.

Marcello: I understand in a pinch they often gave them charcoal, did they not?

- Bartlett: Yes, we made some charcoal and that helps. But there is no germicidal quality in charcoal.
- Marcello: What were these hospital facilities like at Cabanatuan?
- Bartlett: I didn't see any. There was pellagra, beriberi, and dysentery.
- Marcello: And I gather that dysentery was the big killer, was it not?
- Bartlett: Yes, although beriberi would come next. I had it. I started gathering grass. Down on one end there was an old cracked pot that they used to cook rice in, but it was cracked. I needed something that would hold a liquid. I took part of my rice, set it out, and cultivated some wild yeast, Cultivated it. Of course, there were a lot of those empty tin cans around right there. I would use rice on that and created a kind of a rice wine. Then I would macerate the grass and with this rice wine. There was one doctor there that was . . . he was square. He got in with me and he held some kind of a sick call. He'd tell them what to get, and I would give it to them.
- Marcello: I would assume that you would have to make up this mixture kind of on the sly because if anybody knew that you were making it, they would probably try and steal the rice, would they not?

Bartlett: No, they wouldn't bother that. The way I worked that was . . . see, all the barracks there . . . or the kitchen rather . . . when they found out what I was doing, they would take about a half a . . . teaspoonful or half a teaspoonful of rice out of each ration and serve it to me. I'd use it there, and after I got going, why, the rice residue from it would have a lot of yeast in it, and I would bring it back over and serve them a spoonful of that.

Marcello: That was good for beriberi.

Bartlett: Oh, yes. In other words, they would swap the boiled rice to me for yeasted rice.

Marcello: What sort of rations did the Japanese provide for you at Cabanatuan?

Bartlett: They weren't bad. While I was there, there was a quite a bit of rice. It was just straight rice, but there was quite a bit of it.

Marcello: Did you ever get any meat at all?

Bartlett: Yes, they said they were going to serve us steaks one day. It was a little bit . . . the piece of steak I got was a little bit too small even to roll as dice. (Chuckle) It was about the size of a dice!

Marcello: But I'm sure it was some old dead carabao, probably. Did you ever get anything in the way of vegetables or



greens or anything of that nature. How about camotes?

It was almost strictly rice?

Bartlett: Strictly rice.

Marcello: I would assume that now your weight was beginning to drop quite a bit.

Bartlett: No, I was picking up there. I had beriberi. I filled with water up to here.

Marcello: You had wet beriberi, in other words.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Were these Japanese guards in this camp? In a lot of camps I know they used a lot of Korean guards. Were these Japanese or Korean guards?

Bartlett: I don't know. I believe that they were Japs, but I don't know. They had the sadistic temperament of the Japs and not of the Korean.

Marcello: You mentioned that they were sadistic. Did you see any examples of their sadism being practiced on the enlisted men?

Bartlett: No. But they would send them out after the guerrillas. They'd come back in every once in awhile with one or two heads on a bamboo pole, carrying it like a gun.

Marcello: Did you ever see them physically beating any Americans?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. That was constant. I've been beat by them.

Marcello: For what infractions?

Bartlett: None.

Marcello: Now this occurred in Cabanatuan on several occasions?

Bartlett: Yes. It occurred once in Corregidor, but it wasn't the Army that did it. It was the Japanese Navy boys.

Marcello: I would gather that the Japanese soldier couldn't understand why the Americans had surrendered. To them, of course, it was somewhat of a disgrace to surrender. I would assume that they kind of looked down on Americans and in many ways felt that perhaps the Americans had forfeited the right to live because they had surrendered.

Bartlett: Well, that may be.

Marcello: And also I gather that the Japanese officers were very, very brutal to the Japanese enlisted men.

Bartlett: They were.

Marcello: And, of course, this went right down through the ranks. In other words, a sergeant was rough on corporals, and a corporal was rough on privates, and the private was a little bit rough on the prisoners.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: You were low man on the pecking order.

Bartlett: In other words, their punishment was physical or not at all.

Marcello: Did they ever try to force the officers to work, do

actual physical labor?

Bartlett: Well, in a way. They did that all the time, but it wasn't by force. It was by rations. Like in the last camp at Rokorushi, they were getting lenient, you might say, because they were losing the war. First, we were forced to work, and then there was a choice. But if you worked, your ration was a hundred grams of rice a day. If you didn't work, it was ninety grams.

Marcello: How long were you at Cabanatuan altogether?

Bartlett: About four months.

Marcello: You weren't there a real long period of time.

Bartlett: I think I was in the first group that they started shipping to Japan.

Marcello: Well, what was your reaction when you heard that you were going to be sent to Japan?

Bartlett: Philosophical. To my own mind I was already dead.

Marcello: Speaking of death, by the time that they were getting ready to send you to Japan, most of the weak ones had died and had been weeded out.

Bartlett: Well, the weak ones, but it is always a step ladder when you go down that way. There is a weaker one and a weaker one and then a still weaker one, the still weaker one like that. Where are you going to draw the line?

