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Interview with

GLEN McDOLE

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EXCELLENT MATERIAL!

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Interviewer: William J. Alexander

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6, 1921. My parents were David and Dessa McDole.

Alexander: Had they been in Nebraska for a long time?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Were they born there?

McDole: Yes, both of them. My dad was born in Orleans, Nebraska, and my mother was born in Ashland, Nebraska; so, they were both Nebraskans.

Alexander: You ought to meet my wife. So is she (chuckle). Any brothers and sisters?

McDole: Yes, I had two brothers and three sisters. My brother, Max, was the oldest, and he's now deceased. My kid brother, Joseph, lives in Buffalo, New York. I had three sisters. Margaret, she's deceased--the oldest. I had a sister named Colleen, who is deceased. I have one living sister, Delores, who lives, also, in Des Moines [Iowa], where I live.

Alexander: Okay. What about your schooling? Where did you go to school? Did you go to school in that same town?

McDole: Yes. I went to public school in Des Moines.

Alexander: In Des Moines. And when did you graduate from high school?

McDole: In 1940.

Alexander: And you were how old?

McDole: I was nineteen years old.

Alexander: You were nineteen in 1940. That's right. Now, that's one year before [the Japanese attack on December 7,

1941, at] Pearl Harbor.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: A year-and-a-half, probably. When did you go into the service?

McDole: I went into the service in the fall of 1940 into the United States Marine Corps.

Alexander: And whereabouts did you take your boot training?

McDole: In San Diego, California.

Alexander: In good ol' San Diego. I mentioned to you that we would like to ask you your serial number.

McDole: My Marine Corps serial number was 301051. My issued rifle [serial number] was 24109.

Alexander: It was 24109. What kind of a rifle was that?

McDole: That was an old Springfield [Model 1903]. That was a good ol' weapon.

Alexander: A lot of people preferred it, I know, in those earlier days when the Garands [M-1 semiautomatic rifles] came out and so forth. Was your training at that time...how many weeks was that? Do you remember?

McDole: It seems to me that it was about eight weeks training.

Alexander: Did you have at the time any idea of what you were going to do next, or were you being trained for any particular duty? Did you know what that was, or was it just your regular basic training?

McDole: No, the only thing that I took was basic training. They put a request list for those who wanted to go

hither and yon. They had a list for China, so I put in for the [North] China Marines. After we got out to sea and everything, the list came out for the Philippine Islands, and that's where I wound up. I was at the Navy yard out at Cavite, just across the bay from Manila.

Alexander: Were all of you who had left at the same time...did your whole company leave, or did individuals go to various places?

McDole: There was possibly half of the platoon that went over.

Alexander: Were they headed for China, too, until they got the new orders?

McDole: (Chuckle) Yes.

Alexander: I see. How different your life might have been if you had gone to China. [Editor's note: The North China Marines, who served mostly as legation guards, also became prisoners-of-war of the Japanese shortly after the initiation of hostilities.]

McDole: Yes, that's right.

Alexander: Do you recall when you landed at Cavite?

McDole: Oh, it had to be sometime in the first part of 1941.

Alexander: So, you were there in the January timeframe.

McDole: In January. In fact, it was in January.

Alexander: Was there a lot of military activity at that time?

McDole: At that particular time, there wasn't a whole lot because we were security for the Navy yard there at

Cavite. It was a large Navy yard, so we were pulling guard duty. Along with that, of course, we did our regular training with machine guns and antiaircraft guns.

Alexander: Did you have a shipboard assignment at all when you were there, or was it all portside [shore duty]?

McDole: It was all portside.

Alexander: I see.

McDole: The only thing...prior to the war starting, a lot of the European powers' ships were caught in the various harbors. There was a squad of us Marines that took over a Danish ship in Manila Bay there, the Gertrude Mersk. I'll never forget it. [Editor's note: The German army had conquered Denmark in April, 1940.]

Alexander: The Gertrude Mersk. What kind of a ship was she?

McDole: It was just a transport ship.

Alexander: You say that you took it over. What happened?

McDole: By that, I mean that we went aboard for security, to make sure that none of the boats were scuttled in our harbors and everything. We knew that they [the civilian crews] would never scuttle a ship in any of our harbors because they were a bunch of men without a home. That was their home.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: They were great crews.

Alexander: Great crews. You served aboard that ship, then, for a

while. Is that what you're saying?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: For about how long?

McDole: We were only there for a couple of weeks. Then they sent them stateside.

Alexander: You mean that they sent the ship back to the States then.

McDole: Yes, that's what we were told was where they were heading.

Alexander: Yes, probably so. When you were there, were you a company of men *per se*, who were given this duty? Were you part of a company, a regimental company?

McDole: There at Cavite, we were with the 1st Separate Marine Battalion.

Alexander: The 1st Separate Marine Battalion.

McDole: I was in "Dog" [D] Company.

Alexander: "Dog" Company, okay.

McDole: In D Company.

Alexander: Yes, sure. And all of your D Company was assigned to this same kind of duty?

McDole: Well, no, just one of our squads out of D Company was on the ships.

Alexander: Okay. What about the other fellows? Were they dispersed?

McDole: Oh, they were dispersed and doing security guard duty at the Navy yard there.

Alexander: Did you have a direct commanding officer for that group? An overall commanding officer?

McDole: Yes. We had Colonel Montague, and we had a Colonel Adams.

Alexander: Okay. One "bird" [full colonel] and one lieutenant colonel.

McDole: No, they were both "birds."

Alexander: Both "birds". Montague, you say, and Adams.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: How long were you there on that duty? Did you say?

McDole: Only for a couple of weeks aboard ships, and then we went back into Cavite and started pulling Navy yard guard duty again.

Alexander: And this is still in that February timeframe?

McDole: Well, this was a little bit later that summer.

Alexander: Okay. How long did it take you to get there on that ship that you were on?

McDole: When we left (chuckle) San Diego?

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: Well, oh, Goodness! I'm trying to think of how many days it was. When we left San Diego, of course, we wound up going to Pearl Harbor. Then we went to Wake Island and Guam. It must have taken us twenty-some days.

Alexander: I'm sure.

McDole: We were on the USS Chaumont.

Alexander: The USS Chaumont. And it was a transport.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: So, at this particular point, now, we're kind of out into mid-year of 1941.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Did they give you a different assignment, then, at that point?

McDole: No, it was strictly mostly at the Navy yard.

Alexander: It was all duty at the Navy yard. This is just an aside. Did you pull any kind of SP [shore patrol] duty or anything like that while you were there?

McDole: No.

Alexander: The Navy usually took care of that, didn't they?

McDole: Of course, we did have Marines who pulled SP duty or MP [military police] duty.

Alexander: Sure. Oh, yes, that's right. Was there anything from the standpoint of a military interest that happened at that time? Did you have any kind of alerts or anything during that period?

