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Interview with
Mr. Keith Naylor
April 2, 1971

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald Marcello

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Oral History Collection

Mr. Keith Naylor

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Date: April 2, 1971

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. Keith Naylor for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection.

Mr. Naylor was a member of the famous "Lost Battalion" during the second World War, and the purpose of this interview is to tape his experiences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. The interview is taking place on April 2, 1971 in Fort Worth, Texas.

Mr. Naylor, to begin this interview, would you briefly give us a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, where were you born, when were you born, your education, so on and so forth.

Mr. Naylor: All right. I was born in Vernon on April 24, 1919. And I lived in Vernon until I was about fourteen, and then I moved to Wichita Falls. I finished high school in Wichita Falls. And then I worked two years back in Vernon, and in 1940 I joined the Texas National Guard from Wichita Falls. And that ended my education, you might say.

Dr. Marcello: Why did you join the National Guard?

Mr. Naylor: Basically because, I suppose, there was two or three fellows

that I had run around with who were members of it. We knew that mobilization was coming, so I just decided this was a good way to get into it.

Marcello: This is the general explanation which was given by most of the former members of the "Lost Battalion" that I have interviewed. Some of them, for example, will say that they entered because they couldn't get a job. You know, we were still kind of in the depression yet, really hadn't gotten out of it completely. And then others say, "Well, my friends were joining, so I decided to join also." Or then finally, some of them say, "I joined before I was drafted anyhow." So you joined in 1940. Did you have any hint or inkling at that time that the nation might possibly soon be plunging into war?

Naylor: Oh, yes. It was in the cards since, oh, September, 1939, when the war started. I had no idea that we would get into it. The only question I had was how long it was going to take.

Marcello: Now I think shortly after you joined the National Guard your unit was mobilized. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Right. I joined in October of 1940, and we mobilized then on the twenty-fifth of November.

Marcello: That's correct. And this is a part of the 36th Division. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Now you took your training or a good deal of your training at Camp Bowie, near Brownwood?

Naylor: Yes, all of it in fact. We stayed in Wichita Falls until January, 1941, and then we went to Camp Bowie. All of our training was there excepting for the Louisiana maneuvers in 1940. We were down there, oh, about three months.

Marcello: Is there anything outstanding that you can remember from your days in boot camp that you think ought to be a part of the record? Or this training period, let us say.

Naylor: Not really. I was the battery clerk the time we went to Camp Bowie, so most of my time was spent either in the orderly room or over in the regimental headquarters. And really, I got very, very little field training or basic training as such.

Marcello: I see. I was going to ask you exactly what your function was as a member of this unit. Also, would you please identify your unit in full?

Naylor: Okay. It was Battery D of the 2nd Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery.

Marcello: I see. Now the 2nd Battalion is the one that is commonly known as the "Lost Battalion." Is that correct?

Naylor: Right. The 2nd Battalion split off in November of 1941, and went west to the Pacific.

Marcello: And the rest of the division eventually ended up in Europe. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Right, right.

Marcello: In Italy.

Naylor: The division, as I understand it, went to Florida and was

converted to what is called a triangular division. The 1st Battalion, of course, stayed with them, and in the normal course of the war they wound up in Europe.

Marcello: After your initial training you eventually got the word that you were going to the Philippines. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Not exactly.

Marcello: Okay.

Naylor: We got the word that we were going to PLUM.

Marcello: I see. This was a code name . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . for your destination. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Yeah.

Marcello: But I think it was more or less a foregone conclusion that you were going to the Philippines, or at least that was the rumor going around. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: This was common knowledge, but where it developed from I have no idea.

Marcello: But you did think you were going to the Philippines.

Naylor: Oh, yeah. That's just what everybody thought.

Marcello: Describe the trip from San Francisco, which I think is where you debarked, I guess you would say, or embarked. Describe the trip from San Francisco across the ocean.

Naylor: We left Fort McDowell, which was out on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, oh, about the first of December or there about. We were on the U.S.A.T. Republic--U. S. Army Transport. The Republic was actually a converted German ship of some kind. It

had been captured in World War I. And we went from Fort McDowell to Hawaii. We were in Hawaii the first of December, so we must have left the latter part of November from San Francisco.

Marcello: You, of course, weren't at Pearl Harbor very long, were you? Perhaps overnight?

Naylor: Not quite that long. About fourteen or sixteen hours, something like that.

Marcello: I was just going to ask you if you had noticed any extraordinary preparations being taken there to guard against an attack? Or maybe you didn't even leave the ship.

Naylor: Yes, it was a real surprise to me when I heard what happened at Pearl Harbor. I got down into town, Honolulu, oh, for some four or five hours, and at that time, which was about the first of December, they had all the railroad tracks, railroad stations, all the water supply points, and all the sensitive places like this under martial law at this time.

Marcello: Obviously they were thinking about sabotage, because there are quite a few Japanese nationals who lived in the Hawaiian Islands.

Naylor: This could possibly be, but it seemed to me that they were certainly expecting something to happen by having all these barbed wire barricades and soldiers and everything guarding them. And this was a full week before anything happened.

Marcello: Okay. So you were in the Hawaiian Islands then just for a very short time--several hours in fact. Then where were you when

you received the news of Pearl Harbor?

Naylor: Well, we were on the Pacific Ocean is all I know. Rumor had it that we were headed toward Wake Island, and as far as I know this is correct. I suppose it was about the eighth of December I don't recall the exact date. The battalion officers called us all together and told us the news--what had happened as far as they knew.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard about this?

Naylor: I don't recall anything exceptional. It was certainly not unexpected, so I don't remember that I had any feelings one way or another really.

Marcello: Was your ship part of a convoy? Were there other ships accompanying you across the Pacific.

Naylor: Yes. This is what was known as the Pensacola Convoy. I didn't really know this until several years later, but in the compiled history of World War II I had read a short article concerning the Pensacola Convoy. The reason it was called this, I assume, is that the . . . oh, what did they call it . . . I don't think a destroyer. I guess it was a destroyer, the Pensacola. Anyway the U.S.S. Pensacola was the only warship that accompanied us.

Marcello: I assume if it was the Pensacola, it was probably a cruiser, because I think cruisers are named after cities. Destroyers are named after people, as I recall.

Naylor: And besides it . . . we had, oh, as I recall, two other ships,

the Coast Farmer and the Dutch ship, Bloemfontein.

Marcello: The Coast Farmer?

Naylor: Yeah, it was a freighter.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: There were the three ships plus the Pensacola. There may have been another one, but I don't recall.

Marcello: Apparently your destination was somewhat altered after you received the news about the attack, and I believe that you were diverted to Brisbane, Australia. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: Right. At the news of the war we turned south, and it seemed like it was about three weeks there. We put in at Iwa in the Fiji Islands for a very short time, just a few hours.

Marcello: Did you take any extraordinary precautions after you received the word of the attack?

Naylor: Yes, we did actually. The battalion . . . of course, us being a field artillery unit, we manned actually some of the gun mounts on the Republic. I recall one night I stood watch for a friend of mine who was kind of under the weather, and we were up forward in one of these tub things with about a three-inch gun. Now what extra precautions the Navy took, I have no idea.

Marcello: I think the ship did follow a zigzag course, did it not, after it had received the word of the attack and so on? In other words it wasn't a straight line course, as I recall to Brisbane. It was more or less a zigzag-type course.

Naylor: Well, this is right. All the ships in the convoy were actually on the zigzag course.

Marcello: I see. So you landed in Brisbane. What was your reaction to going to Australia? What was it like?

Naylor: Well, first thing we were awfully glad to see land again. We had been on that thing so long that it was real nice that we could get back on land.

Marcello: Had you suffered from seasickness?

Naylor: The first day only in the swells in San Francisco Bay, but by the morning of the second day I was all right. It never did bother me.

Marcello: I see. Anyhow, what sort of a reception did you receive in Australia?

Naylor: It was real nice. We were there . . . oh, we landed there about the twenty-first or twenty-second of December, I forget, shortly before Christmas. I remember the twenty-sixth which is what they call Boxing Day. A friend of mine went downtown, and some Australian youngster about fourteen, somewhere there about, invited us out to his house. We went out and met his parents, and they had what they call tea. It looked like supper to us, but we stayed there, and they were real nice-- anything we wanted at all or any help we wanted or anything. They were real nice.

Marcello: Apparently the Australians did give the Americans a rather warm reception. I think in fact these were the first American

troops that have ever landed in Australia.

Naylor: We were the first American troops to ever land on Australia, the way I understand it. Incidentally, I might add here that rumors had it that we would be a reception center. We would man a reception center for American troops coming over and all this kind of thing, and this suited us just fine. We would have been happy just to stay right there.

Marcello: Well, if those rumors were going around then, apparently you didn't undergo any sort of special training in Australia, let's say, to prepare you for jungle warfare or anything like that. What did you do while you were in Australia? Now you weren't there too long.

Naylor: No, this is right. We were there about a week. We did absolutely nothing. We were actually in the Ascot Race Track in Brisbane. And the only physical labor I recall ever doing was to put some wood flooring in the tents (chuckle) that we had down there, and other than that, it was absolutely no training or anything. I was actually a supply sergeant. I had a few duties, of course, that I had to do. But, insofar as formal training or anything, there was nothing.

Marcello: I see. So you were in Australia for about a week, and then you departed. What was your destination?

Naylor: We actually didn't know. We thought it would be the Philippines, and from what I understand that was the original intention. All we know is that we got the Bloemfontein, and we left there

about the 27th, I suppose, the 27th or the 28th. And all we know is that we headed north, going outside the Barrier Reef and on up the coast of Australia and then to Darwin.

Marcello: Darwin was one of the northernmost cities in Australia, I guess, is it not?

Naylor: Right. It is the northernmost.

Marcello: Yes, I guess it is, right (chuckle).

Naylor: Actually, there were two ships in the convoy. We were on the Bloemfontein . . .

Marcello: And this was a Dutch freighter, isn't that correct, or a Dutch ship of some sort?

Naylor: Well, it was a Dutch freighter, right. And the other ship, as best I remember, it had the 148th Field Artillery Regiment on it. Now on the original convoy going across, there was the 2nd Battalion of the 131st, the 148th Regiment, and one battalion of the 147th Field Artillery. And I'm not real sure as to which one it was that went to Darwin. It was either the 148th or the 147th. But, anyway, they stayed there. We were in Darwin harbor, oh, just a matter of a few hours.

Marcello: They were the lucky ones, I suppose.

Naylor: Not from what I understand. I understand that there was an air raid that night in Darwin harbor, and they got pretty well clobbered. But, like I say, I don't recall which one it was. I know that they did stay in Darwin while we went on and headed north.

Marcello: I see. So you only stayed in Fort Darwin for a few hours.

Naylor: Right. What happened then?

Naylor: Well, we headed north again, and all I know is that we headed out across the north to what we thought was Borneo. It seemed like the general consensus was that we were headed for Borneo. Of course, none of us were real scholarly in geography. We didn't exactly know where Borneo was or what other islands were there, but I know we went generally north and it seemed like one morning, we went through the Straits of Bali, between Bali and Java, and that's the first indication we'd had of actually where we were.

Marcello: How come you were on a Dutch freighter? Is there any special reason for that? Just weren't there any transports available or what?

Naylor: I'm sure that this is the reason.

Marcello: I think this is simply another indication as to how ill-prepared the United States was when World War II started.

Naylor: Well, this is right. Of course, we had absolutely nothing at that time. And I don't really know what happened to the Republic. We always assumed that they turned around and headed back to the States to get another load, so to speak.

Marcello: Did you have any scares on the way from Brisbane to Java, that is, so far as submarines are concerned or meeting any Japanese airplanes?

Naylor: Not to my personal knowledge. There was talk there on board

ship one day that there had been a couple of torpedoes fired at the ship. I didn't see them or anything.

Marcello: I assume there were all sorts of rumors going around on this ship.

Naylor: Not really. Not to the extent that you would think. Everybody seemed to accept it pretty well. It was just, well, "We're here today and where we'll be tomorrow, nobody knows." And nobody particularly cared.

Marcello: I see. So you went through these straits between Bali and Java and eventually landed at the port city of Surabaya, which, of course, is in Java.

Naylor: Yeah.

Marcello: Relatively large place, is it not?

Naylor: Yes, Surabaya was a pretty big town. I don't know exactly how big. I know to us it looked awful big.

Marcello: Why did they send you to Java? Was it simply to reinforce the Dutch who were there, what was the purpose, do you think, in being sent to Java?

Naylor: Well, that is a real good question. I wondered that question for years, but the way it seems to me is that we were strictly sacrifice troops. We were sent into Java to sucker the Japanese into attacking the East Indies rather than Australia. And this is reinforced by the stories that some of the Australians have told us. I had gotten with an Australian later on and became pretty good friends with him, and he was

telling me what they had done. He had been fighting in the Middle East at Tobruk. And they were on a ship headed for Australia, and they were diverted into Java. And the story he told me was that from the docks they would get into the trucks and drive out. Then they would lay down in the back of the truck, drive back into the docks, and sit up and drive out. This was creating the impression that there were an enormous number of troops landing. And it was further reinforced by the fact that we went on a convoy just all over that island for several days. Just all day long all we did was drive.

Marcello: This was when you got to Java.

Naylor: Right, this was actually after the invasion was imminent.

Marcello: You hadn't landed yet, but you could see Java. You were very close to landing, and you were just more or less circling around or cruising around, is this correct?

Naylor: Well, no. This was several weeks later . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . that I was speaking of. You asked me my impression of why we landed . . .

Marcello: Right.

Naylor: . . . in Java. Well, this is the reason from an after view-point. At the time, I had no idea (chuckle) why in the world we landed in Java. In fact, the first morning that we were in Malang Camp in Java . . . this is, well, it was actually the Bicycle Camp. No, I'm sorry. I'm getting ahead of myself. I

don't remember what this camp was named, but it was a Dutch camp outside of Malang, Java. But the first morning we were there a friend of mine named Eastham, Sergeant Raymond G. Eastham . . . I called him "Blackie." But Blackie and I were walking around the camp, and all of a sudden Blackie stopped and looked around. He said, "Naylor, this is Java. Just what in the hell are we doing in Java?" (Chuckle)

Marcello: Was that your reaction, too?

Naylor: (Chuckle) This was my exact reaction.

Marcello: Well, what was this camp like here at Malang?

Naylor: It was real nice. It was a permanent Dutch camp. It had big stone barracks with, oh, eloquent kitchens, storage (I think they call them go-downs) warehouses, maintenance facilities, and headquarters facilities. It was real nice. It was a real nice permanent camp.

Marcello: About how long did you stay there?

Naylor: About three weeks.

Marcello: What did, I'm sorry, please continue.

Naylor: We'd landed in Surabaya late in the afternoon, and we got on one of the small-gauge little bitty car railroads. And as I remember, it was about fifty miles from Surabaya to Malang. It was about dark when we left Surabaya, and it seems to me like it was around midnight when we finally got to the camp at Malang. But actually we stayed there about three weeks.

Marcello: What did you do while you were there?

Naylor: More of the same which was to say, nothing. Again, I was supply sergeant. I had my duties the same as the battery clerk and the cook and these people. But the combat elements of the battery . . . well, I say nothing. Let me back up a little bit. We did do quite a bit of work when we left Camp Bowie in November, we loaded our 75's. These were our field pieces that we were equipped with. They were the old French box-trail 75's seventy-five millimeter guns. It's the same weapon that American forces and the French forces were equipped with in World War I.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: But it was a seventy-five millimeter towed gun. Well, this is what we loaded on the flat cars at Camp Bowie. When we unloaded our equipment in Malang, Java, somehow miraculously, these things had been changed to the American split-trail seventy-five, which was the same tube and used the same shells and all this, but it was a considerably different gun in the trail mechanism, the sighting mechanism, and all of this. Well, these guns were all in what you'd call a depot pack. In other words, they were packed in cosmoline, and so the four given sections had to completely dismantle these guns which was strictly against regulations in a normal situation. But they had to completely dismantle them and clean them, put them all back together, and get them ready to fire. So actually the four gun sections were fairly busy.

Marcello: Now at this time was the unit fairly well-equipped to handle itself in combat with these new weapons?

Naylor: For that time, yes. We were in pretty good shape. Actually, the battery consisted of four gun sections that had one gun each which was only four seventy-five millimeter field pieces. But as I say, for that time this was a pretty well-equipped unit.