Marcello: Well, what I mean is that by the time the fourth month came around, there still weren't thirty-two a day dying yet.

Bartlett: Yes!

Marcello: Or was that death rate still continuing at that stage?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: It was.

Bartlett: There was an awful lot of them dying on the ship going out!

Marcello: Well, I would gather that in a way, then, that this death rate was continuing, you kind of welcomed getting out of that camp. It was a pretty sorry place.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: There wasn't any sadness in leaving.

Bartlett: No, and there wasn't any enjoyment in leaving either!

Marcello: Well, this is what I gather . . .

Bartlett: After you get to go a ways in that stuff--I guess it was me and I think it was about everybody else--as you go through that kind of . . . well, you call it torture . . . you just don't give a damn anymore.

Marcello: How long did you think it would be before you would be rescued?

Bartlett: I was rescued a lot quicker than I thought I would be.

Marcello: In other words, you never had hopes that rescue was a week away, or rescue was a month away or something of that nature.

Bartlett: No. Most of those boys that were over there were fresh. They were green. They weren't, I would say, hardly even out of the recruit class. They were younger, so they were always full of hope, and they couldn't see the impracticability of it. You could take the young fellow . . . he hopes for a miracle. The older man knows there ain't no such thing as a miracle. (Chuckle) You see what I mean?

Marcello: So you got the word that you were going to leave Cabanatuan, and I assume that from Cabanatuan they probably sent you to Bilibid again?

Bartlett: No. We marched right back to the railroad.

Marcello: Right.

Bartlett: Got on a train there, and they took us right into the depot in Manila.

Marcello: Was this a rather uneventful trip, or were you packed on the boxcars once again?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. We were packed!

Marcello: Now was this a combination of officers and enlisted men?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: Just officers.

- Bartlett: Yes. There may have been a few enlisted men, but I don't remember it.
- Marcello: I would assume, then, that that was a pretty stinking mess on those boxcars. People probably had dysentery and . . .
- Bartlett: Yes, I did.
- Marcello: . . . other diseases and . . .
- Bartlett: I believe that I held it all I could, and when we got in the depot in Manila and filed off, in the center of that depot I pulled my pants down and let loose on the tracks from the platform. They took us there, and then they marched us through to the docks . . . through the streets.
- Marcello: Did they try and humiliate you at this time?
- Bartlett: They did then, yes.
- Marcello: How did they do it?
- Bartlett: Oh, just by roughly ordering you and pushing you instead of just telling you, anything, just shove you over, you know.
- Marcello: Did they spit on you or anything of that nature?
- Bartlett: No. I didn't see anything of that.
- Marcello: Were the Filipinos witnessing what was going on?
- Bartlett: Oh, yes, they were there. And we got pretty much of a kick out of it, ourselves! They put us down through

there for humiliating purposes, and looking at the people who were standing up and watching the parade go by, there were no smiles. There were tears.

Marcello: Did any of them secretly flash the "V" sign?

Bartlett: Oh, yes! And those little Manila urchins did a lot in that war! Do you know what their stuff was?

Marcello: No.

Bartlett: They'd find a Jap downtown. There would be three or four of them around and maybe just one in sight. He'd thumb his nose, and he'd just ridicule the Jap, and the Jap would take out after him. He'd duck into a dark alley, and the Jap would go in after him. Nobody saw the Jap again. Them kids took care of them.

Marcello: Did the Filipinos slip the prisoners food, too? Try to slip them food?

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: As they were marching to the docks?

Bartlett: No, not there. There was too heavy a guard for that.

Marcello: What was the ship like that was going to take you back to Japan?

Bartlett: When we got on the Nagatta Maru? We named it "Nagatta Maru." We were in the bottom of the hold. There was a planking there, and as you were laying down, you could hear the bilge water sloshing just below you.

What they were was loading platforms, and we were allowed there . . . it was two men in a space about eight inches wide and seven feet long. I know you could just lay down straight and there would be room for the man there to sit down at your feet. We slept in relays. The aisles were the same. There was a little platform up there, and I happened to be on the platform. The aisles were the same. They were laying thick in the aisles.

Marcello: Now these were all officers still in this hold?

Bartlett: No, I believe some of them were enlisted men there. They weren't separating the officers and the enlisted men that early. They had a space about the size of this room at the bottom of a ladder going up. We were four decks down.

Marcello: In other words, if anything happened to that ship, there was no way that you were going to get out.

Bartlett: No. And the next space there, there was two washtubs for the dysentery. I understand that there were 800 men in that hold, and there was this waiting line all the time on it. When the tub would get full, why, the next two men in line would pack that up those ladders and dump it over the side, and they would bring it back down. It was rather high for the first



platform, and then there was a platform there where there was a battalion of Japanese soldiers.

Marcello: Now they were on the deck above you?