McDole: Oh, I'd say that the week before they [the Japanese] hit Pearl Harbor, we'd go down to defense the beaches and were doing antiaircraft practice and .50-caliber machine gun practice. We were doing a lot of firing.

Alexander: You were getting well-trained.

McDole: We were getting well-trained.

Alexander: I guess that I meant that while you were at Cavite,

were there any kind of alerts? Anything that would cause you to come to battle stations or anything like that at that point?

McDole: No.

Alexander: There wasn't anything. You weren't anticipating anything specifically at that point.

McDole: Oh, a week before [the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor], we could hear rumbles [of activity] of things that were going on up off of northern Luzon. We heard talk of movement around up in through there. We just more or less took it as maneuvers by the Japanese up in there.

Alexander: Because they were the ones doing some maneuvering up in there. Yes, okay. Let's get around to where we, I think, pretty plainly get up Pearl Harbor--to December 7, which in your case [because of the International Dateline] would have been December 8.

McDole: Right, it was.

Alexander: So, when did you first hear about what was going on?

McDole: Well, we had the "Call to Arms"--the bugler sounding off--in the wee hours of the morning, and we fell out [into formation]. They told us that Pearl Harbor had been hit, so everybody had to get out into their positions at their machine guns and everything.

That morning everything was really buzzing fast, you know. We had some PBYS [Catalina flying boats]

there at Manila Bay. They wanted to get those PBYS out of there, so they sent those down to Las Baños, which was south of and east of Manila [in Laguna Province, Luzon].

Alexander: It was still on Luzon?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: I don't know. There must have been a dozen of us Marines, who went by Jeep down to Los Baños to put up security for those PBYS. We must have been there for a week, and then we got ran out down there [by the Japanese]. The dive-bombers came in and took us out.

Alexander: I was going to ask you about that. When you say that you were "run out," the enemy was running you out of there.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Had they landed troops anywhere in there?

McDole: Yes, they had landed in Lingayen Gulf.

Alexander: That's where they landed?

McDole: That's where they had landed--at Lingayen Gulf.

Alexander: Yes. That was immediately after Pearl Harbor?

McDole: Shortly thereafter, yes. We got hit real hard on December 9 by the Japanese.

Alexander: Were there any U.S. or Philippine troops guarding that area? I mean, were they giving resistance to the Japanese at Lingayen Gulf, or was it pretty sparsely

defended?

McDole: I couldn't really say for sure, because we were down there in the Manila area.

Alexander: Right. I know how that is. You don't see the "big picture." You don't realize what was going on. You don't realize that.

[Tape paused briefly]

Alexander: Let's pick up from there. You were run off by the Japanese. Where did you go when you were run off Los Baños?

McDole: Actually, when we got out of Los Baños, we wound up in Manila. In fact, it was on Christmas Day that we got into Manila. We went through the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] to find out where I was supposed to go next. I ran into a Catholic priest, whom we had nicknamed the "Red Rider" because he a red beard. I'll never forget him, God bless him. He said, "'Mack,' where in the '[blankety-blank'] have you been?" I said, "Well, I've been down at Las Baños with those PBYS." He said, "My God! They [the Japanese] were bombing the Navy yard! We didn't know that they had sent you down there. We had you down as missing-in-action in the Navy yard!" Then he said, "I think that maybe a message has been sent to your family!" So, I got busy and got one of the last radiograms that was sent out of Manila.

Alexander: Did you, really?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Well, let's talk about that in just a second. They had received word that you were missing-in-action?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: Then, when I called, though, and got my message out to them, why, what a relief it was.

Alexander: I can only imagine. Yes, their prayers were answered.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Oh, gee! That in itself would be appreciated.

McDole: That was a good Christmas present for them.

Alexander: Oh, that was a wonderful Christmas present. Yes, it really was, and for you as well. At this point, I'm not up on my dates too close here in terms of the main landing, the really heavy bombardment and so forth that the Japanese began, I guess, from the very beginning.

McDole: Oh, yes. They started hitting us on December 9, 1941, pretty hard.

Alexander: Who took charge of, say, the defenses where you were?

McDole: General [Douglas A.] MacArthur. He was the overall supreme commander.

Alexander: Yes, but I'm sure that you reported directly to somebody, and he reported to someone else.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Can you remember who that was?

McDole: So, when we got into Manila there, and after the bombing raid was over there--those of us who were down at Las Baños--they sent us over to Corregidor.

Alexander: Okay.

McDole: That's where I spent the rest of the time there. In fact, when I went over to Corregidor, General MacArthur had already had his headquarters set up at Middleside Barracks. For three days, I was at the CP, the command post, there.

Alexander: At his headquarters.

McDole: I was at the barracks with General MacArthur. He was quite a guy--quite a guy.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: You hear a lot of controversy over the general, but I went with him through some pretty bad bombing raids. Here the general was leading the way, and you're following along as a subordinate. We used to say among ourselves, "Let's get moving, General!" He'd look up there, and he'd say, "Well, Corporal, if they're going to start hitting, they should drop pretty soon." And I never did see that man increase his stride over anything.

Alexander: He just kept going.

McDole: He just kept going along and looking up and watching them.

Alexander: That's interesting. And you were with him.

McDole: Yes!

Alexander: Were you you an aide at that time?

McDole: No, I just...

Alexander: You just happened to be there.

McDole: ...was there standing guard because it was the a command post.

Alexander: Okay, yes.

McDole: It was the command post and so forth, so when the raid came on, we went to the shelters. I'd just go right with him--the whole command post staff. Of course, Manila had been declared an open city right off. That saved the city. I think that General MacArthur should have always gone down in history for that decision. I'll never forget Manila being declared an open city. The Japs came over, and they bombed it, anyway, and they hit a parochial school.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: And I'll never forget when the message came in for the general. He was sitting over behind his big ol' desk. It was a brigadier general or a colonel who came in, and he said, "General, I've just received information that those ['blankety-blanks'] have hit Manila after it had been declared an open city! They've hit this parochial school!" I'll never forget that the general kind of raised up in his chair a little bit, and he

said, "Those ['blankety-blanks']. They did what?" So, the officer repeated the message back to him. The general said, "Well, you get hold of that Jap [So-and-So] that you have had communications with and tell him that if they bomb Manila once more, I'll make Tokyo look like mud and sand!" He just pounded on that desk, and my ol' adrenalin just started pounding, and I said to myself: "Go get 'em, General!"

Alexander: (Chuckle) Oh, yes!

McDole: "Go get 'em!"

Alexander: Did you say that to him?

McDole: No, I didn't.

Alexander: But you wanted to. I didn't know if you might have said that or not.

McDole: I wanted to say: "Sure! Go get 'em, General!" Then, of course, we underwent a terrific pounding in there--unbelievable! When Bataan surrendered, then we really took a beating. We really did.

Alexander: They concentrated their fire on Corregidor, then.

McDole: Concentrated fire--artillery and everything.

Alexander: Artillery, yes.

McDole: Artillery, aerial bombardment. In fifteen minutes that little rock [Corregidor Island] would just be a cloud of dust

Alexander: Casualties?