Marcello: That is, compared to what other American forces had in other places, it was a fairly-well equipped unit.

Naylor: Yes, this is true. Actually, we were organized under a T. O. and E., which was the Table of Organization and Equipment, calling for a 105 millimeter howitzer. But in the absence of those, the seventy-five split trail was a good weapon, so had we been with American combat troops for the logistical supply and all of the other that goes with it, we were comparatively well-equipped.

Marcello: I see. Is there anything else which stands out in your mind during this three-week stay at Malang?

Naylor: Well, yeah. A little while ago I mentioned about suckering the Japanese in there. Another indication of that was that we had some forty-eight, I believe we did that figure, in that area, anyway, old Dutch seventy-five field pieces that just sat around the camp as decoys, actually. We had no equipment for them and no crews or anything else, but they were sitting around the camp to suggest that it was a well-armed camp. So again

this reinforces my idea that we were strictly sacrifice troops.

Marcello: You were expendable in other words, is that correct?

Naylor: Right, right. There are a couple of other things that stand out about Malang. This was where we got our first taste of any kind of enemy action, of course.

Marcello: Oh, I see. How long was it after you landed there that you received your first taste of combat?

Naylor: Oh, I would say around a couple of weeks. I don't recall. Actually, all it consisted of was air raids, but we had several bombing raids which actually didn't do a great deal of harm and one strafing raid that I know of at Singosari Airport was where the remnants of the 19th Bomb Group, who had come from the Philippines, were stationed and it was only a matter of some 300 or 400 yards from the camp where we were. And on the strafing raids they did destroy several B-17s and, oh, several buildings and all. There were no fighters there that I recall. Most of the fighters were up in central Java, what few they had. And I remember Sergeant Karney. Karney and I had a machine gun emplacement at the end of the runway of the airfield. And Karney and I had been out there during three or four bombing raids which, of course, all we could do was watch the things and hope they didn't drop one on us.

Marcello: You mean you were watching the raids taking place over Singosari?

Naylor: Yes, well we . . .

Marcello: I see. You were pretty close . . .

Naylor: . . . we were just at the end of the air strip.

Marcello: Right.

Naylor: But, as I say, the bombing raids took place. Well, the gun we had had been taken from a wrecked B-17. This was the shortage of weapons we had. The Air Corps said they had to have it back, so we had to give it back to them to mount in another B-17. The next day was when we had the strafing raid. And had we had that gun--of course, I don't know whether I could've hit any of them or not--but at least I have been able to shoot back at them a little bit. But the Air Corps had taken my gun back, (chuckle) so I never did even get to crack a shell at them.

Marcello: As you say, this is perhaps another illustration of the disastrous lack of equipment that the American forces had on Java and, of course, that all the American forces had at the beginning of the war. What were your reactions when you were caught in these air raids? What were you thinking about? Do you recall? Or were you just ducking your head and hoping?

Naylor: I don't remember. The first raid we had Karney and a fellow named Tims and were out on this gun which was, oh, some 200 or 300 yards from the center of our camp. And the first stick of bombs they laid right across the length of the camp, and I was on the gun at that time. I was standing up watching. Well,

when it kind of quieted down a little bit, Karney hollered at me and asked me if I was all right. And I believe my answer was that I was mad. I wanted them to come down where I could get a shot at them. (Chuckle) In a few minutes they made another run and laid another stick of bombs across the other way, and I had had time to think a little bit about it, and when I heard those whistling down, I proceeded to get down on the floor of that jeep. Actually, we had the gun mounted on the jeep in sand bags. And I had a little chance to cool off, and I proceeded to get down on the back of that.

Marcello: I see. So then in these initial bombing raids they were primarily interested in attacking those bombers which were close to Malang. Isn't that correct? This was probably their plan--their primary objective.

Naylor: Well, no. The first raid was against the camp we were in.

Marcello: Oh, I see. And was this the strafing raid?

Naylor: No, this was the bombing raid.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: Strafing raids were strictly against the airfield.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: But the bombing raids were primarily against our camp.

Marcello: Here again, do you think that they had come in to try and knock out those decoy guns that had been set up, or what exactly do you think was their purpose?

Naylor: I think this was it. I am sure that they knew the Air Corps

was extremely limited, because actually the only thing there was what had been run out of the Philippines. But they had this impression that there were large troops there, so I'm sure that this is what they were after--the troops and airplanes.

Marcello: Well, how many times did they hit your field altogether?

Naylor: Oh, it seems like it was five or six. I don't remember. Not too many times.

Marcello: Were there very many planes that took place in each of these raids?

Naylor: It seemed to us that there were thousands. I don't suppose there were over fifteen or twenty in any one raid.

Marcello: These were bombers?

Naylor: Yes.

Marcello: Two-engine bombers perhaps?

Naylor: As I recall.

Marcello: Is there anything else which stands out in your mind while you were at Malang?

Naylor: Well, there's one story I've always had . . . liked to tell. It is about this first morning we were in Java, and again, it concerns this sergeant, Sergeant Eastham. Oh, about noon that day we were getting rather bored, so we decided we'd just see a little bit of the country. So we started walking up the road that headed into the camp. We walked, I guess, maybe a mile, and this road dead-ended into another road running both directions. We were standing there at this intersection just

debating which way to go, you know, so Blackie said, "Well, let's go this way. I see a guy down yonder with a beer in his hand." (Chuckle) We went down there, and sure enough there was another camp over there with a canteen where they were selling beer. (Chuckle) And I told Blackie he was the only man in the world I knew who could spot a bottle of beer (chuckle) from half a mile. (Chuckle)

Marcello: What was the purpose of them moving you from Malang to the next camp? Now you said you were at Malang about three weeks altogether.

Naylor: Right, right. Now this is when we started this motor march around the island of Java.

Marcello: The motor march?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Is that what it was called?

Naylor: Well, yeah. It was just convoy marching, you know.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: Well, we just drove all day and bivouacked all night. Again, I think, this was for the purpose of sucking the Nips into Java rather than Australia.

Marcello: About how long did you keep up this convoy?

Naylor: Oh, it would have been a week and a half--two weeks, something like that.

Marcello: Did anything outstanding happen during this week or week and a half that you were riding around the island of Java?

Naylor: Nothing that I recall other than one day we drove into a rubber plantation with the entire battalion convoy. And all day long the bombers came over and headed somewhere. I don't know where they were going, but fortunately they never did spot us.

Marcello: I see. So where did you go then? Where did you finally end up?

Naylor: We were just outside of Garoet, which is in central Java. On this morning the convoy went into a race track again at Garoet, and we were just around the race track just bumper to bumper around the convoy. And the battalion officers called us together and told us that the island was capitulating and that we were surrendering, and that we would remain right there until, I suppose, the Nips came and took us over. Yeah, this is where I, you might say, bowed my neck a little bit. I don't remember now . . . the only one I recall was a Corporal Armisted. Let's see. There was Armisted and Carpenter and me, and I don't remember how many now. But anyway we left.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you were told that you were going to surrender? Now had you known that the Japs had already landed?

Naylor: Oh, yes.

Marcello: You were aware of this. How long after you got to Java did the Japanese land?

Naylor: They landed March 1, 1942.

Marcello: I see. And you landed in Java when?

Naylor: In the first week of January.

Marcello: First week in January. So approximately two months after you got there the Japanese landed.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: In overwhelming force, as I recall.

Naylor: Yeah, yeah.

Marcello: There were quite a few Japanese that landed on Java.

Naylor: Yeah, I mentioned trying to suck them in. Well, we succeeded
. . .

Marcello: You did?

Naylor: . . . admirably.

Marcello: You did.

Naylor: As I understand it, there were approximately 500,000 Nips that landed on the island.

Marcello: That's a lot of Japanese.

Naylor: That is a lot of Japanese. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Apparently, the Dutch didn't put up very much resistance.

Naylor: Practically none.

Marcello: What did you think of the Dutch as soldiers?

Naylor: Well, actually, I never was around them. I didn't know anything about them other than, of course, hearing from them later. Of course, E Battery had stayed behind at Surabaja, and I understand that E Battery got into some pretty good fighting up there. But where we were there was nothing.

Marcello: I see. So you left Malang, you drove around for about a week and a half, did you say?

Naylor: Something like that.

Marcello: And finally the word came down that you were to surrender.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: That the island was capitulating, you were to lay down your arms and surrender.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Okay, now then . . .

Naylor: My reaction?

Marcello: Your reaction.

Naylor: I was crying like a baby, not from any feeling of fear or anything, but just the fact that a bunch of Americans would give up without any fight whatsoever. And then when they ran into this race track like a bunch of prize hogs, well, this is when I just said, "Huh-uh." (Chuckle) So, this is when the three of us (I can't recall whether there were any more or not. I'm sure there were because there were a bunch of them later on down on the coast) . . . I think three . . . I know two of us, me and Armisted, and I believe that Carpenter was with us, but this is when we left the battalion and went with a bunch of Australians. The Australians said that they would not surrender. This is when we got with them. I know we talked to an Australian brigadier, and I don't recall what his name was, but he was a tall, slender, typically-British officer.

And I do know that he had won the Victoria Cross in World War I. We talked to him, and he said that they were not surrendering, but if they did, he would see that we got back to our own troops. So this was in the afternoon, I believe, and we walked better than twenty miles up across the mountains and down to the southern coast of Java. I don't recall exactly where it would have been, but it would have been right in the central part of the southern coast.

Marcello: What was your objective? Were you trying to get back to Australia again?

Naylor: Yes, definitely. Now I remember Major Rogers was one, and I believe Lieutenant Smith were the two officers that were with us. And we took watches exactly. We were up on a high rock overlooking the water.

Marcello: Rogers and Smith were Australian . . .

Naylor: No.

Marcello: . . . is that correct?

Naylor: No, they were American.

Marcello: Well, how many were there besides the three of you who took off with the Australians?

Naylor: Well, only the two or three that I can recall took off with me. We got up with the others after we got to the south coast. See, the Australians decided to surrender later on that same day . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . which was March 8.

Marcello: It was sometime in and around there.

Naylor: Yeah.

Marcello: But anyhow . . .

Naylor: I can't remember. I was captured on the eighth and married on the tenth or vice-versa. I'm not sure. It must have been March 8. And the Australians then gave up later that same day.

Marcello: I see. Now, let me just get this straight for our records. You were told to surrender, and, of course, you didn't want to surrender. So you joined up with some of the Australians. Was this there at the race track?

Naylor: It was in Garoet.

Marcello: I see. It was in Garoet. And then the Australians had second thoughts.

Naylor: Later on . . .

Marcello: And they decided to surrender later on that same day.

Naylor: Right, this was after we had gone quite a ways toward the coast.

Marcello: But then you and your group continued on toward the coast.

Naylor: There were around ten or twelve of us. I don't recall . . .

Marcello: Several others had joined up . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . in the meantime?

Naylor: Several others had joined up in the meantime.

Marcello: I see. So by the time you got to the coast, there were nothing but Americans in your group? Or just about all Americans?

Naylor: Just about all Americans, right, right.

Marcello: Okay, continue from that point on then.

Naylor: We stayed down there, oh, it must have been a little short of a week.

Marcello: What did you do for provisions and so on? Did you take enough . . .

Naylor: Oh . . .

Marcello: . . . with you or did you live off the countryside?

Naylor: Barbecued goat is real good.

Marcello: I see. (Chuckle) Especially when you're hungry, I suppose.

Naylor: Right. We had a few supplies that we had taken with us, and there were also some Dutch down there with us, and they, of course, could barter with the, with the little villages that were back up, away from the coast. So we didn't exactly get fat, but we didn't starve either.

Marcello: I see. What sort of armaments did you have?

Naylor: Only our . . .

Marcello: Were you fairly well armed?

Naylor: . . . no, only our sidearms,

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: We had the old .03 Springfield and, of course, the .45 pistol.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: And this is all we had plus whatever ammunition we could carry. But for several days while we were down there, there were . . . oh, every day there would be two or three or four

who drifted back to give themselves up.

Marcello: How come?

Naylor: They decided it was hopeless, I guess. And so over several days we just became smaller and smaller until eventually there was two of us.

Marcello: Two out of approximately a dozen.

Naylor: Something like this. Me and . . . I can't think of his name. He was an Australian--George. I can't think of his name now.

Marcello: Okay.

Naylor: No, wait a minute, wait a minute. There were three of us. Me and George and the Dutch. Well, this Dutchman had lived there for several years, of course, and he had a motor launch up on a lake in central Java. So the three of us were going to try to get up into central Java, get this motor launch, and get it down to the coast.

Marcello: How were you going to get it down to the coast?

Naylor: (Chuckle) We never did really get that far in our planning. However, again, this Dutchman, of course, could speak the language, knew the people. And so we figured that possibly we could, we could manage. What we planned then was that we would get up to the coast and then make our way along the coast through Java to Bali and to Sumatra and on into New Guinea and get on down and maybe find some kind of Allied troops. But about the second morning when we were up in the jungles, we came into a little village, and there was a

Chinese talking to this Dutchman. And the Japanese had sent word that the Dutch would be allowed just to go home. They would not be interned. They would just be allowed to go home. So the next thing George and I knew, we were there by ourselves. George Stevenson was his name. So that left George and I up there together. Well, of course, George and I couldn't speak the language, and we didn't know the country. And this left us in pretty much of an untenable position. But we had heard rumors of a Dutch general who was forming a guerrilla troop up there in the mountains.

Marcello: Did you hear these rumors from the villagers, or was this information that the Dutchmen had received, that is, the Dutchmen who had been with you?

Naylor: I don't recall where we got the information. I just knew that George and I were aware of it, and we were going to try to find him. But after a couple of days, I think, we decided that there was no way, so we came into another village, and we found out somehow . . . I don't recall how, but I suppose most of those people could speak some English, and they told us that the Australians had a gathering point a little farther on down the road for the prisoners who had wandered down to the coast. So George and I turned ourselves in to them. They were strictly Australians; there were no Nips around.

Marcello: Now how long had you been out in the hills altogether now since the time you'd been told to surrender?

Naylor: Shortly less than a month, between three and four weeks.

Marcello: It had been that long?

Naylor: Yeah, yeah, we stayed out.

Marcello: Now was what you were doing a direct contradiction of orders or had your officers given you your choice of surrendering or trying to head for the hills or to get back to Australia?

Naylor: We did not act in contrary to Army orders. We had never been ordered to surrender, so what we did was strictly on our own.

Marcello: Had you heard rumors that the Japanese didn't take prisoners, that they would kill any Americans that they captured? Was this one of the rumors that was perhaps going around among the battalion?

Naylor: Not that I remember. Of course, we knew very, very little about the Japanese. See, now you're talking about a bunch of old country boys from west Texas that had never been anywhere. Heck, we didn't know anything about any foreign people or anything, and actually we didn't know all that much about the Japanese.

Marcello: In other words, you were just angry because you were ordered to surrender without putting up any sort of a fight at all, and you thought you could do better than that, perhaps.

Naylor: This, I think was the primary thing. It is just the humiliation and the thought of giving up something without even so much as trying anything with no fight whatsoever. Well, this is not the way I was brought up to think about the American

Army. So really, I was stupid, I guess, but still I'm glad I tried it at least. At least I tried.

Marcello: Apparently, the natives didn't have any loyalty to anybody, isn't this correct?

Naylor: This is true. The native Javanese were as bad as the Japanese really.

Marcello: They would sell any of these people out to the highest bidder, I suppose, would they not? Didn't the Japanese put a bounty on the heads of any escapees or Americans . . .

Naylor: They might have later . . .

Marcello: . . . and so on who were back in the hills.

Naylor: . . . they might have later. I don't think they did at that time. See, the Japanese that landed on the island, were your seasoned combat troops, and really they were a pretty good bunch of boys. They were our enemies all right, but I'll have to hand it to them. They were a pretty good bunch of boys.

Marcello: When you say "pretty good," do you mean as fighters, or as soldiers?

Naylor: As fighters and if you want to use the word, as gentlemen. I remember, oh, several weeks later, I suppose, when I got back with the battery, and we were just along the side of the road somewhere up in central Java. And these Japanese would come by on motorcycles, and when they'd see one of our officers, they would stop that motorcycle, and they would get off and they would salute. And they would hold it until our officers

returned it. Then they'd get on their motorcycles and go on their way. Well, this is the type of individual the Japanese combat soldier was, and, like I say, this is the type of Japanese individual that made the initial landing on Java.