Bartlett: Yes. Well, there was a loading hold there for the freight to come in. It was a freighter. Their barracks, their bunks, were there. They were not quite as crowded as we were but pretty near it in their own. And up on the deck, there was one overside toilet and a latrine is all there was for . . . they would just take these tubs up, dump it over, and go back down. And the next two men up in line did that.

Marcello: What sort of food did you get aboard the ship?

Bartlett: Just the rice.

Marcello: Did they lower it in buckets or something, or how was it divided once it got down to your deck?

Bartlett: It came down in a bucket about that big around, about that high. It wasn't full by any means, about a third full, and that would be for about twenty men on a platform, one tier on the platform . . . head to head.

Marcello: How did you decide who would get the rice or how was it divided out?

Bartlett: One of the boys there divided it out.

Marcello: How about water? Did you have adequate water on board the ship?

- Bartlett: You had to go up on deck to get it.
- Marcello: In other words, you didn't have to stay down in the hold. You could go up or were there certain specified periods of time?
- Bartlett: There was only so many--I forget the number--that was allowed on deck at one time. I think it was four or five from the bottom there.
- Marcello: Did they ever let you up for air, other than to get water?
- Bartlett: Some, not much.
- Marcello: I would assume that it was pretty hot down in the hold of that ship.
- Bartlett: Oh, yes. And I happened to be one of those up there at one time. See, there was another hold down . . . we were in the front end of the ship, the one I was in. Down midway and I think there was another one down beyond that had prisoners in it. I don't know about the back one, but I know there was another one. I was up on top there when . . . I don't know what it was, but it didn't look big enough to be a destroyer. It did have a gun mounted in the front end. It was taking shots at us, and I figured it might do the Americans pretty much good, that they had seen that. It came up suddenly, and the Japs didn't get a chance

to herd us down. You could hear those boys along there on that deck calling out corrections in range so as to put the shell on them. You could see the shells hitting out there.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get from Manila to Japan?

Bartlett: About six weeks.

Marcello: Six weeks? You must have gone the long way!

Bartlett: We went slowly. It was a junkpile to start with!

Marcello: I gather it must have followed the coast all the way to Japan.

Bartlett: I don't know. We couldn't tell anything.

Marcello: Did you lose very many men on this trip to Japan?

Bartlett: Oh, yes! I would say about 25 per cent.

Marcello: Mainly due to starvation.

Bartlett: Starvation, disease.

Marcello: Plus the resulting diseases . . .

Bartlett: Yes,

Marcello: . . . that occurred because of starvation. Did you make any stops between Manila and Japan? At this stage, I would gather that there was very little danger from any American air attacks or submarines. This was still fairly early in the war yet, was it not?

Bartlett: Well, yes.

Marcello: It couldn't have been any later than late 1942 at the most?

Bartlett: Yes, '42 because I was in Tanagawa for Christmas of that year.

Marcello: Is there anything else eventful that happened on the trip from Manila to Japan that we need to get as part of the record?

Bartlett: Well, there was one thing. It was supposed to have been a prisoner-of-war ship and no hostiles on there. They squalled about that. But we had a deck cargo of airplanes, fighter planes. On there, we took turns taking the rice bucket back. We had to take it back to the galley after it was empty, wash it, and take it back. And we'd take turns. Well, when it came my turn, I washed it. I wasn't familiar with the rice buckets or anything of that nature, and the coating of the rice was swelled a little bit, and it wasn't that perfectly clean. I thought it was until I brought it back. The Jap looked at it, and I got a beating for it because it wasn't absolutely clean.

Marcello: Was this a pretty severe beating?

Bartlett: Well, he knocked me down twice.

Marcello: What was the usual thing that they would do? Just hit you with their fists or their gun butts?

Bartlett: Usually with their fists by then because they didn't trust themselves too much in among Americans with firearms the way the Americans were crowded.

Marcello: What would happen to the people who died on this trip? Were they just lifted up to the upper deck and just thrown over the side?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: That was the usual procedure? Where did you land when you got to Japan?

Bartlett: I don't know . . . Okayama or something like that. It was on the inland sea.

Marcello: It wasn't Yokohama?

Bartlett: No, it was on the inland sea, about midway.

Marcello: And what happened from there? Can you pick up the story from the time you landed then in Japan?

Bartlett: Well, we were so far gone that they did furnish truck transportation for us to Tanagawa.

Marcello: Incidentally, I would gather that there was quite a difference in climate also.

Bartlett: Oh, God! There was two stages of that trip. We got off the ship, and we stood in formation there for about five hours in tropical clothing, and there was a hellacious cold north wind coming in. Then they marched us over, oh, I would say about the equivalent of about six or seven blocks and gave us some food. What they gave us was the regular railroad . . . like you sell the passengers in the railroad coaches. It was good.

Marcello: Now up to this time, you had not received any Red Cross packages, had you?

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: You had left Cabanatuan too early to get a Red Cross package. I know at Christmas at Cabanatuan there was a . . .

Bartlett: They had these Red Cross packages.