McDole: Casualties, yes. We were fortunate in that the

casualties were low. I'll never forget the night that MacArthur left that island--he and President [Manuel] Quezon of the Philippines. There was an alert [message] that there would be a friendly craft leaving at a [certain] time from a [certain] point, and that there was no need to challenge it--would be a friendly craft. You could hear that PT [patrol-torpedo] boat coming through there [Mr. McDole emulating the throaty sound of a PT boat chugging while running at low idle]. When they got past "The Rock" [Corregidor], you could hear them open up the throttles of that PT boat wide-open as they went to Mindanao, with General MacArthur leaving General [Jonathan] Wainright in charge.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: He [General Wainright] was a terrific man--terrific.

Alexander: General Wainright?

McDole: Yes. We didn't call him [by this nickname] to his face--"Skinny."

Alexander: "Skinny" was a skinny man.

McDole: Yes. I'll never forget him. He was always carrying that .45 [Colt .45-caliber automatic pistol]. It hit him down by his knees down here [gesture].

Alexander: Did he, really?

McDole: Yes. He was a champion of champions.

Alexander: Just for the record, approximately what was the

distance from the time that General MacArthur left "The Rock" and the Japanese secured it?

McDole: I don't know. Anyway, they landed on the night of May 5 [1942], and on the 6th it was surrendered.

Alexander: Yes, I knew that it was very fast.

McDole: Yes. They were just about all pushed off of "The Rock" when we got the ultimatum to put up the flag [of surrender] or suffer the consequences. Wainright had done everything that he could do, because our food supplies and ammunition [were all low].

Of course, the Japs told us not to destroy any of the equipment, but my own serial number 24109 rifle was in the bottom of Manila Bay at that time. We were using 14-inch disappearing rifles [concealed 14-inch guns]. We drained all of the hydraulic systems down and fired them [straight up]. They [the shells] came right back down into the parapet edges. In fact, we were so desperate that at times we were using 10-inch mortars--shooting them straight up at flights of airplanes, hoping that they would hit some and bust them up in the air.

Alexander: That is pretty desperate.

McDole: Yes, we were down to...we were just doing everything that we could just to hold the off as long as we could.

Alexander: Everybody felt the same way.

McDole: Everybody felt the same way. And then it was so sad when you'd see "Old Glory" [the United States flag] come down, and that ol' red and white [Imperial Japanese] flag goes go up.

Alexander: Yes, that's just got to be a scene that you never forget.

McDole: Yes. You witnessed some fellows take their own lives.

Alexander: Some of our people?

McDole: Yes, they weren't going to surrender.

Alexander: Did you talk to any of them before they did?

McDole: I talked to two--pretty good friends. They just said, "'Mack,' we're just not goin' to surrender. We're not goin'." I saw plenty of death after that, though.

Alexander: I know, But I was just thinking, and I want to ask you a question that you don't need to answer because it just came to my mind, too. I'm just wondering whether there were times, then, beyond that point--and I'm sure that it's a dumb question--where you really kind of wished that maybe you had gone with them?

McDole: No, I never did, because I've always had this strong feeling that, as long as there's life, there's hope. I've never been a fellow, really, to fold up and say, "Oh, what the heck!"

Alexander: To give up in that sense, yes.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Okay. We're looking at May 6, which was capitulation

day, approximately.

McDole: Right.

Alexander: Do you have any recollections or any thoughts about that--recollections is a good word here--to describe what it was like at from that point until you were moved off of Corregidor? What kind of conditions were you living in there?

McDole: In fact, I have a picture of the area where they kept us. We were on Corregidor for about thirty days after the capitulation to police up "The Rock," to bury the dead, and tear heavy equipment down and load it aboard ships and send it out.

Of course, the first thing that they did, when they got us in this area, was to search us, get our names, our branch of service, our serial numbers, etc. That was required. They'd search us, and anything that you had, they'd take it away from you--your watches, rings. Any things that were personal items, they'd take them away from you. So, you just felt like you were being emptied.

Alexander: They kind of neutered you.

McDole: You just kind of wondered from one minute to the next what was going to happen. Our food...three men would get a can of Carnation milk--one of those a day. Oh, it was several days that that was all that we had.

Alexander: A can between three of you.

McDole: Yes. And after everything was secured around there, and the dead were buried and all of the steel and everything that they wanted had been put aboard ships, they put us aboard transports. We had no idea where we were going because they just put us on the ships and put us down in the holds and closed the hatches on us. It was not long until we could feel the ships running aground. We knew that we were someplace close to "The Rock" from the mainland. So, they bounced us out of the ships, and we just jumped right into bay, and you could see Manila there.

Alexander: I see.

McDole: So, we came in to the Dewey Boulevard. That's where we started to march us with their cavalry up to Bilibid Prison. Of course, on that march there, they were kind of parading us, showing off: "Look what we [the Japanese] have accomplished [in vanquishing the white men]." Of course, we had some Filipinos with us, too. The Filipinos [soldiers] were marching along with us, too, through the streets lined with Filipino people. They'd try to break through the ranks to embrace their loved ones in the crowd and so forth, and the Japanese cavalry would come through swinging their sabers and everything.

After marching through Manila and everything, we wound up in Bilibid Prison. Back in the old days,

that was classified as a one of the most notorious prisons in the world. It was a vicious-looking thing behind the Walled City there in Manila.

Alexander: Oh, yes.

McDole: We were there for a couple of weeks, and then they marched us down to a railroad, and they put us on these narrow-gauge boxcars. They'd just pack you in there like sardines and slam the doors on you. We had no idea where we were going. We rode all day in these narrow-gauge boxcars. We knew that they were heading north out of Manila. That evening we wound up in a schoolyard a Cabanatuan, and we spent the night there. It rained. Oh, my Goodness, it rained!

Then the next morning, we started marching, and we marched all that day out to a prison camp. It was the Philippine Army camp there. I mean, it was horrible living there! After about thirty days, you saw so many people dying of malnutrition, dysentery. There was no medical assistance and so forth. The tropical rains kept coming on. It was just all night long--a steady line of fellows [suffering diarrhea from dysentery] going up to the slit trenches that were used for latrines. Some of them would slip in the mud and fall into them.

In fact, that's where I saw the first execution of our prisoners. There were six of them. They came

in from a working party. The Japs would come in every day and take out maybe fifteen, twenty, thirty men out on a working party. Somehow, these six fellows...maybe there were four or six. They got separated from the work party, and the Japs thought that they were escaping. So, they brought them back into the Cabanatuan prison camp there, and they made them dig their own trenches [for an individual grave]. They sat them down in front of the trenches, and they came around and wanted to blindfold them. And, so help me, God, not a one of these men would accept a blindfold. They just stood there at attention. Shots rang out, and they fell. Some of our men had to go and cover them up.