Marcello: I see. So anyhow, you decided to give yourself up. You went down the road from this village, and you gave yourself up at a place where there were a group of Australians . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . is that correct?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: What happened then?

Naylor: Well, George told them he was an American, so they sent the two of us back to Garoet where the remnants of the battalion still was.

Marcello: Why did he tell them that he was an American?

Naylor: He wanted to stay with me.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: So they got us back to Garoet, and I know we had a . . . there was guard on the race track, on our vehicles that was still there where we had left them. And one of our . . . well, he was a sergeant, Bruner, out of the battery. He was the sergeant of the guard, I would say. And old Ed happened to be looking over the back of the grandstand there when I got out of this truck (chuckle). So first thing he did was holler at me to come up and have a drink. But that's when I got back with

them, and that's when I got with him, and that night when he was relieved he went back to the battery that was . . . it was at some kind of a plantation. I don't remember whether it was a rubber plantation or what have you, but anyway this was where the battalion was quartered at the time.

Marcello: Now so far as chronology was concerned, this involved a period of several weeks, isn't that correct?

Naylor: Right . . .

Marcello: Three or four weeks perhaps.

Naylor: . . . until the first part of April, right.

Marcello: Was it this long before the Japanese actually assumed control of the camp, or had they already assumed control when you had wandered in?

Naylor: No. There were no Nips around whatsoever.

Marcello: For over a month?

Naylor: None, none. This was about the first of April, and there were no Nips in evidence in Garoet or in the plantation--either one. In fact, I don't recall when the first Japanese I saw was, but it was well after the time I reported back to the battery.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened next after you finally did rejoin the battery?

Naylor: Well, as I recall we stayed there several days, and then we moved down--I don't even remember where--let me see, we were bivouacked along the side of the road for several days. And then we were moved on into Batavia at Tandjong, Priok, and

this again was another Dutch camp that was built in the harbor area of Batavia.

Marcello: Now how did you get there? Did you go by . . .

Naylor: By . . .

Marcello: . . . did you still have your vehicles yet?

Naylor: Right, right. As I recall, I know we went by vehicle, and I'm sure they were under our control.

Marcello: I wonder where your officers were getting all of these orders.

Naylor: I suppose Colonel Tharp was in communication with the Japanese.

Marcello: Colonel Tharp was the battalion commander.

Naylor: Right. And so it just never entered our minds to question it or anything. They told us (chuckle) what to do, and that's what we did. So I suppose Colonel Tharp was receiving instructions.

Marcello: So you were transported down to Batavia.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: What happened from that point?

Naylor: Well, we stayed there, I would say, about a month or maybe a little better, and then we were moved into Bicycle Camp in Batavia itself.

Marcello: When did you first have your contact with the Japanese?

Obviously, it was someplace down in Batavia.

Naylor: In Tandjong Priok. This is the first place we were behind barbed wire.

Marcello: Were they waiting on you when you arrived there?

Naylor: I suppose they were, but I don't recall seeing any of them until the next day outside the fence. We had very little contact with them.

Marcello: Well, what happened at Tandjong Priok?

Naylor: We liked to starve to death.

Marcello: Is that correct?

Naylor: Yes. Yeah, the only thing we had was old moldy rice.

Marcello: Do you think this starvation or this lack of food was a deliberate act of the Japanese, or do you think that perhaps there was just as much confusion and disorganization among the Japanese as perhaps there was among the Allied Forces there?

Naylor: I suspect a good part of it was just disorganization. And actually the only difference between what they got and what we got, they got a little better grade. So there was not all that much difference between the rations that were issued to the Japanese and that were issued to us.

Marcello: What else can you remember from your stay at Priok? How long were you there altogether?

Naylor: Seems to me about a month.

Marcello: What did you do while you were there?

Naylor: Nothing.

Marcello: Just sat around?

Naylor: Just sat around.

Marcello: Did the Japanese rough up any of the prisoners during this one month stay at Priok?

Naylor: Not that I remember. Like I say, we had no contact with them actually. They were outside the barbed wire, and we were inside the barbed wire, so there was really no reason for any contact with them.

Marcello: Except that you were on very, very short rations.

Naylor: (Chuckle) Right.

Marcello: How about the sickness? Did the troops contract very much sickness, or had the battalion contracted very much sickness by this time?

Naylor: No. At Tandjong Priok, as I recall, there was very little sickness--just the normal running nose and headaches and that sort of thing but nothing serious.

Marcello: I see. So you were at Priok for about a month, as you say.

Naylor: Seems about like that.

Marcello: And then you were moved again, and this time it was to the Bicycle Camp.

Naylor: Right, Bicycle Camp in Batavia. Now here the move from Tandjong Priok to Batavia was what you might call a small death march. In it we had to carry everything we possessed, and we walked the distance.

Marcello: About how far was it?

Naylor: I don't know. It seemed to me at the time that it was about 150 miles (chuckle). I don't suppose it was over twelve or fifteen miles at the most.

Marcello: How much equipment were you carrying?

Naylor: Not a great deal--a bed and a duffel bag; that's just about what I had.

Marcello: But I guess your equipment plus the lack of food and water . . .

Naylor: Yeah, it . . .

Marcello: . . . more or less took a toll on the prisoners, perhaps.

Naylor: . . . yeah, it got a little hairy before we got there.

Marcello: Now were you accompanied by Japanese troops . . .

Naylor: Yes . . .

Marcello: . . . on this march?

Naylor: . . . yes. Now here we had guards.

Marcello: Did they rough up any of the prisoners and so on?

Naylor: Yeah, here was the first indication we had of the Japanese nature. If you fell behind, you could expect to get a rifle butt across the rear or somewhere else.

Marcello: Was there ever anybody bayoneted or anything like this . . .

Naylor: Oh, no.

Marcello: . . . that you saw . . .

Naylor: No, no

Marcello: There was nothing this extreme yet?

Naylor: . . . no atrocities, no. Like I say, we got a hit with the bayonet . . . I mean hit with the rifle butt or something like this.

Marcello: Why do you think there was this change in attitude? Well, this is perhaps your first real contact with them anyhow, wasn't it?

Naylor: This is right. This is the first real contact we had with them. This is just the Japanese nature with their own people, so it was really nothing directly against us. This was the same treatment a Japanese soldier would have gotten.

Marcello: Did they make a point of showing the prisoners off to the local population? Did you ever get the feeling that they really wanted to show you off to local population?

Naylor: No, no.

Marcello: They never tried to humiliate the prisoners and so on in front of the natives.

Naylor: Not that I ever noticed. I never got this impression.

Marcello: Okay, so what was the Bicycle Camp like?

Naylor: Oh, it was another Dutch army camp. It had had barbed wire put around it, but other than that it was exactly the same (chuckle) as the others we had been in.

Marcello: I see. And how long had you been there altogether? How long were you at Bicycle Camp altogether?

Naylor: Well, let's see. We got there around the first of May, and we left there in the latter part of November. So we were there around seven or eight months.

Marcello: I see. Describe what a typical day was like at the Bicycle Camp for you personally.

Naylor: Well . . .

Marcello: From the time you got up in the morning until the time you went to bed.

Naylor: Well, it was really just an unending stream of nothingness. There was really nothing to do. We still had a few books and things like this to do. Occasionally I could borrow a book from somebody that I had not read, so I did some reading. We mustered morning and night, and, of course, there was chow three times a day which incidentally was a little better than it was at Tandjong Priok.

Marcello: What did chow consist of?

Naylor: Rice. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Nothing but rice again for the most part.

Naylor: Mostly, yeah. Rice plus a thin soup or possibly vegetables in season and this type thing.

Marcello: What sort of work details did the Japanese have for you at Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: Really nothing. Now they had a few work details that went out each day to the docks, but what they were doing, I don't have any idea. But again I was still supply sergeant, and I had what little canteen we had. I was in charge of the . . . oh, we could manage to get some toothpaste and soup and stuff like this. It was my responsibility to handle this stuff.

Marcello: Where did you get this material?

Naylor: The Nips made it available, as far as I know. Now some of it . . . we still had in the battalion fund. I don't know who it was now, but one of the battalion officers was designated as PX officer, and he could buy some of this stuff occasionally

through the Nips. They'd let him go out and buy this stuff.

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with the local population at the Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: No, none.

Marcello: Was there ever any evidence of atrocities or cruelties here on the part of the Japanese?

Naylor: No, not that I recall.

Marcello: Did they more or less leave the prisoners alone?

Naylor: Yes, we had a little more contact with them. Like I mentioned, we had muster morning and night. Well, the Nips would come in and take the muster. And, of course, there would be Nip guards. But other than that, there was very little contact.

Marcello: Was there ever any escape attempts at Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: No.

Marcello: Apparently this was true throughout the history of the "Lost Battalion." There really never were that many escape attempts, isn't that correct? Mainly because, I suppose, there was no place to go. The jungle was just as hostile, probably, as the Japanese. And, as you were pointing out earlier, the natives apparently had no sense of loyalty, and they, of course, would turn in an escapee. I think the Japanese put a bounty on the heads of any escaped prisoners, did they not?

Naylor: Not that I'm personally aware of. There were plans, and I'm not saying that I was involved in all these plans, (chuckle) but, like you say . . . well, for instance like in Java, I had

spent nearly a month free, wandering around, and I couldn't get off. So why should I think that I could do any better now when it was compounded by the fact that I would have to escape from the camp? So really just common sense told you that there was just no reason to attempt it.

Marcello: How was the morale at this time?

Naylor: Oh, I would say good.

Marcello: Did you still have hope at this time that soon you might possibly be rescued?

Naylor: We never spent over three months at a time in prison.

Marcello: You never looked any more than three months ahead?

Naylor: Right. By the end of three months we were going to be out.
(Chuckle)

Marcello: You were sure of that?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Well, I think this was probably a good thing, because wouldn't you say that this was one of the things, perhaps, that helped you survive--the fact that you apparently never had given up hope?

Naylor: This is right. Oh, some few of the real pessimistic ones said we'd be there a year, so really our morale, so far as I remember, was real good.

Marcello: Were the troops still maintaining fairly good discipline at this time? In other words, were they still obeying their officers and what have you?

Naylor: Oh yeah, yeah.

Marcello: The officers were still in complete control then?

Naylor: Yeah, I would think so. I don't remember any instances of mutiny or anything.

Marcello: What were some of the rules that the Japanese may have had so far as the prisoners were concerned? What couldn't you do? What were some of the things that you were forbidden to do or to have?

Naylor: Well, for one thing we couldn't leave this compound without a pass. Of course, we couldn't leave the camp. You could not go into the Japanese area or something like this. And then, of course, you could not have radios, anything like this. We had shake-down inspections every once in a while looking for weapons or radios or this type thing.

Marcello: How about razors, razor blades, things like that?

Naylor: No, we could keep them. In fact we could have them in the PX. I sold several packages of razor blades. (Chuckle)

Marcello: What would happen if the Japanese perhaps found some forbidden objects or what have you? What would happen to the person that had these items?

Naylor: In Batavia I don't know. I don't really know what would have happened.

Marcello: They never really found any of these forbidden objects then at Batavia, at the Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: Not so far as I ever knew. They told us to turn in our steel

helmets, and I was one of the hard-headed ones that wouldn't. We got wind that there was going to be a showdown inspection, so I tossed mine up in the attic. The ceiling was only built about two-thirds the way. The center third was just open, so I tossed mine up in there on top of the ceiling by one of the sides. As far as I know, it's still there. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You never did go up and get it. What was the barracks itself like? Could you describe it?

Naylor: Well, it was a stone barracks, single story. It had a wide veranda on both sides. I think we had one on both sides. The center aisle was about six feet wide, and then the bays were about six by eight on each side of this center aisle the entire length. The doors were right in the center, one on each side.

Marcello: Were you sleeping on mats?

Naylor: Whatever you could get--blankets, concrete floors as I recall, something like a mosaic or something like this.

Marcello: Now was this another one of those permanent Dutch camps?

Naylor: Right. In Tandjong Priok and Malang it was a permanent Dutch camp.

Marcello: What was your own physical condition like during your stay at the Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: Oh, I was good.

Marcello: You were still in good shape. You had no malaria . . .

Naylor: Nothing.

Marcello: . . . no beriberi, none of these diseases usually associated

with the prisoners in the camp--not at this time anyway.

Naylor: Not at this time. I had nothing. Oh, I think, maybe I had colds a time or two, but this was all. And there were very, very few that were sick there. Only one, so far as I know, died there. A fellow named Griffin.

Marcello: G-R-I-F-F-I-N.

Naylor: Right, from Wichita Falls. And as far as I know, he was the only one that died while we were there.

Marcello: Was there ever any evidence of collaboration by any of the prisoners with the Japanese in order to get any special favors and so on at Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: No, no.

Marcello: None of this?

Naylor: None of this.

Marcello: What did you do to pass away the time? You said there weren't too many work details at Bicycle Camp during your stay there, so what did you do to pass away the time?

Naylor: Oh, I don't remember. I do remember that we had a chess set, and Blackie and I used to play chess quite frequently. Again, there were still some books floating around that I hadn't read. And one of the big things we used to do was that Blackie Eastham and I used to argue. We could get into a good argument over any subject you could think of. Today he would be arguing one way and I'd be arguing the other; tomorrow on the same subject we would switch and argue reversely. So actually it was pretty

much a running debate that we kept up all the time.

Marcello: Did this idleness produce quite a few arguments and perhaps even fights on part of the prisoners?

Naylor: Very, very few if any. I don't recall any.

Marcello: How was your weight at this time?

Naylor: Oh, normal. I was about 155 or so.

Marcello: You hadn't lost too much weight then?

Naylor: No, no.

Marcello: And I suppose this was generally true of all the other prisoners also?

Naylor: Basically, yes. There were a few of them that had lost some weight, but not to a large extent.

Marcello: Are there any individual Japanese that stand out in your mind at this time? Had you started giving the Japanese guards nicknames yet? I know this happened later on.

Naylor: Not that I recall. We didn't have all that much contact with them then.

Marcello: I assume that the Japanese had sent you to Bicycle Camp . . . while they were waiting to send you to the various work projects or details at other points either on Java or on the island itself. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: You lost me there.

Marcello: In other words they were probably just waiting until they had some work details for you to do before they moved you out of there.

Naylor: I don't really know. I don't think they actually had any projects in Java itself that they had in mind, so all they were doing was marking time until they could come up with something.

Marcello: Right. This is what I more or less gathered from what you've said and also from what the other prisoners said. Now I assume at Bicycle Camp there were also other nationalities. Is that correct?

Naylor: Yes.

Marcello: There were other nationalities there.

Naylor: Yes, mostly Australian and some few Dutch.

Marcello: Did you ever have much contact with any of these other nationalities?

Naylor: The Australians fairly frequently.

Marcello: Were relations pretty civil between the Americans and the Australians?

Naylor: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: How about your friends like George Stevenson? Now was he back with the Australians again, or was he still remaining with your group?

Naylor: He finally had to go back to the Australians. We were already in Bicycle Camp at the time it was discovered that he was an Australian, and they put him back over in the . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . in the Australian barracks.

Marcello: Is there anything else that stands out during your stay at

Bicycle Camp that you think ought to be a part of the record? Either anything of a serious nature or anything of a humorous nature.

Naylor: Well, one little highlight of a humorous nature. The survivors of the USS Houston were in the same camp with us, and the barracks that I was in and the barracks that Houston boys were in faced each other across this open compound. Well, at muster we would fall out in front of each barracks, of course, facing each other across the compound. Well, the Nips came out with an order that you were to cut your hair short, and so most of us shaved them. I know I shaved mine, and most of the Houston boys did, too. But several of them over there had grown beards, and I mean real bushy, black beards. And that night when they fell out for muster that was the funniest sight that you ever saw. You looked across there, and all you could see was a bunch of shiny heads, and about half of them had big black beards down there. And this Navy lieutenant--I can't recall his name now--who was in charge of them, instead of hollering, "Fall in!" he hollered, "Rack 'em up!"

Marcello: Rack 'em up. (Chuckle) Why did the Japanese have you shave your heads or have your hair cut short? Was this to prevent lice . . .

Naylor: I'm sure.

Marcello: . . . and things such as that.

Naylor: I'm sure it was for sanitary purposes. They all had their heads shaved.

Marcello: I was going to say that just about all the pictures that you see of the Japanese soldiers usually shows them with shaved heads.

Naylor: Right. Again, this was, only the normal army treatment that the Japanese got.

Marcello: What sort of sanitary facilities were available at Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: There was latrine with running water and showers.