Marcello: They just didn't give them to the prisoners.

Bartlett: We went there, and then from there we went by truck to Tanagawa. See, there was enlisted men in this group, quite a bunch of them, and they shut us in the camp there.

Marcello: What was this camp like from a physical standpoint?

Bartlett: Physical standpoint? It looked like a damn good barracks! Of course, it was bamboo, but like a damn good barracks. But they crowded us in so goddamn close that you couldn't do anything, and they didn't feed us anywhere near what we needed. Then is when the food got short. There was no work; they didn't work us. Then in the cold and such as that they started dying like flies. They had what they called the death ward. It was about a fifteen foot square building. When they got so far along that they couldn't maneuver themselves, why, they would go in there. I was in there.

Marcello: How did you get into the death ward?

Bartlett: The boys packed me in. I had a space about the length of my body to lay down in. It was filled solid, the floor was.

Marcello: What had you contracted to get into death ward?

Bartlett: Hell, I had beriberi!

Marcello: Oh, you still had the beriberi yet.

Bartlett: Yes! It had gone from the wet stage to the dry stage, and while I was there, there was myself and one other officer there. He was a Russian by birth. He was quite a character.

Marcello: But he was in the American Army?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. He was a captain. He had a very peculiar history. He made it through alright, but we were the only two that ever came out of that death ward alive! He was a third lieutenant in the Czar's Army when the war started in Europe. And the Revolution came on. Well, he ran! Well, he didn't run then. They shipped him to France. He was a third lieutenant, and they shipped him to a French military school to get further training. And the Czar's regime collapsed. So there he was--a commissioned officer there--and the French gave him a commission in the French Army. He went through World War I with

that French commission. After the war was over, he went back to Russia, and they discovered who he was, what he was, and he ran. They chased him clear across Siberia, and he got over into Oregon or Washington. I forget which city it is now in the United States. He took out citizenship, applied for a reserve commission, and got it. He was over in the Philippines as a captain in our Army. He had a commission in the Czar's Army, commission in the French Army, and a commission in the American Army! (Chuckle)

Marcello: Very unusual. How did you manage to escape from the death ward? Or to survive?

Bartlett: Downright stubbornness!

Marcello: In other words, here again it is that will to live that you talked about before--that everybody who survived had to have.

Bartlett: I just couldn't get on my feet. I had dysentery and the only toilet available was about twenty feet from where I was. I crawled it to the toilet, and I crawled it back! Most of them there . . . they served their normal ration to them, and they couldn't eat, I ate their rations.

Marcello: You mean a lot of the prisoners couldn't eat what they were being served?



Bartlett: Those in the death ward.

Marcello: I see.

Bartlett: They were so far gone. See, there was only two of us that ever came out of there alive. They couldn't eat. I ate theirs; I stuffed. And so I got out. And, of course, the Japanese and the Russians were friendly, and he was a Russian. They didn't have the animosity . . . their doctor really worked on him, but they didn't work on any of us.

Marcello: How long were you in this camp altogether?

Bartlett: About five months, I think, about four or five months. Wait a minute. No, it wasn't that long. I left there about in January . . .

Marcello: Of 1943?

Bartlett: 1942, I guess. Oh, no . . .

Marcello: Had to be '43. It couldn't be January of '42. You were still fighting in January of '42.

Bartlett: Well, '43 then. Dates didn't mean anything. I just know that in Tanagawa they issued two Red Cross boxes per barracks. And that is what they said they did. They would take out what they wanted and then they put extra stuff in the soup we got, thin, watered soup. I know that my share of the Hershey bars that was in there . . . I got a half of a square. Not half a bar, half of one of those little squares.

Marcello: I know what you mean, yes. Now I would assume that most of the time that you were in this camp you were sick.

Bartlett: No, I came out I guess in a month and a half I was out of there. I didn't stay in that place too damn long. I got some food in me.

Marcello: What did you do to occupy your time in this camp? You mentioned that you didn't work in this camp, so what did you do to fight boredom?

Bartlett: Just sit down in a coma, like in a coma. No reactions at all.

Marcello: Do any individual Japanese stand out in this particular camp?

Bartlett: Yes, one and also one American.

Marcello: Do you want to mention them?

Bartlett: I don't know the American's name, and I don't know the Jap, The Jap was a sergeant. This American was squealing on the boys, a stool pigeon. They was always looking for contraband and things of that nature, and he'd tell them, and boys would get in trouble about it. And they framed up on him, and he didn't know that they suspected him. To prove it out, they let him see one of the boys hide some contraband and such as that, and then they went

out to work. He was telling this guard going out to work. They were working in the shipyards . . . the enlisted men were. He was an enlisted man. The two boys that was with him and he was the only ones that knew that contraband was there. And these boys stayed together all the time. The first thing when they came back from work, that Jap guard went right up there and grabbed that contraband. They didn't say a thing to him there. The next day he went to work, and when work was over they found where he had fallen off a scaffold and was dead.