It seems like disease and everything was breaking out so bad that I've told my buddies--they were all from Texas here--that: "If they ever come in and want a large working party [I'd never volunteer, normally.], let's volunteer for that because it might be a big chance for us to leave this camp and get the hell out of this hellhole."

They came in one day, and they wanted 300 healthy men. I had sat right there by the gate where they came in with the orders. They said that they wanted 300 men. So, I hollered at "Smitty" [Rufus Smith] and Roy and the rest of them. [Editor's note: For the

commentary of Rufus Smith about conditions as a prisoner-of-war, the Palawan Massacre, and his relationship with Mr. McDole, there is an oral history interview with him (see OH 788) in the holdings of the University of North Texas Oral History Collection.] I said, "Come on, fellows! They want 300 men." So, we just lined up, and they just marched 300 of us out, and they took us back to Manila. We wound up down in the dock area, and we were loading ships. It was nothing but working in bulk cement with pick axes and shovels. You know, we were working in bulk cement with no shoes, no clothing...

Alexander: Oh.

McDole: ...and cement burns and so forth.

Alexander: Oh, yes.

McDole: After we had these ships all loaded, they pulled out of Manila Bay and went past Corregidor, past Mindoro Island, and we started heading south. We had no idea where we were going. Finally--I guess that it was the second day out--we pulled into Culion Leper Colony. This was a big surprise to me, that the Japanese wanted to unload some rice and supplies for the lepers there. But before they'd go in, we'd get in motor launches, and we'd have to go in there and spray the area all down. Then their troops would come in and set up in a circle where we were unloading the rice

and so forth. And I'll never forget that when we were unloading the rice and supplies there and the natives gathered around, what horrible sights you'd see.

Alexander: I'm sure.

McDole: There was a Catholic priest there, and the thing that he'd do was walk around real close and talk in a low tone, giving us the ol'...back in those days they used the two fingers up [gesture]--"V" for victory. He'd flash us that down to the side where the Japs couldn't see. He'd say, "Keep the faith. Keep the faith, men."

Alexander: That was to help your morale.

McDole: Oh, yes.

Alexander: That was refreshing.

McDole: And we left there, we went on down to Palawan. Palawan is the fifth largest island of the Philippine group. It lies just north of Borneo [Netherlands East Indies]. We pulled into the capital of Palawan Island, Puerto Prince.

We pulled in there, and we got off the ships and marched up through the little village there. There was an old constabulary barracks there. They used the constabulary barracks that had been abandoned when the constabulary force took off to the mountains. So, we spent some time getting that fixed up so that we would have a place to stay for our shelter. We built

latrines and and so forth.

Then, after we had the camp all prepared, they...of course, everything that they did, they'd have to be in formation, and we'd have to stand there at attention. You'd face the rising sun with them when they'd go through their sunrise ceremonies worshipping the emperor [of Japan] and all of that stuff. So, we'd just have to stand there at attention. Then they'd marched us for about three miles out into the boondocks, the jungle.

I'll never forget Kishimoto, the Jap commander. He would always get on a little pedestal about two-and-a-half feet high and have us stand at attention. That way we'd have to look up at him, and he could look down upon us. He'd say, "Today, we begin building roads." We thought: "Building roads? Why would we build roads out here in the jungle?" Of course, they'd make the first lick at the earth--turn over some dirt--and then we began slaving. I mean, we slaved for two-and-a-half years. It didn't take us long to know that we were building a runway.

Alexander: I've got you.

McDole: And what we did in two-and-a-half years was that we had built the second largest concrete runway in the Philippine Islands.

Alexander: Good Heavens!

McDole: We lost many men there. We had men who tried to escape. They were recaptured, and they'd execute them. I have seen so many beatings. On Saint Patrick's Day of 1943, we were slaving away out there busting coral rock. Boy, we were working in 105-degree temperature, you know. All of a sudden, I had a pain in my side. I went down to the knees. I stood there, and I just had a cold sweat breaking out over me. I'll never forget that this Jap guard came over, and he said, [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese]: "Let's get to work!" I told him that I was sick. I used the word in Japanese: "Bioki!" ["I'm sick!"] And he said in Japanese: "You're crazy!" He'd pound on your head, you know, with a stick or a club. I tried to get to my feet, and I got to my feet, and down I'd go again. We were blessed. We had a doctor from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania...

Alexander: Oh, did you?

McDole: ...who was in our camp--Dr. Carl T. Mango, from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The "Doc" came over, and he said to the Jap: "What do you want to do? Wait a minute!" And he checked me, and he said, "What's the matter 'Mack?'" and I told him. He checked me over, and he said, "My God! You've got an appendix that's about to bust!"

Alexander: Oh, geez!

McDole: So, he got hold of the Jap and got an interpreter over there. He explained to the interpreter that here's a man who's about to have his appendix burst on him. So, the interpreter said, "Get over there!" They went up the chain-of-command. They took me back into the prison camp.

I got in there, and Dr. Mango was talking to the interpreter about getting some supplies to operate on me with. The Japanese said, "Nai!", which means "No!" He said [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "We just have equipment for our own!" I'll never forget Mango. He said, "'Mack,' they won't give me anything." I said, "What are you going to do, then?" He said, "Well, if I don't operate, you're going to die when it bursts on you." I said, "Let's operate, then."

So, they just held me down, and two hours and fifty minutes later, Dr. Mango had my appendix out, and he sutured me back up. Of course, I just laid on the hard floor all the time, you know, and a couple or three days later, infection had set in. And that side swelled up just like it had a football in there. Dr. Mango came in, and he said, "'Mack,' for Heaven's sakes! I don't know what we're going to do!"

One night it was raining and storming, and I said to my buddy--"Smitty"--"'Smitty,' I'm not going to make it out of here, if this thing keeps up. Why

don't you get me a canteen of water?" So, he caught me a canteen of water [from rain drops]. I tilted that whole thing up, and down it went. I thought, "Well, if I'm going to die, I'll die comfortably." So, I rolled over on my side, and you can imagine what happened when I did: "POP!"

Alexander: Oh, yes. You popped the stitches.

McDole: I put my hand down there, and it was just like a mess, and I lay there the rest of the night. And you talk about prayers!

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: I'll never forget Mango when he came in the next morning to check on me. He said, "'Mack,' what in the hell are you doing there?" I told him: Well, 'Doc,' if I'm going to die, I want to die comfortably." He said, "Let me see." And here it was, my side all open. This doctor...two and three times a day, he'd come in there and swab that out with nothing but hot water--as hot as I could stand it. Finally--bless him--he had the infection cleared.

Alexander: Can you believe that?

McDole: And he said, "Well, I'll put you back together." Well, you know, with all of that flesh was so dead that when he'd run the sutures through there...

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: ...they'd just pull right through the flesh.

Alexander: Yes, I would think so.

McDole: I'll tell you the kind of a man that he was. He said, "'Mack,' do you have an old shirt?" I said, "Well, the only one that I've got is hanging right there [gesture]--what's left of it." He reached right up there, and he took the shirt buttons off. He put them down each side of that opening and ran the sutures through the buttons and drew them up like a drawstring.