Marcello: You did have the opportunity to bathe regularly and so on?

Naylor: Oh, yes, they had showers.

Marcello: So when did you move out of Bicycle Camp?

Naylor: It was some time in the latter part of November.

Marcello: This would be November of 1942. Is that correct?

Naylor: Right, right.

Marcello: And where did you go from there?

Naylor: We loaded on a boat in Batavia Harbor, I think, but I don't really remember. (Chuckle) I'm sure that's where we went from, and we went up along the coast of Sumatra and landed in Singapore.

Marcello: What happened on this trip to Singapore? Is there anything that stands out in your mind? First of all, describe the ship you boarded.

Naylor: It was a Japanese freighter . . .

Marcello: And as I recall it was a pretty decrepit one too, was it not?

Naylor: Right. I was trying to think I believe this was the Dai Moji

Maru. Now the "Dai Maru," I think, means "great ship," and the center word was the name of the ship. But it was an old decrepit freighter, and the only thing I recall about it was that we were packed into the hold there. There was about two square feet per person, I think, something like that. We were real closely packed in there.

Marcello: Well, describe exactly what this trip was like. Apparently the conditions were quite horrible in this ship. Is that correct?

Naylor: On that ship I don't recall anything especially wrong other than being crowded.

Marcello: How many ships were there altogether?

Naylor: You know, I don't remember. So far as I know, it was just that one.

Marcello: I see. In other words all the members of the battalion were . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . crammed into the hold, I assume, of this one ship.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Were you allowed on deck?

Naylor: Yeah, yeah, we could go on deck, but it's very strange that I don't remember hardly anything about that trip. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did you ever have any submarine scares or . . .

Naylor: Nothing that I know of. Of course, at that time, see, this was the latter part of '42, and this was north of Java.

Marcello: The Japanese were still in control.

Naylor: They were. There wasn't allied shipping that I know of in that area at that time.

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

Naylor: Yeah, all the time we were in Java a friend of mine had a radio; in fact this Sergeant Karney I mentioned a while ago had a radio. So we kept pretty well.

Marcello: Where did he hide that radio? Obviously it was something which was forbidden by the Japanese.

Naylor: Right. Oh, he . . .

Marcello: Were the parts scattered throughout the barracks or something?

Naylor: Yeah. He dismantled it and various people had parts of it. At times I had parts of it, and it was scattered around through the area.

Marcello: What would of happened if the Japanese had caught you?

Naylor: This is a good question. Now we heard later that they had caught a British officer with one. This was up in the jungles, I think. And they had actually beaten him to death in front of the guardhouse. So we don't know what would have happened.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you found out you were going to Singapore, or didn't you really know you were going to Singapore?

Naylor: We had no idea, that is, I didn't. I don't suppose anybody else did until we landed there. Of course, we knew we were headed in that direction, because we kept enough sense of direction and knew enough of the area and all that we knew

about where we were going.

Marcello: Now you weren't at Singapore too long, were you?

Naylor: No, about a month.

Marcello: What did you do while you were there?

Naylor: This was the first place we were actually on work details pretty regularly, and actually the gardening detail is what we were doing.

Marcello: You were on the gardening detail?

Naylor: Right. The Nips had cut down a lot of palm trees and had cleared the space, and we planted vegetable gardens.

Marcello: Now these vegetables were not for you, were they? These were for the Japanese? They may have told you that they were for you, but I think most of these vegetables were designated for the Japanese, isn't this correct?

Naylor: Well, this could be. Of course, we weren't there long enough for them to grow, so we don't really know.

Marcello: That's true. What were your quarters like here at Singapore? Were you right in the city, or were you on the outskirts of . . .

Naylor: No . . .

Marcello: . . . the city?

Naylor: . . . we were in Changi. This was the British Army camp; Changi camp was the British Army camp. And again, these were big stone barracks, two stories, and very similar to the ones in Java with the wide verandas all the way around and the wide

open area in the middle upstairs and down. And again, they had running water and showers, and the sanitary facilities were good.

Marcello: And I assume the physical condition of the battalion was still pretty good at this time.

Naylor: Yes. We were all still in pretty good shape. The real sick, Griffin and a few others, had been left behind in Java.

Marcello: Now was the unit mainly intact at this . . . no, it was not intact, was it? Because some of them had been left behind in Java, and some were eventually sent to Japan. So obviously by this time the unit had been split up, isn't that correct?

Naylor: We were scattered all over the world. E Battery was still up at Surabaja, practically in its entirety. There were a . . . quite a few who had been left in Java, not a full battery or anything, but several individuals. And about August or thereabouts there had been, oh, something around a hundred that had been sent up into Burma before us. They left Batavia about August or thereabouts, so they were somewhere up in the jungle. There had been, oh, I guess a 150 or so that had gone to Japan or were on the way to Japan. And then our group had, oh, possibly a hundred or so. So we were actually split up basically into fourths.

Marcello: Into four groups. One group went to Burma first, one group stayed in Java, one group went to Japan, and then your group eventually got to Burma, also.

Naylor: Yeah.

Marcello: Is there anything else that stands out in your mind during this very short one month stay here at Singapore? Again, you were mainly on this gardening detail, is this correct?

Naylor: Correct.

Marcello: Didn't make any difference whether you were a supply clerk anymore or whatever it was? You were put . . .

Naylor: Oh, no.

Marcello: . . . on the gardening detail by this time.

Naylor: No, we had no supplies by this time. I . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . I had given up my job as supply sergeant. No, there's nothing I recall too much about Changi. We were there Christmas, of course, which was a rather poor Christmas, you might say.

Marcello: Was there any special way that you celebrated it? I use that term "celebrate" loosely (chuckle), of course.

Naylor: I don't remember hardly even mentioning it. The only thing I remember about Changi that really stands out was when we left. We were marching, of course, out of the camp and were headed towards the docks. And there was a Scottish piper who piped us out of the camp which was, I think, quite an honor, really, but this Scottish piper was about, oh, ten yards in front of us, and he marched us all the way out of the camp, you know, with his bagpipe playing.

Marcello: I see. I assume that at Changi there was more or less an international group. There were Americans, some British, and . . .

Naylor: Basically British.

Marcello: . . . Australians? Basically British.

Naylor: Right, it was nearly all British.

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with the British here at Changi?

Naylor: Not a great deal.

Marcello: I keep asking you this point. What I'm trying to get around to asking you is what your opinion was of the British?

Naylor: Well, really, at this time I had not had enough contact with them to know much about them. Now the Australians . . .

Marcello: Were you to form some opinions of the British later on?

Naylor: Yes, sir. (Chuckle)

Marcello: And some rather strong opinions, I assume.

Naylor: Yes, sir.

Marcello: Some negative opinions.

Naylor: Basically negative, right.

Marcello: Okay, I assume we'll talk about those then a little bit later on. Is there anything else, then, which stands out in your mind here at Changi?

Naylor: No, here again, it was just . . .

Marcello: It was more or less a stopping-off place . . .

Naylor: . . . nothingness, right.

Marcello: . . . for prisoners who perhaps were in transit, I suppose you

could say, to be sent on to some other place. Okay, what happens from there then?

Naylor: Well, now here is where the real tale starts.

Marcello: This is when you really knew you were a prisoner-of-war.

Naylor: Right. Actually, we loaded again on a Nip freighter, and we were packed in the hold and on deck and what have you. And we left Singapore and headed north up the Malay coast towards Burma. No, wait a minute, wait a minute! No, we didn't either. We went on the train from Singapore. We got on the train in Singapore, and we went up the Malay Straits to, oh, I can't even think of it now . . .

Marcello: It's not Rangoon.

Naylor: No, it's in Malaya.

Marcello: Still in Malaya.

Naylor: In Malaya, right. But anyway it's in central Malaya where we loaded off the train, and this is where we got on the boat and continued then north up the coast of Malaya.

Marcello: What was the train trip like? Was there anything eventful that happened on it?

Naylor: Negative. Again, we were just crowded in.

Marcello: What sort of a train was it? Was it a passenger train, cattle cars, or what?

Naylor: They were boxcars.

Marcello: Boxcars.

Naylor: Boxcars, right. Of course, you could put about two or three of

them in one of our boxcars.

Marcello: Right.

Naylor: It was just a narrow gauge railway boxcar.

Marcello: I assume it was quite hot inside those boxcars, was it not?

Naylor: Pretty warm, pretty warm.

Marcello: Did they allow you to keep the doors open?

Naylor: Yeah, they let us keep the doors open. Of course, we was so crowded that only a few at a time could get to the door, but it kept some breeze stirred up, and it wasn't really too bad.

Marcello: I assume each one of the cars had a Japanese guard on it or something like that?

Naylor: No, there was guards with the train but none in these cars. But here again, we could have gotten away, but where would we have gone if we had? Of course, the Japanese controlled thousands of miles of territory at that time.

Marcello: They sure did. Then where did you land in Burma? I assume you went from trains, like you say, to central Malaya and eventually took a boat and ended up in Burma. Is that correct?

Naylor: Right. That's right. Actually we landed in Rangoon. Here about two days out of Rangoon is where we saw our first Allied action. There were two Nip freighters. One of them had prisoners on it; the other one had some Dutch prisoners and some Japanese officers. And we were attacked one afternoon by B-25s, I think they were. Of course, we had never seen a B-25, but we think that's what they were. And there were three

airplanes. And the first stick of bombs they dropped, one of them went right smack down the stack of the other ship. The ship I was on sustained two near misses--one on each side. It blew the bridge practically completely off. I don't know whether it killed the ship's captain or not.

Marcello: This was on your ship?

Naylor: Right. It did kill several Japanese sailors and several of the Japanese ship's officers. It did not kill any Allied prisoners on our ship. There were quite a few Dutch who were killed on the other ship.

Marcello: Were you able to witness all this action?

Naylor: No, no, we were . . .

Marcello: You were down in the hold.

Naylor: . . . they forced us down in the hold. But the other ship went down immediately. Well, I might say during the entire experience during World War II, there was only one time I said, "Well, Naylor, this is where you get off." And I wouldn't have given a plugged nickel for my chances for five more minutes on that ship.

Marcello: In other words, I suppose this is one time you were perhaps taking up for the Japanese. You were hoping they would win.

Naylor: (Chuckle) No, I just figured that this was as far as I would go. I'd just had it. And the next thing I remember I'd be either looking at the Pearly Gates or be at the other place.

Marcello: At the same time, however, did this more or less provide a

boost for morale after it was over? At least you knew the Americans were active someplace or somewhere.

Naylor: Yeah, later on, of course, we were real happy about it, but right at that time we didn't think so much of it. And really, I think the only thing that saved us was the Japanese. They had an old army fieldpiece on the back end of this ship, and they'd fire it at those planes, and the thing exploded and caught the back end of the ship on fire. And I honestly believe that those pilots saw the ship burning and thought they hit it, and this was the only reason that they left us alone. But we picked up the survivors off this other ship, and in a couple of days we put into Rangoon. That's the first indication we had that the Allies were actually doing anything over there. (Chuckle)

Marcello: So what happened then after you got to Rangoon?

Naylor: Well, we were put into a Burmese prison that was . . .

Marcello: You mean just a regular penitentiary-type prison.

Naylor: Right. It was actually a penitentiary. I don't know whether it was a state prison or what have you though, but anyway it was a penitentiary. Once again there were real crowded conditions and everything. Now this is really the first place that we got thrown in with any Dutchmen. But there was Dutch that had, you know, come off that other ship, and they were in with us. And, of course, most of them could speak English. Nearly every Dutchman I met could speak real good English, so

we learned quite a bit about them and got acquainted with several of them.

Marcello: What did you think of the Dutch?

Naylor: Pretty so-so. That's an opinion I still have. I don't have real strong opinions either way about the Dutch. They're smart traders, and I suppose that they would be good fighters if they had a chance as some of them in Europe demonstrated. But these people, they did not. So like I say, I'm just kind of so-so on the Dutch, no strong feelings either way.

Marcello: How long were you in this prison altogether?

Naylor: It was a period of some weeks, but I don't remember exactly.

Marcello: Again, you did nothing while you were there?

Naylor: Absolutely nothing. It seems like it was about a month or something like that.

Marcello: Generally speaking, the unit was still in pretty good physical condition at this time.

Naylor: Yes, we were not in bad shape at all.

Marcello: Maybe a little loss of weight perhaps?

Naylor: Oh, I'm sure there was but nothing real noticeable. I was about normal, and most of the ones that I had real close contact with, you know, were about the same.

Marcello: Okay, what happened then?

Naylor: Now here I don't recall real plain. I do know we left Rangoon and went up into central Burma to Thanbuzayay. Now how we got to there, I don't recall. It seems like it was on a train, but

I don't remember . . .

Marcello: Now, I assume . . .

Naylor: . . . just don't remember anything at all about it for some reason.

Marcello: Now I assume by this time it was quite clear they were going to have you working on this railroad. Isn't that correct?

Naylor: We didn't know.

Marcello: You didn't know it, but apparently this is where you were headed . . .

Naylor: Oh, I'm sure, yes.

Marcello: . . . going to begin work on the railroad.

Naylor: Yes, it was . . .

Marcello: In fact, work on the railroad had already begun. I assume that other groups from Java had already been sent there to work on the railroad. Is that correct?

Naylor: Right. They had been over there for several months working on it. Right. Of course, this we didn't know at the time, but it turned out later that they had. And they had also had, oh, the Burmese and Thais and these indigenous people were also working on it.

Marcello: This was forced labor, I assume.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: The Burmese and the Thais and so on, anyhow.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: They were civilians.

- Naylor: Right. They were civilians. But anyway, we were in Thanbuyzayat for just a short while. I don't recall how we got from Thanbuyzayat on up to the railroad, but we went into . . . oh, I don't even recall what kilo marking it was now, the first camp we were in. But anyway, it was a bamboo hut.
- Marcello: Was it about the Forty Kilo Camp? Does that sound about right, or is that too high? I'm just taking a guess here myself. I'm trying to recall what some of the other "Lost Battalion" people had said.
- Naylor: This sounds . . . let me look right here. I remembered it this time.
- Marcello: You landed at the Eighteen Kilo Camp.
- Naylor: Eighteen Kilo Camp, right. And this was the temporary camp actually built with bamboo huts and leaf-topped roofs and everything. And this was where then we started working on the railroad.
- Marcello: Okay. Describe a typical day of working on the railroad. What did you personally do?
- Naylor: Well, we were divided into groups, what they call kumis. This was the Japanese word meaning group, I think. But, well, I know all of the sergeants in the three batteries were in one kumi, which was about twelve or fourteen--something like that. Well, we'd go out, and the Nip would mark off on the ground. If there were fourteen of us, he would mark off twenty-eight meters, and we would have to dig these twenty-eight meters one

meter deep. In other words, we'd move two meters of dirt per man per day, and this was either building a fill or building a cut--one or the other, whatever. If it was fill, of course, we removed the dirt and moved it on to the fill and stacked it up; if it was a cut, well, then we just moved it off to the side. But this is what we did--two meters a day.

Marcello: I assume that you kept working until you met the quota. Is that correct?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Suppose you met the quota before the day was finished?

Naylor: We didn't.

Marcello: The quota was high enough that you would have to work the full day.

Naylor: (Chuckle) Yeah, we worked the full day.

Marcello: What was a full day?

Naylor: Well, there was one old boy from Georgia said, "From 'cain't' see to 'cain't' see." (Chuckle) No, it was dark when we got up, and by the time we ate a little breakfast and got out there it was good daylight. And it was getting pretty close to sundown by the time we'd get back.

Marcello: What was the chow like here?

Naylor: Well, now here . . .

Marcello: We're at the Eighteen Kilo Camp now. Is that correct?

Naylor: Right. Right. It was rice and again we had a thin soup of some kind. Occasionally we'd get some meat and vegetables in

season and tea. we usually had quite a bit of tea.

Marcello: What did you use or eat in order to supplement your diet?
Anything that walked, talked or crawled or . . . I mean did it get to the point, let's say, where you were eating snakes or dogs or cats or things like that?

Naylor: No, not really because there was not any available. (Chuckle)
Had there been some available I'm sure there would have been.
But now the Nips would eat the snakes. They loved it; that was a delicacy. But I don't recall ever seeing one.

Marcello: About how long were you at the Eighteen Kilo Camp altogether?

Naylor: Oh, it must have been two or three months.

Marcello: I see. Did the Japanese treat you pretty roughly at this camp?