Marcello: This brings up another very interesting point. How bad was theft in this camp or in any of these camps that you were in?

Bartlett: Very little of it.

Marcello: I am sure that if anybody was caught stealing he never did it again.

Bartlett: I don't know of anyone that was actually stealing among the prisoners. I don't know of anybody actually doing it.

Marcello: At this stage of the game was it every man for himself, or did you kind of form little cliques to look out for one another?

Bartlett: Every man for himself, You might have a friend, but he was not too close,

Marcello: Were you ever able to do any trading with the Japanese at all?

Bartlett: Oh, yes. Black market.

Marcello: What sort of things exchanged hands in the black market? What did you have that the Japanese could use?

Bartlett: Well, after Tanagawa, we were shipped to Zentsuji. We began to get a few Red Cross boxes. They were widely scattered. In these Red Cross boxes they put in soap and a few things like that. Well, soap was a scarce item in Japan. I remember a guard walking the post there one time. I couldn't talk his language, but I showed him the bar of soap. I walked by and dropped the bar of soap right near where his post was. He made two trips before he even touched it. Then he stopped and put it in his pocket. He made two more trips, and when he came back by, he dropped a pack of cigarettes.

Marcello: Well, this sort of activity went on all the time, I gather.

Bartlett: Yes. Some of the guards we couldn't. In Zentsuji it was an impossibility because our guards there were primarily injured soldiers who had come back from the front and they . . .

Marcello: . . . they had a grudge.

Bartlett : They had a grudge. But in Rokorushi it was different.  
We had recruits. (Chuckle)

Marcello: But anyway we are still at this initial camp back in  
Japan, and as you mentioned, men were continuing to  
die in this camp.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: And I would assume that this was one of the low  
points of your entire stay as a prisoner-of-war.

Bartlett: Yes, it was.

Marcello: I guess when you got the word to get out of there  
you were quite happy.

Bartlett: Oh, yes!

Marcello: Where did you go from there?

Bartlett: To Zentsuji.

Marcello: You went to Zentsuji. Did you go by train?

Bartlett: Had to.

Marcello: Now even at this stage yet, I don't think Japan had  
really been hit with any bombs, had it?

Bartlett: No,

Marcello: It was still too early. Maybe Doolittle's raid, but  
that was about it.

Bartlett: I don't think that they got hit while we were in  
Zentsuji.

Marcello: Were you receiving any news at all from the outside world?

Bartlett: Well, we were writing our censored prisoner-of-war mail.

Marcello: You were receiving mail?

Bartlett: From home, occasionally.

Marcello: And you were allowed to send those little postcards occasionally. Now how would you get news from the outside?

Bartlett: Well, I had my system with my wife. I am not a religious man, never have been, still ain't! When I started in and got to Zentsuji, I wrote just this: "I am now reading such and such a paragraph in the Bible and studying the Bible," Then I gave them the paragraph. Then I put the next one: "Joseph isn't in Japan." Well, that paragraph refers to the . . . I referred to the Bible where Joseph is tending the multitudes. Joseph wasn't in Japan,

Marcello: In other words, that was your way of telling your family that you were not being fed very well.

Bartlett: Well, that's the way that I originated the code. When I would write, I would go and look through the Bible and find something kindred. You can find anything in the Bible. I would just remark that I was reading

that paragraph, that part of the Bible. This would go right by a censor, you know! My wife would get it, and she was in direct contact with the . . . of course, being an officer's wife on this side, she was in direct contact with the higher command on this side.

Marcello: Did you have any access to any Japanese newspapers? Not that you could believe what was in the Japanese newspapers . . .

Bartlett: Oh, yes, we had what they . . . it was printed in English--the Manichi--when we were in Zentsuji. They would lie about it. Of course, it was all "Japan is doing this!"

Marcello: Now the title of the newspaper was what?

Bartlett: The name of the newspaper was the Manichi. It was funny how it was set up. We were getting news of the African battles through it. The Japs were always winning. They put out, "We advanced so many kilometers." They would name the town, so we would look at the map, and they had retreated that far actually! (Chuckle) But the Japanese people didn't know any geography, so they were winning!

Marcello: Were there ever any clandestine radios or anything like that constructed in the camp that you recall?

- Bartlett: No, we were too closely guarded.
- Marcello: You mentioned contraband awhile ago. What were some of the articles to be considered contraband?
- Bartlett: Well, anything that you might say was not issued . . . Japanese issue. See, the working parties would get out there . . . well, I never did get out to work, but they would get . . . the Japanese . . . those Japs are corruptible, and they would corrupt them, and they would swap off pocketknives or something of that nature. I had one there, but I kept it hid. Matches were taboo and a lot of things of that nature.
- Marcello: Well, how did the camp at Zentsuji differ from the first one that you were in in Japan?
- Bartlett: Oh, Zentsuji wasn't bad. There was no rough treatment. Only thing wrong with Zentsuji was the food . . . not enough food.
- Marcello: You were still being fed rice, what little bit you got?
- Bartlett: Oh, yes. Well, that's all we ever got in any of the camps. See, Zentsuji wasn't just an American camp. The night we went there, there was both British and Australians in the camp. And later came some Dutch. Then we got the New Guinea group. Oh, it was a mass



of different nationalities.