Alexander: With the buttons from your shirt.

McDole: With the buttons down my side. When the Japs heard about this, they'd come in the barrack and say they'd want to see my buttons. I'd say, "Nai!" That mean's "no!"

Alexander: (Chuckle)

McDole: And they'd say [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "Oh, please!" I'd say, "Nai!" They'd say [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "Oh, come on!" I'd say [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "Give me cigarettes, and then I'll show you my buttons!" So, I was relishing pretty well in cigarettes because the Japs wanted to see these shirt buttons up and down my side.

Alexander: (Chuckle) Oh, that's funny.

McDole: And so, of course, I'd use those. You'd be surprised. A man--for a cigarette--would give his ration of rice away. Of course, we all had malaria, and they we were

not eating.

Alexander: And not eating.

McDole: And not eating, and a cigarette was good to them. I'd get with my buddies from Texas and give them good cigarettes all the time that I was laid up.

Alexander: (Chuckle) I guess that you would.

McDole: Then after I got healed up, I went back to the slave pits.

Alexander: How long a time was this, now?

McDole: Oh, gosh! That was on Saint Patrick's Day, and I must have been laid up for a couple of months.

Alexander: During that time, if we go back and take a look at what the old World War II movies did and so forth, they would have indicated that, if you didn't work, the Japanese would kill you or something like that.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: So, the question that would come to my mind is, what happened? The Japanese apparently allowed you to heal, obviously.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Do you have any idea why?

McDole: I think that this was a case where it was of such an unbelievable type of illness, and the Japs...

Alexander: I see. I see. Some superstition, perhaps.

McDole: ...had some superstition or something like that. The sons-of-guns would kind of look after me a little bit.

Then they put me with...of course, I was assigned to a plumbing detail. They wanted to run water and everything to this airfield, so I told them that I was a plumber.

I was real fortunate that I had a Japanese guard who was an older man. The only thing that I knew about him then was that his name was "Smiley." We'd be working out there in the jungle--just "Smiley" and one other guard, and about six of us fellows--laying pipe from the mountains down into the airstrip and everything. Every now and then, say, about an-hour-and-a-half or so, "Smiley" would say [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "Get rest! Go get some coconuts!" So, we got in the jungle there, and we'd go up the coconut tree and get some coconuts and bring them back. He'd also let us pick papayas. We'd bring those back from the jungle, but he wouldn't let us take them back into camp. That was forbidden fruit.

Alexander: Oh, that was forbidden fruit.

McDole: Yes, the Jap commander forbade that.

Alexander: That had to be a pretty good adjunct to your diet.

McDole: Yes, it was. Of course, some of the things that we'd eat were unbelievable--snakes.

Alexander: Yes. And bugs of all kinds. Of course, there's good protein in them.

McDole: Yes. We'd be busting coral rock, and underneath this

coral rock there'd one of these big ol' king cobras.

Alexander: Oh, yes (chuckle)!

McDole: (Chuckle) What would happen was that here a big ol' king cobra would come out of there dancing around. There was always one or two of those fellows, and they'd form a circle around the snake. The guys would get out there and dance with this cobra until the Japs would see that they were doing that. Then they'd come over with their clubs and get you back to work. The Japanese troops thought: "Boy! These guys are *baka*!" That means "crazy." "That's crazy!"

Alexander: I'll bet that they did.

McDole: They did! They thought that the guys were crazy.

Alexander: Well, they were in a way.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: But in a good way.

McDole: Yes. It was so terrible out there working on that airstrip. I've seen fellows who would lay their arms down across a couple of coconut logs, and another guy would take a club and bust their arms.

Alexander: Boy!

McDole: I've seen guys who would take a 55-gallon drum of hot-water tea and just dump it on themselves...

Alexander: Just to burn themselves.

McDole: ...just to stay away from working on that airstrip, to stay away from that airstrip. Some fellows tried to

escape. When that first group tried to escape, they recaptured them. Of course, they put us all on starvation diets until they recaptured them. Then they came out with an order that...everybody was numbered off [assigned a number]. If anybody escaped out of that group, they'd take five numbers below and five numbers above [that individual's number], and when they'd capture that one fellow, they'd execute those other fellows.

Some of the fellows would get so bad with malaria and dysentery and so forth that they'd send maybe twenty-five or thirty of them back to Cabanatuan. Then they'd send in another twenty-five or thirty. I suppose that, overall, sometimes it would be as high as 500 who were in and out of Palawan. I remember that years later someone said to me that he remembered me because he was down there for maybe three months, and then they shipped him back.

Alexander: Were you in barricades at night, where they kept you in a barricaded area?

McDole: Oh, yes!

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: It was a big six-foot barbed wire fence all the way around us. Then, of course, they had towers with guards in them. Then you had them [guards] walking post all the way around it.

Alexander: Did you have barracks, or not?

McDole: There were barracks there.

Alexander: There were barracks. What you've just said is amazing. It's amazing how anybody could survive. Tell me something about your doctor. Where was he from?

McDole: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Alexander: You said that. I'm sorry. What was his name? Obviously, he was an officer.

McDole: Yes. Lieutenant Carl T. Mango.

Alexander: Okay. I have written down "officers" because I was going to ask you whether among all of you enlisted men, were there officers also included?

McDole: Yes. We had Captain Bruni. He was U.S. Army; he was from Wisconsin. We had Captain Ted Pulos; he was in the Marine Corps. He was from Nebraska. Let's see. We had a Lieutenant Knight.

Alexander: That's all right. We don't need all of their names. We don't need to go into all of that. I didn't know whether they might have separated you from the officers.

McDole: Yes. Everytime that they'd take a large working party, they'd take "X" number of officers. They were supposed to be in charge--to keep us counted.

Alexander: They were responsible for your behavior.

McDole: Right.

Alexander: And did you respond pretty well to them, as far as they were concerned, or not?

McDole: As long as they were concerned about us. I had one officer, though...I won't mention his name. After being there for quite a few years, you get to sort of understand the Japanese [language].

Alexander: Yes, yes. Yes, you obviously do.

McDole: I knew when Italy had surrendered. I heard the Japs talking about Italy surrendering. They were also talking something about that Germany was just about to capitulate. So, that was kind of morale-building. I told the troops--our men--what I had overheard: "Then Japan will be next. We'll be next." Well, you know, you've always got somebody who would make a few remarks. So, this fellow was telling this Jap: "Ah, Italy, Germany, Nippon!" That means Japan. So, that alerted them that we knew. So, the Jap wanted to know where he had heard the news. Well, he fingered me. It was one of the officers who told them.

Alexander: And you know who that American officer was, probably.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: That's why you don't want to mention his name. That's all right.