Naylor: No, the real bad treatment had not started yet. I don't remember any incidents at the Eighteen Kilo at all.

Marcello: Were there any sort of enclosures or barbed wire around any of these work camps?

Naylor: Oh, yeah. Yeah, the camp itself was surrounded by barbed wire.

Marcello: I see. And the Japanese patrolled the perimeter, I assume.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: What thoughts were on your mind most constantly during your stay at these various camps while you were working on the railroad?

Naylor: Well, now you won't hardly believe this, but the thoughts that were on . . . the biggest percentage of people's minds was hot

cakes. It seemed that of any single item to eat--and food was 90 per cent of what you thought about--the biggest single item was hot cakes. Now why, I don't know, but it seemed like everybody missed having hot cakes.

Marcello: Apparently at this camp you never did see any evidence of any Japanese atrocities or cruelties and so on and so forth?

Naylor: I don't recall anything at the Eighteen Kilo at all.

Marcello: How closely were the work details supervised by the Japanese? Did you have guards at each detail?

Naylor: Right. Each detail had a guard who was actually a Korean. Now here's where we got involved with the Koreans. And each guard was a Korean. The Japanese were actually the engineers who were supervising the building of the railroad, and the Japanese again were pretty good people. But those Koreans, this is where we got to where we didn't think so good of the Koreans.

Marcello: For example, what did the Koreans do?

Naylor: Well, at Eighteen Kilo, nothing really. None of them was real bad there. In fact, I'm not real sure that the guards at Eighteen Kilo were Korean. They could have been Japanese also. But later on is where the Koreans came in.

Marcello: Okay, just keep that in mind, and we'll talk about that a little later on. Let me ask you this then. This is one of the questions which has come up very often when I have talked to people about the experiences of the "Lost Battalion." Does

this railroad have any connection with the bridge on the River Kwai? I'm sure you've heard of the movie, The Bridge on the River Kwai.

Naylor: Yes, I've seen the movie. Actually this is supposed to be based in fact on a bridge which was built at Tamarkan which was in Thailand. And, well, since we are working chronologically here, later on I'll have some remarks about it.

Marcello: About how long were you at the, the Eighteen Kilo Camp altogether?

Naylor: About two or three months.

Marcello: Was this an average stay at each one of the camps?

Naylor: Seems like it was as best I can recall.

Marcello: I suppose it would have depended on the terrain, too. I mean the more difficult the terrain, I suppose, the longer you'd have had to have stayed at one place until you . . .

Naylor: I'm sure this is right.

Marcello: . . . got it finished.

Naylor: On the part of the road that I worked on, the area was fairly well constant. Now on up into Thailand there was some extremely high bridges and extremely deep cuts through practically solid rock, which I'm sure took a whole lot longer to do than the area we were working on.

Marcello: Now during your various activities of sorts at these Kilo camps, was there anything that the prisoners did to sabotage the work?

Naylor: Nothing that I know of. How can you sabotage a shovel full of dirt?

Marcello: This is all you had, just picks and shovels? You were not working with any equipment other than that?

Naylor: No, no, no.

Marcello: How about the dynamite charges and things like that? Were the Japanese handling that sort of thing?

Naylor: Oh, yes. I don't recall any dynamite until way later, but when they did, the Japanese had it. We had no access to anything like that at all.

Marcello: I see. Then from the Eighteen Kilo Camp where did you proceed to next? To which particular camp?

Naylor: It seems like it was the Eighty Kilo . . .

Marcello: You went from the . . .

Naylor: . . . that we went to.

Marcello: Eighteen to the Eighty Kilo . . .

Naylor: Right . . .

Marcello: . . . Camp.

Naylor: . . . right.

Marcello: Now did things get a little bit tougher at the Eighty Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Not for me personally. No, now wait a minute. We went to Eighty-five Kilo Camp.

Marcello: From the Eighteenth to the Eighty-five Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Right. The Eighty-five Kilo Camp. And here was practically the same as the Eighteenth, not a great deal of illness. I personally did not get sick at all. And, oh, there was nothing

unusual at all. The food was about the same. The treatment was about the same, and the work remained about the same. Now this was all still during the dry season. So Eighteen and Eighty-five Kilo Camps were just about the same.

Marcello: Did you still have Japanese guards? You hadn't encountered those Korean guards yet?

Naylor: Not that I recall . . .

Marcello: They came a little bit later on.

Naylor: . . . they could have been Koreans, but we didn't start getting the treatment that we got later on.

Marcello: Did the work differ in any way at the Eighty-five Kilo Camp from what it was at the Eighteen Kilo Camp?

Naylor: As I recall, it was practically identical.

Marcello: You were still shoveling dirt . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . from sunup to sundown . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . from dark to dark as you put it awhile ago. (Chuckle)
"From 'cain't' see to 'cain't' see" as the old boy said.
(Chuckle) What was the barracks like here at the Eighty-five Kilo Camp?

Naylor: They were bamboo.

Marcello: Same sort of structure that you found at the other camp?

Naylor: Exactly.

Marcello: Now at these various camps was there a mixture of nationalities once again?

Naylor: No, no, they were strictly American.

Marcello: These were strictly American.

Naylor: Strictly American.

Marcello: You hadn't had those contacts with the British yet . . .

Naylor: No.

Marcello: . . . where you formed your rather strong opinions about that particular nationality. How about cruelties and atrocities on the part of the Japanese guards? Did you see very much of that at the Eighty-five Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Not that I recall at all.

Marcello: Did they rough up the prisoners at all?

Naylor: Oh, you got a whack across the rear, stuff like this, you know, if they thought you were moving too slow or something. But it was nothing very drastic.

Marcello: Did you ever experience any of this personally? Did you ever get whacked anytime by the Japanese . . .

Naylor: Not up to this time.

Marcello: . . . up to this time?

Naylor: No. (Chuckle) Well, I was lucky, I guess. Up to this time, no. I had no personal contact at all with the Japanese.

Marcello: Again, I would assume that there were no more escape attempts. That was, I gather, a remote possibility so far as the prisoners were concerned.

Naylor: By this time there had even ended any talk about it.

Marcello: How was the morale of the troops by the time you got to the Eighty-five Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Oh, it was just as it had always been. We were still living it three to six months at a time.

Marcello: I see. You were still hoping that sooner or later, or you believed anyhow, that within three to six months time you'd be released, perhaps . . .

Naylor: Oh, yeah.

Marcello: . . . you'd be liberated.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: About how long were you at the Eighty-five Kilo Camp altogether?

Naylor: A fairly short time. It seems like about a month or so.

Marcello: What would determine how long you stayed at each one of these camps?

Naylor: I suppose it would be the progress of the work we were . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . required to do.

Marcello: In other words, when you got your work done you moved on to another camp.

Naylor: Right, right.

Marcello: Okay, from the Eighty-five Kilo Camp, you moved to the . . . which one?

Naylor: We went back down to the Eighty Kilo Camp.

Marcello: Why that particular procedure?

Naylor: Well, I don't know. I sure don't know. But Eighty Kilo was a considerably bigger camp, and I suppose that they just had the work around there to do.

Marcello: Did things differ at the Eighty Kilo Camp from what they had been at either the Eighteen or the Eighty-five Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Yes, to a large extent. Now here, we were there when the rainy season started which was the fall, of course, in '43. And this, of course, made our work considerably more difficult, because we worked in the rain all day long. And the work differed quite a bit. Here we were still digging, but also some kumis would go out, and you'd have to go up on the side of the hill and pick up rocks and bring them down and rock the road. So the work differed quite a bit. And like I say it rained continually.

Marcello: I assume this took a toll on the troops so far as health was concerned.

Naylor: Right. Now here was where you started having quite a few get sick.

Marcello: What did they usually get sick from? What was the cause of the illness?

Naylor: Dysentery and tropical ulcers.

Marcello: Did you ever have any of the tropical ulcers?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: What were they like? Describe what your tropical ulcers were like.

Naylor: Well, it started one day when I was carrying rocks, and we had to take a hammer and then break the rocks up, you know, into manageable pieces. And there was a chip that flew off and hit

me on the shin. Well, it acted just like an infection does over here. It just became red and got larger and larger and larger. And eventually, I think mine got to be, oh, possibly three inches in diameter, just a raw, open wound. I have seen them, oh, they would start up about the knee and go down and completely encompass the foot with a raw, running sore, you know.

Marcello: What sort of means were used to remedy these tropical ulcers?

Naylor: Soak them in hot water. That's the only thing you could do.

Marcello: Did this help?

Naylor: Yeah, yeah, it did. In fact, there was several of them that healed up. Of course, mine healed up.

Marcello: I understand that some of the prisoners used maggots, did they not, to clean out the dead flesh and so on from the tropical ulcers.

Naylor: Yeah, this was a Dutch doctor, I believe, later on that used this treatment. He would get maggots, actually from the latrine, I think, is where he got them. And he would wash them and put them into the sore itself.

Marcello: And let them eat out the dead flesh . . .

Naylor: The idea would be that the maggots would eat the dead flesh out. And I suppose it was effective. I never actually saw anybody do it, and I didn't have it done to me, but I do know this went on.

Marcello: Did you have any other illnesses in addition to the tropical

ulcer? Did you come down with malaria or dysentery or beriberi

. . .

Naylor: Yeah . . .

Marcello: . . . or pellagra?

Naylor: . . . yeah, I came down with malaria here. I remember I had gone forty-five days, working every day in the rain before I came down. There was one person--he was a boy off the Houston--that went longer. I think he went about fifty some odd days. (Chuckle) But I went next to the longest.

Marcello: Did you have a pretty serious case of malaria?

Naylor: Here, no. I did not; it was comparatively light, and at this time we still had quite a bit of quinine.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you had any medicine to treat the malaria.

Naylor: Yes, here we still had quite a bit of quinine, so it knocked mine. Basically, my health was pretty good.

Marcello: How about the rest of the unit? Did you lose very many men here?

Naylor: Yes, we lost quite a few. I'd hesitate to say how many, but I do know we lost several.

Marcello: How many would you say you lost per day? Would you have any way of knowing or guessing?

Naylor: Oh, it would be real hard to say. Some days we might not lose any, and some days we might lose four or five. So it would be real hard to say. I do know we had a pretty good-sized cemetery.

Marcello: Did you ever manage to get on any of the burial details?

Naylor: Here, no. I did not.

Marcello: Is there anything else that you think we ought to talk about that happened at Eighty Kilo Camp? Apparently, there weren't too many humorous things that happened here.

Naylor: No, not really. Here was where I got the nickname that I come by and am sometimes called by. The nickname is "Zeke."

Marcello: "Zeke?"

Naylor: "Zeke."

Marcello: How did you get that name?

Naylor: I don't really know, really. (Chuckle) It's just one of those things that develops. But for a while I was "Doc Zeke."

Marcello: "Doc Zeke?"

Naylor: Yeah. Our medical officer, Captain Lumpkin, died here at the camp, and we had a Navy corpsman who was the senior medical officer. And we were real short-handed, so I acted as a medical orderly for quite a while. And, actually, I didn't do anything but just carry water, and I dressed a couple of ulcers and this type of thing.

Marcello: Now, were your illnesses or afflictions as such that you were not able to work, or did you still continue to work with the ulcers and the malaria and so on?

Naylor: Most of the time, I worked. Very few days I didn't work.

Marcello: How could you get on sick call?

Naylor: Well . . .

Marcello: Who determined whether or not you would go on sick call?

Naylor: . . . well, the Nips, really. They would fall out the work party, and if enough showed up, well, then it was all right. But if enough didn't show up, well, then they came in the barracks, and they said, "You, you and you, you're on the work party." So it was just whether you were sick enough that the Nips thought you were sick enough or not, and that was the way you wound up on sick call.

Marcello: Up to this time, then, you were mostly on the pick and shovel job, isn't that correct . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . with the exception of the short time, now, that you apparently . . .

Naylor: Right. We had to . . .

Marcello: . . . were in the hospital as an orderly?

Naylor: . . . yeah, well, of course, I worked several days, too, carrying rocks. I was on that detail quite a bit. You would go up the side of the hill and load a yo-ho, a piece of bamboo with a couple of holes running through it. Actually, all it was was a couple of bamboo poles about, oh, eight feet long, and then it was laced with bamboo for a distance of about four feet and about three feet wide. One man got on each end of it and carried a load of rocks down.

Marcello: Describe the terrain through which you were building this railroad? What was the terrain or the geography like?

Naylor: It was basically jungle, that is, real thick undergrowth and fairly tall trees and pretty mountainous--not mountainous, really, but extremely hilly. To an old West Texas boy, they looked like mountains to me. (Chuckle) But it was extremely rocky on the hills. There were shrubs and trees and what have you growing on them.

Marcello: Well, were you having to cut through the jungle? Was this thick jungle or not?

Naylor: Originally, no, when we first got there because it was at the end of the dry season . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . and everything was pretty well dried up. But then later on during the rainy season it started getting overgrown pretty good.

Marcello: So what did you . . .

Naylor: . . . with vines and stuff like that.

Marcello: So what did you do? Did you have to cut down the trees and the vines and so on or . . .

Naylor: Yeah, we used . . .

Marcello: Were you on these details, too?

Naylor: Well, no, this was just part of the regular work detail. You cleared off the area, and the Nips showed you what to dig, and (chuckle) that's what you dug.

Marcello: But I mean so far as cutting down the trees and so on, did they issue you axes and what have you to cut down the trees or

Naylor: Yeah. Now I know we had details to cut wood for the kitchen. Of course, all we used was wood. But I don't really remember cutting down any trees for the railroad. I'm sure we did, but I don't know. I guess when the Nips took out the kitchen detail to get wood for the kitchen he just had them cut where the railroad stopped. I never had thought of that.

Marcello: I see. Then next you were on your way to the One Hundred Kilo Camp, is that correct?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: From the Eighty you jumped up to the One Hundred Kilo Camp.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: And this, I assume, was perhaps the worst of all of them.

Naylor: This was the worst of all.

Marcello: Okay, first of all, describe the One Hundred Kilo Camp. What did it look like from a physical standpoint?

Naylor: Oh, it was exactly the same as the others. It had the bamboo huts that were, of course, open except for the uprights and the roof. And, oh, I don't remember anything that would distinguish it from any of the others, I don't imagine.

Marcello: And this is where you distinctly remember the Korean guards, is that correct?

Naylor: Right, right. This is where the Korean guards became their worst.

Marcello: Okay, describe the Korean guards and their activities.

Naylor: Well, in the first place, you've always heard about the Nips

being little men. Well, as for the Koreans, this is not true. Some of those guards (chuckle) were as big as I am.

Marcello: That is, the Koreans were as big as you were.

Naylor: Right, right. And they were just actually mean. They loved to slap you around and, oh, hit you with rifle butts or bamboo poles and what have you.

Marcello: Was this their favorite form of treatment?

Naylor: Yes. I think they just did for the kicks of doing it. I don't know of any other reason. Now here again the Nip engineers were pretty nice guys. Several of them that we worked with, I'd talk to them and what have you and get to be pretty good friends with them. But the Koreans were, well, they were just mean, that's all.

Marcello: Some prisoners have speculated that this was perhaps because of the fact that the Japanese had traditionally stomped on the Koreans, and now for the first time the Koreans had the opportunity to stomp on somebody. In other words, the Americans were the low men on the packing order, I suppose you could say, and some people speculated that this was perhaps the reason why the Koreans were so cruel, which apparently they were.

Naylor: Well, this could be. And I think, too, that . . . see, the Japanese engineers were reasonably well-educated, and, oh, they had done some reading. Well, they knew pretty well what America was. Well, the Koreans were just a bunch of people that they had taken out of paddy fields and what have you and

put them in a uniform. And I think it was actually just a planned program here that they tried to build their ego up to make them think that they were better than the prisoners. And this was one of their methods of showing it. I honestly believe that this is what brought the whole situation on.

Marcello: Did the Koreans guard both the camp and the work details . . .

Naylor: Right . . .

Marcello: . . . also?

Naylor: They manned the guardposts and the guardhouse at the main gate.

Marcello: Was the bulk of the military personnel made up of Koreans?

Naylor: Yes, yes. The Japanese railroad crew was very small.

Marcello: In other words, they were mostly engineers, as you were pointing out before--technicians of some sort . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . whereas most of the actual military people here were Koreans . . .

Naylor: Koreans.

Marcello: . . . who had been conscripted by the Japanese, I assume.

Naylor: That is right.