Marcello: I gather then that Zentsuji was a pretty big camp.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: How did all the nationalities get along with one another?

Bartlett: Just like that.

Marcello: They got along very well together?

Bartlett: Yes. We intermingled quite well.

Marcello: I assume that they did segregate you into nationalities.

Bartlett: Partially, not much. The only segregation was the Dutch and the New Guineas. They were the last to come in. They were kind of off to themselves, but we could go together. We could go anywhere we wanted to in the compound, and they were all in the same compound.

Marcello: Were you more or less in forced idleness at this camp also? Was there any work to be done at Zentsuji?

Bartlett: No, they worked us in Zentsuji. They had gardens, not only our own gardens, but they had gardens all over the place.

Marcello: I would assume that even though officers weren't required to work that you kind of welcomed planting your own gardens to supplement your food supply.

Bartlett: Well, even though it was supposed to be our own

garden, we did get some of it, but most of it went to the Japanese.

Marcello: How else did you spend your time in Zentsuji?

Bartlett: Playing cards and reading and such as that.

Marcello: How did you get reading material?

Bartlett: They had a captured, I guess what you would call, a circulating library that goes among soldiers, you know, and had the Bible and the World Almanac and a few . . . not much fiction . . . and such as that.

Marcello: I would assume that continual idleness is perhaps just as hard or worse than strenuous work.

Bartlett: Yes, but we kept busy. We played poker. Of course, it was against the rules, but we played it.

Marcello: Was there ever any resentment among the enlisted men over the fact that officers were not working and they were?

Bartlett: The only place I know where the officers didn't work was in Tanagawa, maybe in Cabanatuan. There wasn't much work in Cabanatuan while I was there. But the enlisted man worked in Tanagawa because I don't believe that they could have gotten the officers to work because it was all war projects, building ships.

Marcello: What were the accommodations like at Zentsuji? I am speaking in comparison to the others that you had lived in.

Bartlett: Just maybe a shade more elbow room, but not much.

Marcello: Were the barracks warm?

Bartlett: No! When we moved in, there was a stove in each . . . it was in the very early spring about, I would say, in January. There were stoves in all of the barracks, cast iron stoves. Well, when the Americans moved in, they took all those out. And they opened all windows and said they would not be closed at any time.

Marcello: Why did they do that?

Bartlett: Fresh air!

Marcello: Did they issue you any blankets or overcoats or things of that nature?

Bartlett: Well, late in the spring they issued us an overcoat sometimes.

Marcello: By that time winter was over!

Bartlett: Yes! There were blankets but no mattresses. They had rooms, and some of them were partitioned off, and some of them had the hallway in between, but they were the same size--about twenty-by-twenty. They had an aisle in between of about . . . well, it took up about a four foot table and a bed on each side and room to sit down at the table. And on the other side was a plank just \_\_\_\_\_, and

just back of that was a bed with about that much space on the wall. That space was where you put your stuff, anything you had. There was ten men who slept on a side--twenty men to a twenty by twenty room. In the center was the table that we ate on with a bench on each side.

Marcello: I understand that in a lot of barracks, in order to share the very thin blankets that the Japanese did issue, that maybe three or four men would sleep together, and you could pile the blankets on top.

Bartlett: The Japanese had a peculiar setup there. They issued clothing. Early in the spring, why, they'd issue us heavy clothing. Late in the fall, they would take it up and issue us light clothing.

Marcello: Just anything to harass you. I gather from the most part in Zentsuji the Japanese more or less left you alone. There wasn't too much physical harassment.

Bartlett: I don't know. Now at Rokorushi there was the least of that. Oh, you had physical harassment--plenty of it--almost anywhere.

Marcello: What were the sanitary facilities like at Zentsuji?

Bartlett: Well, it was built up from the floor like our own latrines. There was a slit in the floor about that long and about that wide spaced evenly. You'd

go over and squat down, and it was about that big in diameter and about that tall--a concrete receiver. It was set up high enough so that on the side was the door to the outside of that. Hell, those Japs would be dipping out crap while we would still be shitting!

Marcello: That was fertilizer, right?

Bartlett: Yes,

Marcello: How about showers, bathing facilities?

Bartlett: There was one shower head and one of these Japanese kind of tub affairs, like a bath house. You could go in once a week. You could take that, but that was just the one for the whole works, and I would say there was close to 800 in that camp at Zentsuji, so bathing was not very handy.

Marcello: As a result, were there very many cases of men having lice or things of this nature?

Bartlett: Oh, Jesus Christ! We kind of got rid of them in Zentsuji, finally.

Marcello: Bedbugs, too, I'm sure, were quite prevalent.