McDole: Then the *Kempei-tai*--that's the Japanese secret police--came over, and they jerked me out of the prison camp, and they took me over to their

headquarters. They set me down behind desk there. The big "bull" [interrogator], I'll never forget him. He looked like a big *Sumo* wrestler. He turned to me and was asking me where I had heard this news. I told him that I had overheard the Japs talking about Italy, and that Germany could be next. For some morale building I added the Japs. I mean, you talk about a "shellacking" [brutal beating]! I took it that day!

Alexander: Are you talking about a physical "shellacking?"

McDole: Yes. Oh, you'd better believe it.

Alexander: We're going to have to stop and let me turn over the tape. So, let's take a little break.

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Alexander: All right. We have the tape turned over. Let's continue with conversation. We were talking about the [American] officers, who were pretty much looking after the work gangs and so forth under military rules and codes--how they would ask you to do things and, of course, how you responded to that rather than to the captors in that case. I'm sure that they kept guards on all of you, though, didn't they?.

McDole: Oh, man, yes! The officers who were with us were as much under guard as we were.

Alexander: This is probably something that would not be terribly important, but I'm curious about that runway. Could you tell me, again, where that would have been

approximately or what it became, if you know?

McDole: That runway was pretty close to the center of Palawan Island. It was the second largest concrete runway in the Philippine Islands. It was to be used by the Japanese forces, because we did see Jap planes come in and land and take off there. In fact, one day I saw about 200 Japanese planes get caught on the ground by our forces.

Alexander: That was on December 15, 16, 17, 1944. I can tell you pretty confidently because I was right in that area (chuckle).

McDole: Yes.

[Tape paused briefly]

Alexander: We'll go back to the airstrip and the bombing of it.

McDole: When they [American warplanes] came in, they just completely criss-crossed that thing. Even the planes out here [gesture] would have hits--the ones that we would have hidden in the jungle. They'd come down there and pinpoint those, even. They got so many planes on the ground that day. Then, after the bombing was over, we went back out to fill in the craters and everything. The first plane that we ever did see come over us was a big ol' B-24. It was Navy Day, which would have been on October 13, 1944.

Alexander: Okay.

McDole: We had just come in off from working on the strip and

were getting ready for our ration of rice. I'll never forget that ol' "Smitty" and I were standing there. We were looking out over the bay, and "Smitty" said, "'Mack'! Do you hear that?" I said, "I sure do." He said, "That don't sound like a Jap plane." I said, "It don't sound like one to me, either." And here this thing came--four engines--right toward that prison camp, and he hedge-hopped [at low-altitude] right over the top of it. You could see those stars [American warplane insignia] on the wings flashing by.

Alexander: Oh, boy!

McDole: You talk about 300 guys just going berserk...

Alexander: Boy, I'll bet.

McDole: ...and jumping up and down and screaming!

Alexander: Oh, I can imagine!

McDole: And he came back over giving us [wagging] his wings, you know.

Alexander: Sure.

McDole: Then he went over the bay, and he circled. He came back across the docks, and he got two ships. He got two ships that were tied up to the dock. There were about a half-dozen float planes setting there, and he got all of those. Then he gets up in the air and comes down through that "beautiful" air strip that we had built--just one [bomb] right after the other...

Alexander: Drops them all right on it.

McDole: ...right down through the center. Of course, when everything was over, we looked around the prison camp. There were no Japs around the prison camp or anything, you know. It just scared the devil out of them.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: So, boy, from then on, it was every day. It got to the point that you could set your clock at 12:00 noon, and you'd hear this drone of the plane.

Alexander: The same airplane.

McDole: Well, whether it was the same plane, I don't know. But it was a big ol' B-24, and you could hear him coming.

Alexander: Yes, you sure could.

McDole: And he'd come across there. He'd flop his wings and circle back across that airstrip, drop his bombs, and take off. Then we would go back out there and patch it up. That continued like that every day, and we got to where we called him "Hysterical Harry."

Alexander: (Chuckle) "Hysterical Harry." That's funny.

McDole: "Hysterical Harry." You never knew what he was going to do, but you could just about set your clock by him, and here he'd be coming in. So, one day the Japs sent up six Zeroes--they were going to get him. The Japs were patrolling this airstrip, and there were three of them like this [gesture to indicate a high altitude]. Of course, we were all praying: "Harry! Don't come in

today! Don't come in today!"

Alexander: I'll bet.

McDole: Well, sure enough, at 12:00 noon, you could hear him coming. So, he was coming across the airstrip there, and, of course, these Zeroes started diving on him. Of course, what he did was just nosed her down [in a dive]...

Alexander: Straight down.

McDole: ...where they couldn't get underneath him. He shot three of them out of the air.

Alexander: Did he, really?

McDole: He got three of them.

Alexander: Those guys were good, weren't they?

McDole: They really were. They were outstanding! Then what happened then, the other three...I don't know what happened to those three Zeroes.

Alexander: They took off. They left (chuckle).

McDole: So, ol' "Hysterical Harry" made a few runs around there and took off. Then here came the three Jap Zeroes to land. I'll never forget this one that was coming in. We had dirt runways off to the side. These guys were coming in giving it back and forth.

Alexander: Oh, you mean this way [gesture].

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Oh, yes.

McDole: And when he came down to the end of the turntable...I

was standing down there. He spun that plane around and went into the coral rocks. He got out of that plane, and, so help me, God, in perfect English and with perfect gestures, he went like this [gesture]: "Wow! I feel a hell of a lot better now!"

Alexander: Did he, really?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: (Chuckle) And you were able to hear it.

McDole: Oh, yes.

Alexander: Isn't that something! Do you believe it! And he knew that you had heard him; otherwise, he wouldn't have spoken in English.

McDole: He said, "WHEEW! I feel a hell of a lot better now."

Alexander: (Chuckle) Oh, that's priceless.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: The first time that "Harry" came across was on October...

McDole: It was Navy Day.

Alexander: That's about October 11. [Editor's note: October 13 is Navy Day, which commemorates the founding of the United States Navy by the Second Continental Congress on that date in 1775.]

McDole: Somewhere in there. I don't remember the exact date.

Alexander: That's okay. I've got Navy Day--October--yes. I'm putting this together in my own mind with the fact that the Battle of Leyte Gulf began in October--toward

the end of the month, about the 25th [1944].

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: And that's when MacArthur was landing his troops there--in October. I'm sure that they were trying to keep as many [Japanese] planes on the ground as they possibly could, so that would kind of coincide with those activities that were going on at that time. Did you know or hear of anything about that at the time?

McDole: We knew when they landed on Tacloban [Leyte Province].

Alexander: Oh, you knew when they did that. Well, yes, I guess that you would, wouldn't you?

McDole: We could hear the Japs talking about it.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: Since you could understand quite well what they were saying, did you at anytime get the feeling that they were pretty concerned?

Alexander: Yes. You'd be surprised. A number of them would ask us what would happen to them if they became POWs [prisoners-of-war] like us.

Alexander: Okay.

McDole: And we'd tell them that they would be treated good!

Alexander: They were asking you what you thought.