Marcello: Now what else made this One Hundred Kilo Camp so bad other than the fact that the Koreans were apparently belting you around pretty regularly?

Naylor: Of course, we were still in the rainy season, and here was where we lost the biggest bulk or percentage of our people with dysentery and tropical ulcers and some cholera--we had an outbreak of cholera, too--and, of course, malaria.

Marcello: What was your own physical condition at this particular time, that is, during your stay at the One Hundred Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Now, here I would say is where everybody but me thought I was going to die. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Why was this so?

Naylor: Well, I had no scales or anything, but I'm sure I got below a hundred pounds up here. I know my bicep muscle here, I could reach around it and close my fingers. So, I was in pretty bad shape.

Marcello: And you were suffering from malaria . . .

Naylor: Malaria . . .

Marcello: . . . also?

Naylor: . . . basically, yeah.

Marcello: How about the dysentery or the beriberi?

Naylor: No dysentery and no beriberi.

Marcello: How did the physical condition effect your work? Were you able to work?

Naylor: Oh, yeah, I worked practically every day.

Marcello: Now, is it also true that many of the prisoners dreaded going on sick call or dreaded going to the prison hospital or whatever it was? I've heard stories that actually that at the Hundred Kilo Camp, I guess it was, that most people who went to the prison hospital never came out again, you know, that it was . . .

Naylor: Well . . .

Marcello: . . . they had one foot in the grave by the time they went there.

Naylor: . . . this is basically right. Of course, the hospital so called was nothing other than an isolated tent, I mean isolated hut, just like the rest of them. The only difference that I remember is the Nips didn't go into the hospital to actually (chuckle) conscript the people for the work details. And so as you say, when you went in there you were normally on your last leg, so for this reason, I guess, you might say very few of them came out. I don't recall any actual reluctance in the going over there. Usually, if a man was sick enough that they wanted to take him to the hospital, he was so far gone anyway that he didn't have any objections. The fact that you were not in the hospital was no guarantee that you weren't sick anyway. I remember one morning there was a man off the Houston--I don't recall now what his name was--but he was right next to me in the barracks. And all of a sudden he just kind of gurgled and he was dead. And this was not in the hospital. So like I say, even though you weren't in the hospital, it didn't mean you weren't sick.

Marcello: Did you ever see anybody get the so-called "death hiccups," is that what they were called? Did you ever hear that term being used?

Naylor: No, I don't think I am familiar with the term at all.

Marcello: Well, apparently, at this camp some of the prisoners told me

that this was one of the sure ways, perhaps, that you knew that somebody was going to die. Apparently, at some time before he died they would get what were called the "death hiccups." And they simply couldn't stop hiccuping. And . . .

Naylor: No, I don't recall . . .

Marcello: . . . eventually they died. What else made things so bad at the Hundred Kilo Camp? You've mentioned the Korean guards, of course; it was still the rainy season; the malaria and the other diseases were apparently rather rampant. About how many prisoners were you losing a day here? Could you estimate this?

Naylor: Oh, this would be real hard to do. It seems to me that we had some every day, but how many I don't know. I know a friend of mine was making biers for them, and I know he told me one day he had four, I think, that particular day that he had made. Now this kind of a sidelight on the Koreans. He went up to this Korean, oh, early in the morning before work call and asked permission to go out and cut bamboo to make these biers.

Marcello: What did they make a bier from? You are referring to something like a coffin, aren't you?

Naylor: Yeah, it was a bamboo deal that they put them on to drop them in the hole.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: And the Nip thought he was just trying to get out of the work

detail, and he proceeded to beat the mortal thunder out of him. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You called this guy a "Nip," but he was actually . . .

Naylor: Well, he was a Korean . . .

Marcello: . . . a Korean, right. But they were all Nips.

Naylor: Yeah, yeah they were all Nips . . .

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: . . . to me or to everybody else. But this was just a sidelight, see. But later on, then, the . . . I don't remember what rank he was, but he was a little higher ranking than the guy that beat up the prisoner. But this high ranking officer found about it, and he came around and more or less apologized to him and gave him a cigar and told him to go get his bamboo and all of this, see. Well, the Koreans actually were real strange. One time they were real friendly, and the next time they'd just beat the thunder out of you.

Marcello: Well, now this particular individual that allowed this man to go out and cut his bamboo, was this a Japanese or was this another . . .

Naylor: No, I believe he was . . .

Marcello: . . . Korean?

Naylor: . . . Korean, also.

Marcello: Korean, also?

Naylor: Yeah.

Marcello: Is there anything else that happened at the Hundred Kilo Camp

that stands out in your mind?

Naylor: No, nothing . . .

Marcello: Did you ever see any experiences of anybody who perhaps just simply gave up . . .

Naylor: Oh, yes . . .

Marcello: . . . you know, just simply layed down and died . . .

Naylor: . . . yeah.

Marcello: . . . you know, just gave up.

Naylor: Oh, I'd say that 90 per cent of the ones that died, this is the reason they died. They just flat gave up. Didn't want to live.

Marcello: What do you think kept you going?

Naylor: My hard head. (Chuckle) That's all. This friend of mine, Max Offerle, had a tropical ulcer, oh, all the way down his leg. It was tremendous, but Max never did give up. And he always fought it, and soaking it with hot water was all he could do. But he was up two or three times every night soaking that thing. And he sure made it. Well, this is what it took. Several others--Charlie Russell--Charlie just gave up, and sure enough inside of a week they was planting him over there. So this is the only reason they died, and in 90 per cent of the instances they just decided that they weren't going to make it and just quit.

Marcello: Were there any other nationalities in this Hundred Kilo Camp besides the Americans?

Naylor: I don't think so.

Marcello: This was almost strictly an American Camp.

Naylor: Seems to me that it was strictly American.

Marcello: Were these mostly "Lost Battalion" boys and members of the Houston?

Naylor: Right, right. Yeah, that was all we ever had up to this time.

Marcello: About how long were you at the Hundred Kilo Camp altogether?

Naylor: Oh, several months. I left there in January of '44, so it must have been four or five months where I was at.

Marcello: And all this time you were still doing the same type of work that you had been doing at Eighteen Kilo Camp and the Eighty Kilo Camp and the Eighty-five Kilo Camp.

Naylor: Well, basically the Eighty. We were still rocking the road and keeping it to where the Nip traffic could go through plus the work on the railroad tracks.

Marcello: While you were working on this railroad, were you ever subjected to any bombing raids or air raids of any sort?

Naylor: Up to now, no, nothing.

Marcello: Okay, so where'd you move from the Hundred Kilo Camp?

Naylor: Okay, now here's . . .

Marcello: Where'd you go next?

Naylor: We went into Kanburi, Thailand. I remember we left Hundred Kilo fairly early that morning, and we had traveled all day until well into the night when we unloaded at Kanburi.

Marcello: How did you travel?

Naylor: On boxcars.

Marcello: On boxcars. Over the railroad that you had built or that was being built, or was this another railroad?

Naylor: Over the one we had built, by golly, (chuckle) come to think of it. It sure was; it was the one we had built. Actually, it ran from Thanbuyzayat, Burma, into Kanburi, Thailand. This is where we built the railroad, so the one we went in on was the one we had built. And of course, we hadn't built the part that we went over, because we had come from the other direction.

Marcello: Well, eventually, this railroad also went to Moulmein, did it not, somewhere along the way?

Naylor: There was already one from Moulmein to Thanbuyzayat.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: We just tied on to it.

Marcello: I see. Now some of the prisoners did work on that Moulmein railroad, however, did they not? Seems to me some of them did.

Naylor: I didn't think so. I thought there was one from Moulmein already to Thanbuyzayat.

Marcello: Maybe this is so, then.

Naylor: Well, they might have. I didn't personally, but I thought Thanbuyzayat was the end of it.

Marcello: I see. So what did you do when you got to Thailand?

Naylor: Oh, this was basically a hospital camp. I don't remember any

work details at all at Kanburi. We were just there, and this was, I guess, about the best camp I was in during the war.

Marcello: What made it the best camp?

Naylor: Basically, the food. It seems that that area of Thailand was a pretty good vegetable-growing area, and we had a pretty good supply of rice and vegetables. There were Dutch cooks there, and they knew how to cook this stuff to where there was a taste to it. So the food actually was better here than at any other prison camp that I was in.

Marcello: About how long were you at this camp altogether?

Naylor: Oh, until up in the summer. I would say four or five months.

Marcello: Up into the summer of 1944?

Naylor: Right. One amusing sidelight, here. I was in charge of one of these cars, one of the boxcars, coming from the jungle up there. Well, I had a bunch of . . . they actually could walk, but they had to use crutches. Well, when we loaded on the train, we loaded from the right side, so we had the crutches and all over in front of the left door for this. And I had a bunch on stretchers and what have you. And one man died on the way up there. But most of them were in reasonable shape. But we had these crutches in front of the door. Well, when we started to unload in Kanburi, we had to unload out of this left door. Well, the Nips were standing out there banging on the door, you know. Well, we started moving the crutches so we could get the door open, and the Nips banged and hollered. So

finally we got the crutches away from the door and got the door open. Well, of course, I was the first guy the Nips saw. So he reaches up and swung on me. Well, I just kind of pulled my head back and he missed me, so he hollered some more to me and swung at me again. Well, I did the same thing. I just kind of drew my head back, and he missed me again. So I figured, "Well, we're going to be here all night like this." So (chuckle) he hollered again and he swung. Well, that time I just kind of turned my head to him and let him bang me up the side of the head. He was happy then; he went on. (Chuckle) So we (chuckle) unloaded out of the car. (Chuckle) But I guess he would have stayed there all night trying to swing on me there if I'd have kept ducking. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Why do you think they sent you to this camp in Thailand? Any special reason? Now you said it was a hospital camp. Had they sent the group there . . .

Naylor: Well . . .

Marcello: . . . possibly because you were in such bad physical shape?

Naylor: I think basically that this is what it was.

Marcello: Did you get any sort of medical attention at . . .

Naylor: No . . .

Marcello: . . . this camp?

Naylor: . . . no, no more so than we were getting. But at least there were no work details. And by then, of course, it was nice weather again. The rainy season was over, and all in all it was just a whole lot freer atmosphere.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: The only time I recall that I had there . . . instead of barbed wire, the camp had a bamboo outer perimeter fence about, oh, five feet high, I guess. Well, about three feet then inside of this outside perimeter fence there was another railing fence about three feet high. Well, they had prisoners patrolling inside this little three foot fence, and this was real good duty because you got extra rations for it. You got an extra meal when you switched at midnight.

Marcello: Why . . .

Naylor: You ate it before you went on at midnight or after you came off at midnight.

Marcello: Why did they use the prisoners for guard details?

Naylor: Well, I think the idea was that the Japanese patrolled between them, see--the big outside fence--and they were to keep the prisoners in and then the prisoners patrolled the inside--the little fence--to keep the Japanese in. (Chuckle) This didn't always work. We had one old boy that nearly every night he wanted to go into town, so he'd come out and he'd tell the prisoner he was going into town and, "You take my watch, see." He'd slide this bamboo up and go out through the fence and go into town. He'd come back then in about an hour or two.

Marcello: This was the Japanese guard?

Naylor: That was a Japanese guard. Yeah.

Marcello: Did you have much contact with the natives at this particular camp?

Naylor: Not really. We had very little contact with the native people over there at any time.

Marcello: Where did you go from Thailand then?

Naylor: Well, from Kanburi we went up to Tamarkan. That's one I mentioned a while ago . . .

Marcello: That's correct.

Naylor: . . . on the River Kwai. But we marched, oh, it must have been about five or six miles.

Marcello: Had you regained your strength and your health pretty much by this time?

Naylor: Yeah, yeah I was fine.

Marcello: You were over a hundred pounds now?

Naylor: Yeah, I was well back over a hundred pounds.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: But we went from Kanburi to Tamarkan, and it was only about a two or three hour march, so it couldn't have been a great distance. And here was where I kind of got an "in," as you might call it, with our medical officer. He was a commander of the Navy, and, of course, he was the same equivalent rank as Colonel Tharp. Well, Colonel Tharp got to ride, and Commander Epstein had to walk. Well, some of us didn't particularly look on that too well, so we'd been walking about thirty minutes and an old boy named Donald Johnson and I noticed that the

commander was kind of stumbling. He was getting pretty tired. So by this time all I had was a small bedroll. So Johnny took the commander's . . . I believe he had a roll and a big pack. Now Johnny took his roll, and I took his pack which left, of course, the commander carrying nothing. And we carried it on in to Tamarkan. Well, from then on when we wanted to go on sick call or anything, of course, Commander Epstein said okay. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Were you on sick call quite a bit?

Naylor: Ah, not really. There still wasn't anything wrong with me.

Marcello: What was Tamarkan like?

Naylor: This was a pretty nice camp. It was considerably more crowded and a bigger camp.

Marcello: All nationalities here?

Naylor: Yes. And all nationalities here--British, Dutch, Javanese, Australian, the whole bit.

Marcello: And what did you do at this camp?

Naylor: Well, again basically nothing at this time. I don't remember any work details or anything. Of course, at this time there was still not a great deal of Allied activity, so the two bridges across the river there were intact. One of them was a pile bridge, and one was a steel . . . it wasn't a suspension. What do you call the other? Anyway . . .

Marcello: I really don't know.

Naylor: . . . it was a steel bridge that had been in Java. The Nips

had dismantled it and brought it over there and put it across the river. And then there was this one that the prisoners put up with piles.

Marcello: And then this piled bridge was the so-called Bridge over the River Kwai?

Naylor: Right. Right. This is the so-called . . .

Marcello: But you actually didn't work on this, and this had been constructed before you were there.

Naylor: Right. This had already been constructed. And I don't recall anything particular about Tamarkan. We were only there, oh, I'd say a month or six weeks, something like this, until the middle of the summer of '44.

Marcello: Well, had you formed this negative opinion of the British yet, or was this to come later on?

Naylor: Not really. I hadn't had a great deal of experience with them up until now. Tamarkan was basically run by the Dutch. The senior officer was a Dutchman--a Dutch officer.

Marcello: Where were the Japanese? There had to have been some Japanese here, however.

Naylor: Well, yes. Your Japanese guards and all, but the senior officer that . . . you see, your prisoners all the way through had very little contact with the Japanese other than on work details or something like this. All of the administrative details came through the senior Allied officer.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: And in this case it was a Dutch officer. And in Kanburi, of course, this had been Colonel Tharp. He had been senior officer right up the line.

Marcello: Okay, so where did you go from here? Obviously you didn't stay too long, and I assume there wasn't too much of importance that really happened there. Is that correct?

Naylor: At this time, nothing.

Marcello: You were still more or less resting and recuperating, perhaps, a little bit.

Naylor: Right. Well, one evening I had been on quarters. Commander Epstein had put me on quarters for some reason or another. And at muster they had asked for volunteers for an advance party to go to Chungkai, so Johnson and Max Offerle had volunteered and had volunteered me along with them to go on this advance detail. So, oh, a day or two later there were four of us. There were those three--Donald Johnson, Mack Offerle, and me, and this sailor. I forget his name. But we went along with some Dutch and Australians to Chungkai, which was just up the railroad about five miles. And supposedly we were on an advance detail to move the rest of the Tamarkan people down to Chungkai. But as it turned out, that's the last we saw of those people. They never did come through Chungkai and we never did go back.

Marcello: What happened?

Naylor: We just went our separate ways. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: We were just integrated into the people that were already in Chungkai. Now here was where your American forces started getting real small about this time, because there was the four of us, and we had been there several days when they brought some other people down from the other direction. And there were two Americans in that. So that made a total of six Americans in Chungkai.

Marcello: Out of approximately how many prisoners?

Naylor: Oh, golly. It must have been 1,500 - 2,000. This was a pretty big camp. The rest of them were English, Australians, Dutch, and what have you.

Marcello: And it was here I assume . . .

Naylor: Here is where I started getting my negative attitude toward the British.

Marcello: What happened? Can you describe how you happened to form this attitude?

Naylor: Basically it was just their entire attitude. You see, what medical personnel they had were British, and the administrative people were British. And I don't know. It was just the attitude that they had: "Hurrah for me, and the hell with you." That was just the entire attitude I got there that the British had, and I just didn't go for this, and I just never particularly liked them since.

Marcello: How were they so far as cleanliness was concerned? Many of the prisoners have complained that the British weren't exactly

too clean as our American standards.