Bartlett: Plenty. Hell, I could have found you a grayback anytime! It wouldn't take me all day to do it.

Marcello: I would assume that after awhile this more or less became a part of the routine, and you can't let it

bother you . . .

Bartlett: No.

Marcello: . . . or you would still be over there yet.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Well, what was their purpose in shipping you to Zentsuji? Do you know offhand?

Bartlett: I think at Zentsuji there was some Navy enlisted men that were of the higher rank. I don't know the ranks very well, but they were . . . I know one was a bo'sun and such as that. There were about four or five of them there that was about all of the enlisted men. The rest were all officers. And we worked all the time.

Marcello: Then you did work at Zentsuji.

Bartlett: Oh, hell yes! Well, they had what was a country club, or an officers club or something like that. I don't know. It had a great big garden or I guess about a ten acre lawn there. They were beginning to get

\_\_\_\_\_ for food, and we went out there and plowed it with shovels. You started a line and went right on down the line with the shovels. We would always work in line, but we never got any of the produce.

Marcello: What sort of a work week did you put in? Was it six days a week, seven days a week?

Bartlett: Six.

Marcello: Six days a week and one day off. How many hours a day did you usually work?

Bartlett: I guess about eight.

Marcello: Now were you being supervised at Zentsuji by military personnel or civilian personnel?

Bartlett: Koreans.

Marcello: I'll bet you don't have any good words to say about the Koreans.

Bartlett: These were civilian Koreans. No, I'll kind of differ with you there. They were the best friends we had in there.

Marcello: In what way?

Bartlett: Well, it was like this. If we had Japanese guards around, we had to work on account of all of them with no rest. If it was the Koreans and the civilians, why, you could loaf along, and there was nothing said. You could take time out, and nothing would be said. With the Japs, we got one smoke period in mid-morning and one in mid-afternoon. The Koreans, why, if we wanted to smoke, we did. We would put them a lot closer together.

Marcello: Why do you think the Koreans were so compassionate?

Bartlett: The Koreans didn't like the Japs. The Japs had been pretty rough in Korea, you know, at one time.

Marcello: How long were you at Zentsuji altogether?

Bartlett: I can't give it to you in months. I would say about a year and a half.

Marcello: In other words, by the time you left Zentsuji, the tide of the war had definitely changed.

Bartlett: It had changed.

Marcello: What evidence were you able to note at Zentsuji to indicate that the tide of the war had changed?

Bartlett: None.

Marcello: None? You had not seen nor heard any of the American air attacks yet?

Bartlett: No. I never saw an American airplane.

Marcello: The whole time you were in camp?

Bartlett: Rokorushi was way up in the mountains.

Marcello: So you left Zentsuji, and I assume that you went by train again, and you went to Rokorushi.

Bartlett: It's a little town, and it was up in the silk center where they raise silk worms, and they wove the fabric. Most of the people there did not like the Japanese. They were more of the Koreans, and they helped us out a lot.

Marcello: Rokorushi was inhabited mainly by Koreans.



Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What did you do when you got there?

Bartlett: There was a rough mountainside there, and we converted it to farmland. And the Koreans were the overseers on us. Fact is, we all liked them. In fact, after the surrender, why, the little village that was a ways away from the camp sent over an invitation for us prisoners to visit their village. They took us in. We went into all their churches. We conformed to their customs. We took off our shoes in the lobby and walked in in our stockings. In fact, when we took over and got the American food in, we turned over all the Japanese military food to them. They were very good.

Marcello: They treated you that well?

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: What were their accommodations like at Rokorushi?

Bartlett: About the same as the others.

Marcello: Same sort of barracks?

Bartlett: Same sort of barracks, only at Rokorushi we had dirt floors. It had been a mule barn, and it was alive with fleas! You would take a blanket out in the morning, and you would get anywhere from a dozen to twenty fleas on each blanket. And the Japanese

were vicious there, most of them. Some of them weren't, but most of them were.

Marcello: Now I assume that the military people in this camp were definitely Japanese.

Bartlett: Yes. Now after VJ Day, but before we had been notified, for nothing I was knocked in the jaw and knocked clear to the ground three times!

Marcello: By a Japanese . . .

Bartlett: Personally . . .

Marcello: . . . soldier, and you didn't know the war was over.

Bartlett: . . . by a Japanese soldier . . .

Marcello: . . . and he was taking his wrath out on you.

Bartlett: . . . Japanese soldier.

Marcello: He obviously knew the war was over.

Bartlett: What he claimed he was hitting me for . . . where we was standing, there was a row here, and a row here. When they were taking the roll, we were supposed to look straight at the man in front of us, at his eyes. I was looking at the man next to him, and that's why I got hit. Just one man over! And we were shoulder to shoulder.

Marcello: Now by this time, I would gather that the death rate had leveled off quite a bit.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: The tough ones were left.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: That's about the only way you can describe them.

Bartlett: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Now what was your weight about this time? Could you estimate it?

Bartlett: At that time?