McDole: Yes. In fact, they couldn't believe that they would be treated good. They'd say, "Nai!" They said that they'd never surrender, because of their Code of Bushido.

Alexander: That's right.

McDole: That was their belief.

Alexander: That was a shameful thing for them to do, as it is for anybody. All right, at this point in time, what you were doing, really, was re-repairing this "beautiful" airstrip, as you called it.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: How did you feel about what we [American warplanes] were doing to the airstrip.

McDole: Oh, we were happy about that. We were happy.

Alexander: I'm sure of that.

McDole: And shortly after all of this started in, they cut our force in two. There were only 150 of us left.

Alexander: Oh, really. What did they do with the other 150?

McDole: They sent them back to Manila. From there a bunch of them went to Japan, and they were on some of those ships that were sunk by [American] submarines.

Alexander: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we lost a bunch of them that way.

McDole: We sure did. In fact, I had several buddies who had left Palawan on those ships that were sunk.

Alexander: That were with them.

McDole: They were with those who got sunk out there. These were guys, who, in knowing them, they were praying for American intervention, and American submarines got them.

Alexander: I'm sure. Where are we in terms of your final

episode? Where are we from that point?

McDole: Well, this was from Navy Day until December 14 [1944].

Alexander: December 14.

McDole: It was early in the morning. Of course, we had been hearing the Japs talk about a [American] convoy that had left Tacloban, and it was heading west toward Palawan Island. Of course, they routed us out of the barracks pretty early in the morning. But before they even routed us out of the barracks, we could hear the [Japanese] troops moving out--the heavy artillery and the trucks and everything moving.

So, I slipped out of the barracks and got down there, and I could hear them talking about a convoy that had left Tacloban and was heading across the Sulu Sea toward Palawan. So, they were moving out. I presume that they had the feeling that this landing was going to take place on Palawan Island.

At 12:00 noon they sounded the air raid warning, so they congregated us altogether again. The commander got up on his pedestal, and he said, "Americans, today your working days are over!" We said, "Thank God! They're coming in to get us!" But what happened was that that convoy had shot north, and it hit Mindoro island.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: It hit Mindoro, and so it left them here. But before

it shifted, the Japs marched us back into the prison camp.

When we got into the prison camp, they sounded the air raid warning again. We kept listening and listening--no planes--and then they sounded the all-clear. So, we started coming out of the trenches and everything that we had we had constructed there, and we started coming back into the barracks area. The Japanese said, "Nai! ["You stay in barracks area!"] We looked around this prison camp, and all the way around the prison camp were machine-gunners lined up. So, we just figured that: "Well, this is extra security to keep us under control when the landing takes place." Then sounded the air raid warning again. They came running in there, saying [Mr. McDole speaking in Japanese], "Get to the trenches! Get to the trenches! The Americans are coming!" We knew that they were excited as all get out, so down in the trenches we went. These trenches...some of them had thirty-five men, some of them had maybe fifty. In the trench that I was in, they had dug it right along the edge of the cliff. Of course, with the trenches they had made us put coconut logs over top of them and then mound dirt over the top of them. That was to keep us in there. But we didn't know what they had in mind that they were going to do to us. But when the air

raid warning sounded again, they told us to get to our trenches. We just thought: "Well, this is it! They're coming in! The troops are landing!"

So, we went down there. In the trench that I was in, "Smitty" and I were more or less in charge of it. We were looking out and saw a platoon of Japanese soldiers coming down through the barracks carrying buckets and torches. The first thing that they did was run up to Company B, as we called it, in the first trench. What they did was throw a bucket of gasoline and the torches in on the fellows. Of course, the explosions and screaming and hollering were coming out of there, and then the machine guns would open up. So, I told "Smitty", "My God! They're murdering everybody!"

We'd been tunneling through in our trench, so we could look out over the bay there. The reason that we were doing that was so that we could make an escape hatch in case bombs would hit and cave the trench in on us. So, we had an escape hatch. "Smitty" said, "Oh, 'Mack!' You've gotta be kidding me!" He stuck his head out there, and the machine guns opened up on us. This tall, big ol' Texan--"Smitty"--(chuckle) said, "All right, you guys! Get busy! Knock the rest of that side out!"

I was keeping my eyes on what was happening

outside. You could see these guys--human torches--coming out of these trenches. They'd grab a Jap, and down they'd go with him. The next thing I knew...

Alexander: Grab a Jap.

McDole: Yes. They'd run right into them, and down they'd go with them.

Alexander: The Jap would go down with them.

McDole: Yes, they'd hold onto them. The American would hold onto him, and they'd both be in flames.

Then the next thing that I noticed...I've got a picture in the back of my mind. Dr. Mango came out of his trench. He had his hands in the air. He was saying, "Dozo! Dozo!" In Japanese, that means, "Please! Wait a minute!" The only thing that they did was open up and fire on him with machine guns. Then they threw gasoline on him and set him on fire. Then they got Turner. Pulos had already been sent out. Turner and Bruni--three of them--were in that, so they got the other two in the trench. They burned them alive.

So, "Smitty" hollered at me. He said, "'Mack,' I've got most of the fellows out of here!" They'd gone over this cliff about sixty feet down. So, I said, "Okay, I'm coming!" So, I started running back there to go through this hole.

Here was a fellow by the name of "Pop" Daniels.

He was from East Texas--the oldest man in the prison camp in terms of service time. I said, "C'mon, 'Pop'! Let's go!" And this guy, bless his heart, he was so petrified that he couldn't even move. So, I just reached down and picked "Pop" up and shoved him out this hole. I thought that it was better for the fall to kill him than to have him burn alive.

About that time, some more fellows jumped in our trench, and here came the flames in after us. These fellows took the brunt of the flames. The only thing that I got was singed up and down my back, and over the cliff I went.

When I got down the sixty-foot drop, there was my ol' buddy, "Smitty."

Alexander: Was he, really?

McDole: He stuck out his hand, and he said, "McDole, I'll see you," and he started down the beach. Man, then they opened up on us!

Alexander: I'll bet.

McDole: They split us up, and "Smitty" just kept going--that big ol' long-legged Texan. His legs...I never saw him run so fast.

So, I had to swing back around to come back down the beach, and below this prison camp...you can imagine after two-and-a-half years of garbage and debris have come down there.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: It was all piled up there. I could see on down the beach, and coming down toward me were more guards. So, I buried myself in this garbage pile. There I spent the afternoon. Later on, somebody else got in that garbage pile with me. This fellow was from back East, and he said, "'Mack,' what are we going to do?" I said, "Just keep quiet. Maybe they'll pass over us." I could tell that he was excited as all get out.

The next thing that you could hear was that the Japs were coming down on the beach. The next thing that I knew, ol' Risby (?) just stood right up out of this garbage pile, and he said, "Okay, you Jap sons-of-bitches! Here I am! Go ahead and shoot me and get it over with!" When he raised up, all of that garbage just caved in right on top of me. Then shots rang out, and I could feel them pulling his body off of that garbage pile.