Naylor: Yeah, they were not by American standards. They sure weren't. In their medical facilities or so-called hospitals, in their kitchens, in their cooking habits and . . . as I recall their personal habits--personal cleanliness--was pretty good. It seemed to me that they were in the creeks about as often as we were. But other than this in their hospitals and kitchens and this type of thing they were just not too clean--not what we would expect, anyway.

Marcello: Is there anything else that happened at this particular camp that stands out? What did you do when you got there?

Naylor: Again, nothing. No work details. Well, wait a minute. I remember being on the river several times, so I must have been unloading barges of some sort. There was a big river that ran right by Chungkai, but I don't remember the name of exactly what we were doing. Evidently, it was unloading barges to some sort.

Marcello: Did the Japanese more or less let the prisoners alone so far as harassment, physical punishment, and this sort of thing?

Naylor: Yeah, in this area they sure did. The only time we ever got any bad treatment from the Japanese was actually in the jungle itself working on the railroad.

Marcello: And even here, this was mainly the Koreans, was it not?

Naylor: It was. Yeah, that's right. As far as the Japanese were concerned, I don't recall any of them ever committing any

atrocities or anything like that. They'd bat you around a little bit if you got out of line, sure. But I remember one afternoon . . . I don't even remember now which camp it was in, but the Nips always held muster.

Marcello: This was back in one of the Kilo camps . . .

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: . . . that you're referring to now?

Naylor: I believe so. I can't seem to recall that. I just remember the incident. But this sergeant called this muster, and there was one of the Nips late calling in by maybe thirty seconds or so. But everybody else was already there standing at attention, and this guy was just coming in. And that sergeant called him out in front of that platoon, and he just proceeded to beat the mortal thunder out of him. Well, this was the discipline in the Japanese Army, so according to their ideas, there was no difference. If we stepped out of line, well, the thing to do was whack us, which, again, according to them, was perfectly all right.

Marcello: And I kind of gather this was the same sort of situation with regard to the food. Weren't they supposedly feeding you the same rations that the typical Japanese soldier was getting in the field? Isn't this what they told you anyhow?

Naylor: This is exactly right, too. The only difference--and I think I mentioned a while ago--was that they got a better quality of rice. They would get a little more meat. They would get a few

more vegetables and this type thing. But basically the rations of the Japanese . . . and not only in combat but in the situation we were in we got the same thing that they did. So we would do the same thing. If there was a little shortage in one of our POW camps, the Americans would get the best, but we still would see to it that whatever prisoners we had were getting enough to live on. Well, according to their thinking, this is exactly what they were doing. So really I've got no complaints against the Japanese for this purpose.

Marcello: So essentially then at this latest camp . . . I guess you really didn't know why they were moving you around from camp to camp, because you obviously weren't doing anything.

Naylor: No, of course, they originally they told us we were the advance detail for the rest of the camp.

Marcello: In other words they were just going to send the rest of camp up there, also.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Well, why did they send you there ahead of everybody else to begin with?

Naylor: No telling. (Chuckle) We don't know. I imagine why . . .

Marcello: But the rest of them never did join you.

Naylor: No. In fact, why they were going from Tamarkan up to Chungkai in the first place, we never did know.

Marcello: Then now the "Lost Battalion" really becomes even more scattered. Is that correct?

Naylor: In so far as I was concerned . . .

Marcello: Right.

Naylor: . . . they were. Right. And this is true. They were scattered all up and down the line, and there were even some in Saigon, off over in there, and, of course, in Japan. They were scattered all the way back down, I suppose, through Malaya and Singapore and everywhere else.

Marcello: Now how long . . .

Naylor: Even some of them were in Manchuria.

Marcello: Now how long were you at this latest place? Just a couple of months?

Naylor: Yes. For a short while. It was in August.

Marcello: August of 1944.

Naylor: Of 1944.

Marcello: By this time could you tell that the tide of the war was changing, that it was turning against the Japanese?

Naylor: Yes. Again, we had access to radio news. There were a few radios scattered around, and we would get it by word of mouth basically.

Marcello: Could you tell any difference in the attitude of the Japanese as the war was apparently changing against them?

Naylor: Not really. The Japanese on the level where we were didn't know actually as much about it as we did. They believed what they were told, and, of course, they were never told anything.

I know one incident that I heard about. A Japanese and

this British I guess--I don't remember now--were talking and something was said about Italy surrendering. And this prisoner told the Nip that Italy had surrendered. And sure enough they had, and it had only been just a few days before. So the Japanese commandant called the senior Allied officer in and wanted to know where they got the news that Italy had surrendered, and this officer could think fast enough, and he told him that, "Well, we've known that for six months." And, of course, this had only happened a few days before. So the Nip said, "Well, then if they've known for six months, it must be a bunch of malarky." So if he hadn't been smart enough to think fast enough and come up with something like that, somebody could have been in trouble.

Marcello: Where did you go from here then?

Naylor: From here we went back up into the jungle to Linson. On the Thai side they were not designated as Kilo camps. They were designated by name, and this was the name of the one that we were in.

Marcello: You were working on the railroad again, I assume.

Naylor: Well, no, here we were cutting wood for it. The railroad was complete. There was no more railroad building.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: But they were all wood-burning locomotives, so at Linson we were cutting the wood for the wood-burning locomotives.

Marcello: Is this pretty tough work?

Naylor: No. Now really, I mentioned that Kanburi was the best one I was in, but Linson was the easiest work camp that I've been in and was the best work camp.

Marcello: Did this have the typical bamboo barracks?

Naylor: Yes. In fact, we built most of them after we got up there. I think there was one maybe when we got up there, and we built two or three more.

Marcello: About how many people were in this camp?

Naylor: Approximately 300.

Marcello: Mixed nationalities once again, I assume.

Naylor: Yeah, there were basically British and Dutch and quite a few Australians and us six Americans. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I see. Just the six Americans yet.

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: Did you six Americans more or less try to stick together, look out for one another?

Naylor: Oh, yeah. Of course, we lived together. But this didn't last very long. We got up there in August and along about the latter part of September . . . wait a minute. There were only five of us who went up there. Max Offerle didn't go up there. There was me, Johnson, Charlie Heald, and the sailor--I can't remember his name--and one other out of the battalion that I don't recall his name. But Johnson, the sailor, and this other boy out of the battalion only stayed up there about a month which left me and Charlie as the only two up there.

Marcello: About how long did you stay at Linson altogether?

Naylor: I was there until about the latter part of May, 1945.

Marcello: In other words, this is getting pretty close to the end?

Naylor: Right.

Marcello: All this time you were cutting wood for the most part?

Naylor: Basically, for the most part.

Marcello: How was this camp so far as the treatment given to the prisoners by the Japanese?

Naylor: Pretty good. All we had were Japanese.

Marcello: These were all Japanese now? You didn't have any Koreans.

Naylor: All Japanese.

Marcello: In other words there was really no evidence of atrocities or anything like that.

Naylor: Oh, no. None whatsoever.

Marcello: Up until this time, what sort of atrocities did you witness? Now you've talked about, you know, the customary beatings and the clubbings and this sort of thing. What other unusual ones, perhaps, did you ever witness?

Naylor: The only thing that I ever actually witnessed . . . the Nips had a habit that if they really got it in for somebody, they would stand them up at attention in front of the guardhouse. And I know I've seen some of them stand there for two or three days--day and night. If they fell down, they beat them until they get back upon their feet, and this was about the worst treatment I ever saw anybody get.

Marcello: This was right out in the blazing sun, I would assume?

Naylor: Sun, rain, night--anything. They just stood them up there in front of that guardhouse. But other than this, like I mentioned, it was just a beating or the rifle butt--and incidentally those rifle butts hurt--and stuff like that.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you ever witness many cases of men actually physically maiming themselves in any way in order to get out of work details, say, deliberately break an arm or something like that?

Naylor: No, I don't remember any incident at all.

Marcello: Is there anything else which stands out in Linson which you think ought to be a part of the record?

Naylor: Linson? Well, really, there's enough about Linson that I think I could write a book about it.

Marcello: In what way?

Naylor: Oh, about what went on and, well, the entire time I was there. In some way or another this six or seven month portion sticks with me more than any other time that I was over there.

Marcello: Why do you think this is so?

Naylor: I don't really know. I guess by this time I was getting so inured to the idea that I was thinking about taking up residence over there. Well, just for instance, I said I was up there until about the first of June. Charlie Heald and I were there from some time in November, I guess, up until some time in May--about the first of May when he got sick and

he went down country. That left me--one lone American--there by myself in a camp of approximately 300. (Chuckle) Well, if any prisoners died . . . there wasn't a great many, but once or twice a week approximately something like this happened. Well, each nationality would try to have a representative at each funeral. Well, I guess you know who went too as the American representative (chuckle) at all these funerals, so every funeral they had, well, I was out there.

Oh, there was the duck dinner that Charlie and I stole for Christmas.

Marcello: Well, let's hear about the duck dinner.

Naylor: This is a story within itself.

Marcello: This would have been in the Christmas of 1944?

Naylor: 1944. Right. I really don't remember a great deal about it. I know the Japanese commandant there raised ducks, and Charlie and I decided we wanted a duck dinner for Christmas. So we proceeded to confiscate one of the Japanese commander's ducks (chuckle).

Marcello: How did you go about doing that?

Naylor: I don't really remember. This is the reason I wanted you to talk to Charlie Heald. I do remember we cooked the thing in the oven we had built down in the kitchen, which was nothing but a barrel set in a mud mound with a fire box underneath it. And I remember we cooked it and had that duck for Christmas dinner, and we didn't get caught. (Chuckle) I don't know how but . . .

Marcello: What were some of the other incidents that stand out at this camp at Linson?

Naylor: Well, one of them I was in charge of a work detail that had, I guess, ten or twelve in the detail. And where we were cutting wood must have been about maybe two or three miles back off in the woods. So we had a small gauge railroad built from that point down to the railroad, and the camp then sets kind of off to the side. Well, in the mornings when we start to work, the work detail would set straight across the woods to the railroad tracks and push the cars back up to where we were cutting the wood. And the Nip in charge of the work detail, would meet me over at the guardhouse. I'd report to him how many people I had there. Well, then he and I would cut through the woods, and we'd be over to the work site by the time these people got the trucks pushed up there. So we'd load the trucks up--usually about three of them if I had twelve people because it took about four to push the thing. We loaded it up and then they would start pushing it down to the railroad. Well, when they left, the Nip and I would sit down, and we'd talk and carry on until they came back. Well, then they loaded up and started back down to the line. Then they would stop where they had picked the trucks up that morning and walk across to camp to eat lunch. Well, as soon as they left up there, the Nip and I would come back through the jungle back to camp, and that afternoon I'd report to him. They'd go over and pick up the trucks and push them down and we'd go back

through the jungle for one trip. Well, we got to be pretty good friends. He actually couldn't speak English; I couldn't speak Japanese. But he could speak a few words of English; he could speak a few words of Malayan; he could speak a few words of Dutch. And I could speak a few words of Japanese, a few words of Malayan, a few words of Dutch. And you'd be suprised how well you can converse with people using maybe four or five different languages.

Marcello: Why do you think he allowed you to go with him or to join him in this little scheme?

Naylor: I was the "Kumi honcho." I was the leader of this group, and I was acting on a par with him. I know one day I was short. I only had two people on one of the trucks, so I told the Japanese guard, "Well, if you'll boil the tea . . ." We always had tea boiled for them when they came back. I told him, "Now if you'll boil the tea, I'll help them push the truck down there." Well, he thought this was real good. So I helped them push the truck down to the line and back. When I got back the Nip had already boiled that tea there for us.

Marcello: Now this truck you're talking about is the sort of a deal that's on tracks, or what exactly was . . . what was it like?

Naylor: Yeah, it was a small narrow gauge railroad that we had laid.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: There was about an eighteen inch . . .

Marcello: In other words, it was a hand car or like a hand truck that you had to push along.

Naylor: It was just flat bed.

Marcello: Right.

Naylor: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's all it was. And you had to push it down these tracks and then push it back.

And another incident happened there. We were about up on top of this hill cutting wood. Well, you had to load these trucks and then try to get them down this hill, and it was a steep hill. So the Nip and I discussed how best to do it, and we came up with the idea that we'd put a break on one truck. We just cut a hole right in the center and put a log back where it would drag on the two back wheels. And we made a lever attachment where you pulled back on this lever, and it'd pull that log up under the wheel and hold it. Well, the first morning we tried it, we had it blocked there, and we loaded up the truck behind it with wood about four feet high. And the thing started slipping. Well, I happened to be standing right by this front truck. So I just jumped on the thing and pulled the brake back. (Chuckle) It didn't have much effect. I went flying off down that hill (chuckle) with four foot pile of logs right behind me. I went a flying off down that hill, and it was about 300 or 400 yards to where that thing came to a stop. And me sitting on there, boy, I had a death grip on that brake pulling it back and flying off down that hill. I could just see that thing jumping that track and all that lumber coming down on top of my head. It didn't. I made it

to the bottom of the hill all right. So we decided that brake idea wasn't so good. But it's incidents like these that I remember best at Linson.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you have any particular nicknames for any of the Japanese guards and so on?

Naylor: Yeah, we did at the time. I don't remember now. I remember "Liver Lips."

Marcello: Oh, you remember "Liver Lips," too?

Naylor: Oh, yeah.

Marcello: One of the last prisoners that I talked to remembered "Liver Lips."

Naylor: (Chuckle) Yeah.

Marcello: Now what camp was he at?

Naylor: It was either Eighty or One Hundred--I don't remember--or maybe both. "Liver Lip" and "Hollywood" I remember. We had a "Hollywood."

Marcello: How did he get the name "Hollywood?"

Naylor: Oh, he was a matinee-idol-type, a real slick-looking individual. (Chuckle) He was like a matinee-idol. (Chuckle) Gosh, I haven't thought of them in so long I don't recall many. "Liver Lips was the worst. Oh, he was pretty big. He was close to six feet.

Marcello: I see. Was he Japanese or was he a Korean?

Naylor: He was Korean and real husky. Well, I know I saw him beat several of them.

Marcello: He really whipped the prisoners over pretty well, huh?

Naylor: Oh, you bet. He sure did.

Marcello: How did he get the name "Liver Lips?"

Naylor: On account of his lower lip, I guess, or his upper lip one or both.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: They looked like a piece of raw liver. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I see. Is there anything else that stands out in your mind from Linson?

Naylor: No. I know Charlie got sick and had to come back down the country. And he was running about 106 fever that day and went out of his head. It scared the fool out of me.

Marcello: Now this is Heald, right?

Naylor: Right. And I know we had him . . . laid outside the tent. We took wet cloths and laid over him to get his fever down, and, boy, he was flat out of his head.

Marcello: Where did you go from Linson?

Naylor: This is where I went to from back down country. I went back to Chungkai.

Marcello: You went from Linson back to Chungkai?

Naylor: Back to Chungkai. Right. This was sometime in June--first part of June, 1944.

Marcello: Now was this in Thailand or in Burma yet?

Naylor: In Thailand.

Marcello: This is in Thailand.

Naylor: Yeah. I left Hundred Kilo Camp in January of '44.

Marcello: Okay, let's just go back there once again in order to get the record straight. From the Hundred Kilo Camp you went to . . .

Naylor: To Kanburi.

Marcello: All right.

Naylor: This was in January of '44.

Marcello: Okay. And then from there you went to . . .

Naylor: From Kanburi to Tamarkan.

Marcello: Tamarkan.

Naylor: Right. From Tamarkan to Chungkai.

Marcello: Okay.

Naylor: From Chungkai to Linson.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: And then from Linson back to Chungkai.

Marcello: Okay.

Naylor: So now we're in Chungkai.

Marcello: We're in Chungkai again. And this is approximately at what time?

Naylor: Oh, this is in June of '45.

Marcello: In other words, we're getting pretty close to the end of the war?

Naylor: Oh, yeah.

Marcello: Right. Okay, what happened at Chungkai?

Naylor: Really nothing. I was in pretty good shape. Charlie Heald was still there at Chungkai, so I got back with Charlie for, oh, must have been a couple of weeks. And then I went to Tamuang.

This is where I went to Tamuang . . .

Marcello: Okay. From here then you went to Tamuang.

Naylor: . . . from Chungkai. Tamuang was again another one approximately like Kanburi.

Marcello: I see.

Naylor: It was basically a rest and recuperation type of camp.

Marcello: Is this where you were located when the war ended?