Marcello: Right.

Bartlett: I know what it was! One hundred and five pounds.

Marcello: You had gone from about approximately 183 pounds down to 105 pounds. You had lost almost a quarter of your weight, about 25 per cent of it.

Bartlett: More than that. I lost over a third of my weight. A hundred and eighty-three down to 105! That's seventy-five pounds!

Marcello: Well, let's talk about the events then leading up to your eventual repatriation. How did you find out that the war was over? What happened?

Bartlett: The Japanese announced it to us.

Marcello: Did you notice any easing off on work or anything?

Bartlett: No, sir!

Marcello: Just one day all of a sudden they announced that the war was over.

Bartlett: One morning there was no guards around. I think it was a Japanese sergeant who said that Japan had surrendered, and phwish! That's the last we saw of him. Didn't see any more of our guards at all right then. We pulled a pretty rough stunt when we heard it. Then he came and made it official, the Japanese officer. Our commanding officer says, "Well, we will have a formal surrender of the guards." They lined the guards up, and we lined up. The commanding officer came up and took off his sword and presented it to our commanding officer. There's where the hurt came.

Marcello: What happened?

Bartlett: He took it, pulled the sword out of the scabbard, threw the scabbard away, took the sword, and broke it across his knee, and threw it down to the ground! You know, the Japanese have their setup that our sword shall never be replaced in this scabbard, if it's once taken out, until it has had human blood on it. When they clean their swords, it is sharp, and they will nick themselves with the blade to get blood on that sword when they put it back.

Marcello: Did any of the prisoners have any scores to settle with any Japanese guards at this time?

Bartlett: No, we didn't.

Marcello: I guess that you were so damn glad to be free.

Bartlett: Yes. Well, as soon as that surrender was over they disappeared! There wasn't no guards around there.

Marcello: What did you people do? Did you stay in the camp or did you go out and check out the countryside?

Bartlett: We raided the goddamn supply house and got food, and we started eating Japanese food. And about that time, the food drops started.

Marcello: You might describe the food drops. I've heard about them, but I would like to have your version of them in the record.

Bartlett: Well, what were they? B-29s?

Marcello: B-29s.

Bartlett: Yes.

Marcello: Did you have to mark your camp in any way?

Bartlett: No, it was just right out in the open.

Marcello: And they knew where it was.

Bartlett: Oh, yes. They would go over and they would fly over and drop the parachutes. Sometimes the parachutes would open, and sometimes they wouldn't.

Marcello: I guess that they were lethal weapons when those parachutes didn't open.

Bartlett: We got under cover.

Marcello: They dropped them in the fifty-five gallon oil drums, did they not?

Bartlett: Yes. And one of them, the parachute didn't open. We opened that and it was filled with cigarettes, cartons of cigarettes. We would open a pack and get out a cigarette, and every goddamn cigarette in it was split! That happened because of the impact. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did you share any of this food with the Japanese or anybody?

Bartlett: There weren't any Japanese around then.

Marcello: Not even civilians?

Bartlett: No, they were Koreans. Oh, we treated them fine. We had no quarrel with them; they helped us out when we were prisoners.

Marcello: Incidentally, speaking of food, without a doubt, that was the thing that was on your mind.

Bartlett: Oh, certainly!

Marcello: And, I would assume that part of your spare time was spent in dreaming up menus.

Bartlett: Oh, goddamn! I got a recipe book with recipes that thick!

Marcello: What was the food that you were thinking of more than any other?

Bartlett: Nothing in particular, just anything and everything.

Marcello: I've often heard it said by some of the prisoners that they thought about food so much that on occasions they swear that they could actually smell a particular type of food cooking someplace. Their imagination played such tricks on them.

Bartlett: I wouldn't doubt it! It's very possible.

Marcello: How long was it after the surrender before the Americans came?

Bartlett: They didn't. They sent trucks up.

Marcello: As you look back on your tenure as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as being the key to your survival? For example, you mentioned that back in Cabanatuan you had beriberi rather badly. Back on Corregidor you had been hit rather severely by that Japanese soldier. In Japan you were also suffering from beriberi. You had had malaria. Obviously, you had been through quite a bit. Now that . . . what do you see as being the key to your survival?

Bartlett: Damn stubbornness!

Marcello: The will to live?

Bartlett: Yes. And also, what helped me on that is that I'm a fatalist.

Marcello: Suppose I would have interviewed you in September of 1945, after you had recently gotten out of the prisoner-

of-war camp. How would this interview have differed from the one that we are having now in September of 1972?

Bartlett: Mainly in details.

Marcello: Mainly in details? How about your feelings toward the Japanese?

Bartlett: They are the same.

Marcello: What were your feelings then when you got out, and what are your feelings now?

Bartlett: Total and complete hatred!

Marcello: Then and now. In other words, time hasn't healed the wounds,

Bartlett: Hasn't healed it a bit. Now the Koreans, I'm for them. But the Jap, no! (Chuckle)