Naylor: Right. That's just where I was when the war ended.

Marcello: Describe the events leading up to your liberation then.

Naylor: Well, let's see. When was it? The sixteenth of August. The war was actually over the fourteenth, so the sixteenth of August was on a Thursday. Well, Thursday was our half-day holiday. We worked until noon on Thursday, and then we had the rest of the day off. Well, by this time Charlie Heald had also come over there to Tamuang. Well, that night I don't remember anything special, but on Thursday nights they had a show for the prisoners. They had some musicians and what have you and all, and they had a stage built over there, and they'd have a little show. Well, they were having this show that night, and Charlie and I hadn't gone. We were messing around the camp there for some reason or another. Well, Charlie kept telling me, "Now, Zeke, the war's over." I told him, "Well, it'd go on another two years." (Chuckle) Up until this time he had been the one that was always pessimistic, and I was one who said it was over. But for some reason or another he

maintained that the war was over, and I wouldn't believe it. Well, it must have been about nine o'clock. I heard this band over on the stage playing the "Star-Spangled Banner," and, of course, that's the first time I had heard it in three and a half years. Well, then is when I thought maybe Charlie might be right. The war might be over. And they did make the announcement from the stage that the war was over, and the Japanese had quit. The senior person in the camp was a British sergeant-major, and he made the announcement and asked us all to stay in the camp, that he was putting British people on all the gates. The Japs were going over into their area, and we wouldn't see no more of them. And he asked us to stay there until we found out something further.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you had heard the news that the war was over?

Naylor: Oh, really just kind of numb, I think. We had looked forward to it for so long, and when it finally came I don't think there was really any emotion left in us. We had learned so long just to live for the day and let tomorrow take care of itself. You really didn't think a great deal about it.

Marcello: Were you kind of excited? Could you sleep that night knowing that . . .

Naylor: Oh, yeah. It didn't bother me in the slightest.

Marcello: You didn't have any trouble at all sleeping that evening. So what happened after this then?

Naylor: Well, we stayed there for several days. I don't remember now how long, but I know Charlie and I had finally decided that if something didn't happen, we were going to bail out of this place, and we were going somewhere where something was happening. But I know Lieutenant Morgan was one of the D Battery officers. They had segregated the officers several years before. And he came over to Tamuang. And, of course, he assumed command of what ones of us were there. And it must have been the twenty-eighth of August when they got vehicles in there and moved us to Ratburi, Thailand, right outside of Bangkok, and this was an airstrip that had been built by POW labor. The Japanese had never landed a plane on it. The first planes to land on it was American C-47's. (Chuckle)

Marcello: And like you said, you were apparently one of the first ones to leave. Is that correct?

Naylor: Yeah, we were. Well, yes and no. We stayed at Ratburi that night, and the next morning they were going to fly us out. Well, they had C-47's, and it took four of them to carry all the Americans out and they got enough Americans from the area.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you were reunited with any of the "Lost Battalion" boys at Ratburi.

Naylor: Yeah, yeah, I was. I don't recall now who they were. I guess I was a little more excited than I thought I was. But there must have been quite a few, because I know Charlie and I were on the fourth plane that left there, and we were on the last

one. So that was the morning of the twenty-ninth of August, 1945. They flew us from there into Rangoon and then from Rangoon into Calcutta, which there's a story within itself, too, on that flight from Rangoon to Calcutta.

Marcello: Why? What happened on the flight from Rangoon to Calcutta?

Naylor: We were at the airfield there in Rangoon. There was me and Charlie Heald and J. B. Pitts. I remember the three of us, and I don't remember now who else or even if there was anyone else. So we were there at the airfield, and some Air Force colonel was talking to us. He said, "Hey, how about going out to the house for a beer?" So that sounded pretty good to us, so we went with him out to his house. He had a house on Rangoon, and we sat there and drank a beer for a couple of hours or so. And there was an Air Force captain, who walked in, and he saw us there and he said, "Well, boys, I'm sorry to tell you this, but that last plane has already left for Calcutta." So we discussed it there, and here kind of shows you what we thought of the British again, too. And he said, "Well, now I can make a ship available to take you into Calcutta, but it means that there'll be one that can't go back to the jungle tomorrow and bring the British out." And he said, "Now what do you think the British would do?" Old Charlie said, "Hell, they'd fly them into London." (Chuckle) This captain kind of grinned and said, "I'll have your ship ready in about an hour." (Chuckle) So they flew the three of us from Rangoon clear into Calcutta. And this pilot had radioed to the general

hospital there at Calcutta that they were coming in with liberated POW's. And they had about four or five ambulances out there to meet us. And all three of us were in good shape. (Chuckle) So we checked into the hospital there in Calcutta, and I remember that first meal we had. By the time we got there they had already closed the mess hall, but they opened it up and cooked us bacon and eggs. And we told this old boy, "Man, you better keep that thing hot!" We told him, "This isn't going to be near enough." And, you know, that none of us could eat that first helping. I suppose it was two eggs and a couple slices of bacon. None of us could eat all of it. It made us so mad we couldn't see. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Your stomachs had shrunk so much?

Naylor: I suppose so. So we thought that they'd put us on a diet and all this baloney. They didn't . . . they never did. I guess they knew we weren't going to eat enough to hurt us, because it was . . . oh, golly, a week or so before we could eat anything that was close to a square meal.

Marcello: As you look back upon your stay in the prison camps, what perhaps stands out the most in your mind? Is there any one thing? Let me put it to you another way. What was the key to your survival? What do you think pulled you through more than anything else?

Naylor: Oh, just stubbornness. I just made up my mind that they weren't going to get me. I honestly I think it was just my

old hard head--it's all hard up there--that brought me through
it. (Chuckle)

Marcello: How old were you at the time you were captured?

Naylor: Twenty-two.

Marcello: You were twenty-two.

Naylor: Uh-huh. I was twenty-two in April of '41.

A P P E N D I X

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THE LOST BATTALION

(An excerpt from the broadcast on March 9, 1943--"Norton McGiffin In The News," a radio feature of the BURRUS MILLS, Manufacturers of Burrus TEXO Feeds...."It's In The Bag!" The programs are broadcast at 12:30 Noon, Mondays thru Fridays, over the Texas Quality Network -- WBAP, Fort Worth; WFAA, Dallas; WOAI, San Antonio; and KPRC, Houston)

During the week just past the men of the U. S. Army Air Corps, under General Douglas MacArthur's command, have struck punishing blows at the naval and aerial fleets of Japan. The proud Rising Sun flag of Nippon has gone down in the blood-red Bismarck Sea, true foretaste, let us hope, of coming events in the Southwest Pacific.

A year ago today things did not look so rosy for the United Nations in the jungle islands which lie north and east of Australia. The Japs, following Pearl Harbor, swept south into Hongkong. They wiped out the heroic force on Bataan in the Philippines. They slashed their way through the matted green undergrowth of Malaya to reach the proud British city of Singapore. They leaped over the Singapore strait to Dutch Sumatra. Their war ships dashed through the Maccasar straits and into the waters north of Java, the pearl of the Netherlands East Indies.

Those were anxious days of watching and nights of prayer for 600 Texas families, who had sons, brothers, husbands in Java, members of the second battalion of the 131st Field Artillery of the United States Army. The Jap tide of invasion swept across

Java from north to south, driving Dutch and Australian and American units before us. In the gloomy days of last March, we heard of American and Dutch and Australian planes flying huge loads of passengers out of the doomed island. War correspondents slipped out of harbors in Southern Java on rickety little Dutch cargo vessels which dodged and ducked bombs from Jap planes on their perilous voyages to the safe ports of Australia.

But what of that second battalion of the 131st, that heroic six hundred who have taken their place in history's halls alongside the immortal six hundred the British poet Tennyson immortalized? Well, they didn't get away; they stayed behind. They had a job to do, and they did it in the far-off jungles in central Java; theirs was the task of protecting the retreat of others who lived because they were willing to die.

They call it "the lost battalion," but I protest. They were never lost; many of them are alive, if not well, in Jap prison camps. They knew where they were all the time on the backbone of that great ridge of mountains which bisects the island of Java. Some of their grandfathers had given the rebel yell with Terry's Rangers. Some of them had died in Hood's Brigade. Some of them had heard at close battle range the war whoop of the Comanche and Cheyenne. These 600 sons of Texas in the second battalion were made of more than common clay, sons and grandsons of men who had lived dangerously and died gameky.

The gallant six hundred in the green jungles of Java were expendable, and they knew it. Knowledge of it probably sharpened their shooting eyes, made them fire that last artillery shot for good measure. They belonged to a national guard outfit, part of Texas' own 36th Division. They had slogged their way through Louisiana swamps on military maneuvers in 1941, little realizing that they would, within six months, be firing artillery guns 8000 miles across the world. They had slapped at mosquitoes, they had munched cold rations, they had been drowned out by days of incessant rain, yet their spirits were high. They came from the high country, the plains of West Texas primarily, although many were from central Texas and the piney woods farther east. A Battery hailed from Plainview, B Battery from neighboring Amarillo. C Battery was from Lubbock in the Panhandle, D Battery from Wichita Falls, E Battery from Abilene, F Battery from Jacksboro. Their commanding officer was the Amarillo insurance man, Lieutenant Col. Blucher Tharp, veteran national guard officer, veteran of World War I, a fighting, red-headed Irishman.

When the Jap planes dipped their noses treacherously down into Pearl Harbor on that fateful December morning in 1941, the second battalion was somewhere west of Hawaii. Detached from their fellow Texans of the 36th, they had been sent to the Far East. Whether their destination was the Philippines or not, we can't tell; it's a military secret. Anyway, the "lost" battalion, so-called, was detoured to Australia. Then it arrived in Java. In

January, 1942, a large number of these Texans phoned from Java to homes here in Texas, phoned at a cost of \$17.75 apiece. Those who did not phone urged their buddies to ask their relatives to pass the word around that the second battalion was in Java and rarin' to go. So the news spread from the high plateau of the Panhandle down to north-central Texas and into the piney woods. By word of mouth, by phone call, by telegram, 600 Texas families learned that their boys were ready for action.

Then came the fall of Java, a year ago today, and those rumors which were so seldom authenticated. It was said that two batteries had escaped to Australia. Last May Lt. Col. Tharp was reported safe. On January 28 last, 50 families in Texas received from the War Department telegrams telling of a husband, a brother, a son who was prisoner of the Japs on Java. Jacksboro and Abilene and other Texas towns received the news.

Whether all members of the battalion are prisoners, we do not know. Probably some still fight on in the interior of the island. Others are dead and wounded, because Texans do not surrender easily. Of one thing we can be sure, before the men of the second battalion were killed or captured, they fired the last artillery shell, the last machine gun bullet into the grim faces of Nippon's infantry. They were just boys, most of them; one was a football hero from a small town in the Panhandle; others were students from Texas Tech; some were farm hands and cowboys, others clerks and railroad workers. They were just kids in a national

guard outfit, the kind who liked to get together after maneuvers and listen to a guitar and sing songs of the trail and cowcamp. Over night they became men in that inferno of blood and steel which was Java.

There were Texans in those crews which swooped down in their Flying Fortresses last week and caught in their bomb sights the troop-packed transports of Nippon. And when they let those bombs drop, they gave the Japs some high explosive for the men of the Lost Battalion, the 600 Texans, who, like the men who died at the Alamo, had no messenger of defeat.

WAR DEPARTMENT

SERVICES OF SUPPLY

JAU

IN REPLY
REFER TO

AG 201 Naylor, Keith F.
(6-3-42) EB

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON

June 3, 1942.

Mrs. Flossie Irene Naylor,
3014 Cumberland Street,
Wichita Falls, Texas.

Dear Mrs. Naylor:


According to War Department records, you have been designated as the emergency addressee of Keith F. Naylor, 20,813,892, who, according to the latest information available, was serving in Java at the time of the final capitulation.

I deeply regret that it is impossible for me to give you more information than is contained in this letter. In the last days before the capitulation of Java there were casualties which were not reported to the War Department. The Japanese Government has indicated its intention of conforming to the terms of the Geneva Convention with respect to the interchange of information regarding prisoners of war. At some future date this Government will receive through Geneva a list of persons who have been taken prisoners of war. Until that time the War Department cannot give you positive information.

The War Department will consider the persons serving in Java as "missing in action" until definite information to the contrary is received. It is to be hoped that the Japanese Government will communicate a list of prisoners of war at an early date. At that time you will be notified by this office in the event his name is contained in the list of prisoners of war. In the case of persons known to have been present in Java and who are not reported to be prisoners of war by the Japanese Government, the War Department will continue to carry them as "missing in action," in the absence of information to the contrary, until twelve months have expired. At the expiration of twelve months and in the absence of other information the War Department is authorized to make a final determination.

I am inclosing for your information a memorandum regarding benefits to certain dependents of missing, captured or interned personnel.

Very truly yours,


Major General,
The Adjutant General.

Incl. 1



AMERICAN RED CROSS

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

August 12, 1942

Mrs. Bertha Ross
Home Service Chairman
American Red Cross
Box 547
Vernon, Texas

Re: NAYLOR, Keith F.
Sergeant
ASN 20,813,892

Inq: Mother
NAYLOR, Mrs. O. H.
3013 Cumberland
Wichita Falls, Texas

My dear Mrs. Ross:

Replying to the inquiry on Form 1609A initiated in your Chapter by Mrs. Naylor for her son as above, we have received the report that casualty file shows this serviceman in the Far East since February 24, according to the roster of personnel known to have been left in Java at the time of the Island's evacuation. There is no additional information regarding this serviceman through August 6.

Please assure your inquirer that when the prisoner of war lists reach us we will send your Chapter any additional information regarding Sergeant Naylor.

Very sincerely yours,

(Miss) Helen K. James
Correspondent, Inquiry Service

HKJ:swc

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

IN REPLY
REFER TO AG 201 Naylor, Keith F.
(2-24-43) PC-G

WASHINGTON

February 24, 1943.

Mrs. Flossie Irene Naylor,
3014 Cumberland Street,
Wichita Falls, Texas.

Dear Mrs. Naylor:


The records of the War Department show your son, Sergeant Keith F. Naylor, 20,813,892, Field Artillery, missing in Java since February 24, 1942.

Every effort possible has been made through the American Red Cross with the Japanese Government to obtain information regarding the names of men taken as prisoners, but to date few reports have been received.

The case has been carefully reviewed and as there was no evidence warranting contrary action, the War Department has, under the provisions of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, made an official determination continuing him on the records in a missing status. The law cited provides that pay, allowances and allotments are to be continued while in such status.

Please be assured that the War Department will continue its efforts to determine his status and you will be notified promptly if additional information is received, or when circumstances warrant a change in the present determination.

Very truly yours,


J. A. Ulio
Major General,
The Adjutant General

176
IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

Date MAY 19, 1944

Your mails (and) are received with thanks.

My health is (good, usual, ~~poor~~).

I am ~~ill in hospital~~.

I am working for pay (I am paid monthly salary).

I am ~~not working~~.

My best regards to ALL THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Yours ever,

Keith F. Taylor

2/23/42

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date of writing and the signature of the sender. Sentences not required should be crossed out by sender. IF ANYTHING ELSE IS ADDED, THE POST CARD WILL BE DESTROYED.

I am well. ~~(sick)~~ - (serious)
~~I have been admitted into hospital as (wounded) - (not serious)~~
~~Am getting on well. Hope to return to duty soon.~~

~~(Letter, date)~~

~~I have received your (Telegram, date)~~

~~(Parcel of)~~

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you ~~(for a long time)~~

(Signature only) *Keith F. Taylor*

Date December 21, 1941

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

Date JAN 22, 1944

Your mails (and) are received with thanks.

My health is (good, usual, ~~poor~~).

I am ~~ill in hospital~~.

I am working for pay (I am paid monthly salary).

I am ~~not working~~.

My best regards to ALL THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Yours ever,

Keith F. Taylor

2/23/42

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date of writing and the signature of the sender. Sentences not required should be crossed out by sender. IF ANYTHING ELSE IS ADDED, THE POST CARD WILL BE DESTROYED.

I am well. ~~(sick)~~ - (serious)
~~I have been admitted into hospital as (wounded) - (not serious)~~
~~Am getting on well. Hope to return to duty soon.~~

~~(Letter, date)~~

~~I have received your (Telegram, date)~~

~~(Parcel of)~~

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you (for a long time)

(Signature only) *Keith F. Taylor*

Date December 14, 1941