The next thing I could smell was gasoline. I thought, "My God! They're setting this thing on fire!" But what had happened was that they had just pulled his body off and saturated it with gasoline and set him afire. Then there was a shot that rang out down the beach, and away they took off because they had found somebody else.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: So, I just couldn't even move because I was pinned down in this garbage. I laid under that garbage all night long. You'd hear shots ring out and so forth.

Finally, by daybreak, I had a hole about that big [gesture] where I could look out along the beach. And here the next I knew, I could hear Japs coming again. The next thing that I knew, so help me, I was like [this]--looking straight in the eyes of a Jap through that hole.

Alexander: You were?

McDole: Yes! I just closed my eyes and said, "God, give me the strength and the power to face what's before me." Again, a shot rang out, [Mr. McDole snapping his fingers] and away they went. So, when they went down the beach, with all of the strength that I could muster, I bolted out of that garbage pile, and I started running the other way. I was running on coral rock, and I fell face forward. You've possibly seen those big coral rocks, how those holes go back in them.

Alexander: Sure. Yes, yes.

McDole: All right, when I fell, I could look right into a hole. I could crawl in that hole, and hear the landing if it was really going to take place.

Alexander: Sure.

McDole: So, I crawled up underneath that coral rock, and then, boy, our planes came over! They gave us a "shellacking" that day.

Alexander: Our planes did?

McDole: Yes. In fact, you could hear them "splashing" [shooting down] some of the Jap planes over the water there.

Then, late that evening somebody walked in front of the opening, and I could see that he was one of the fellows. I said, "Hey!" Here it was a kid by the name of Dana Hamrick. He stuck his head in there, and he said, "Where are you at?" I said, "I'm here on this rock ledge!"

Alexander: He didn't happen to be from Nebraska, did he?

McDole: No.

Alexander: Okay.

McDole: He said, "'Mack,' I'm in bad shape. It's my arm. I've been shot!"

Alexander: Oh.

McDole: So, we sat there, and we bathed that arm in saltwater. He said, "What are we going to do?" I said, "As soon as it gets dark, we're going to try to swim out of here." He said, "Do you think that we can make it?" I said, "No, but the only thing to do is try."

So, when it quieted down a little bit, I entered the water. I said, "Come on, Dana." We started

swimming, and I was trying to help him. We got about fifty yards out there, and Dana said, "I can't make it, 'Mack!' Take me back! I'm not going to be able to make it at all!" So, I took him back there. He had so much gangrene that he died on me. I just rolled him up on some rocks. Before he died, he made a loud noise, and then you could hear the machine guns roar.

So, as soon as things quieted down out there, I started swimming again.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: So, I had always kind of had my mind made up that the only way that anybody could make an escape out of there was to swim that channel. I figured that it was five miles, but the navigators said that it was possibly seven miles. But I still think that it was only five miles. I had my course set with the Southern Cross...

Alexander: Yes. Did you really?

McDole: ...and a range of mountains. I just kept myself lined up that way, and I was just floating and flipping along. The next morning, when I hit the other side, I don't...

Alexander: How long were you in the water? Do you know? Do you have any idea?

McDole: Possibly seven, eight hours. When I hit the beach on

the other side, of course, I collapsed.

Alexander: You did? I would think so.

McDole: I was just gone. I came to [recovered consciousness], and here was a couple of big green coconuts that had just washed up alongside me. If you think that the Good Master hasn't taken care of me...

Alexander: Yes. Talk about angels (chuckle)

McDole: So, these coconuts were laying right alongside me because I was laying along the water's edge. I was looking for anything that I could break those open and get that fresh juice out of them, and the pulp.

Then I panicked, thinking: "How long have I been here? Japanese planes going over could have spotted me." So, I started up through that jungle. Now, you talk about getting into a jungle! It was just a terror, you know. The mud was going up to your knees. You were crawling over things--big snakes--the works.

When I got out to a little clearing there, I sat down and did a lot of praying and a lot of crying, thinking that: "I'm the only man alive!" I thought, "I can't make it through this jungle, so I had better go back to that inlet."

I came out by a mountain range on this little inlet that was possibly half-a-mile across. I could see a little native village in there, and I thought, "Well, the only thing to do is swim across there and

see if these natives are friendly or not."

So, as I was swimming, it was getting toward sunset by then. The next thing that I knew, I was grasping for something to get hold of. You've seen pictures where they have the fish trap that looks like snow fence coming around.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: I hid out at the very end of that fish trap--bamboo.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: So, I worked my way to the center and crawled up on top of the fish trap, and that's where I spent the night.

Alexander: Was there a net on top of that?

McDole: It was bamboo.

Alexander: It was bamboo, like, a float made of bamboo on the top.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: So, it was a firm platform.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: So, they caught the fish inside that.

McDole: Yes. See, when the fish would hit these snow fences, as I call them--the bamboo fences--they'd work their way in, and they'd come into this trap, and they'd be trapped in there. So, the natives would come out and bring a gate and shut it on them.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: Then they'd crawl out in there and get the fish out and stuff. At daybreak I could hear this little village come to life. I could hear the commotion going on. Here were a couple of fellows who got in a *banca* [dugout canoe]...

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: ...and they started rowing out toward this fish trap. The closer they got, the more scared I became. There was one of them who pointed across to just where I had come from. Then they were just paddling all the way over there. They jumped out of the canoe, and I could see them carrying somebody back with them. It was one of our prisoners, I think. I was thinking to myself. I watched what was going on, and as they went past, I could see that it was one of the fellows with them.

Alexander: One of your fellows?

McDole: Yes. So, they got into the little village, and I thought, "Oh, the Japs are liable to see something and hear this commotion and send some troops or something." Time elapsed. Then they came back out to the fish trap. As they pulled alongside that fish trap, I just raised up--I stood up (chuckle)--and started talking. This native said, "Hey, 'Joe!' [Are] you a prisoner?"

Alexander: (Chuckle) Did he, really?

McDole: I said, "Well, I was, but no longer." They said,

"Come! Come!" I couldn't move, so they helped me down and put me in their *banca*, and they took me into the little village and took me into a bamboo hut. Of course, when I got into that hut, I was looking around to see what I could find. So, they brought me some papayas, some rice, and a pair of trousers for me. The next thing that I noticed was that the bamboo door opened, and in stepped a fellow by the name of Pedro Phaie. I just kind of bowed down. I said under my breath, "Well, I guess that this is the end of it." He kind of grinned, and then he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, we've seen you over there hobnobbing with those Japs all the time, drinking sake with them. So, you're going to turn me into the Japs." He said, "No, you're on your way out of here. Just stop and think about it. When I was over there, and if there was much activity going on over there, what would happen the following day?" He was getting the information out.

Alexander: Sure.

McDole: So, he said, "Do you know a Sergeant Bogue with the U.S. Marines?" I said, "I sure do!" He said, "I've got him in the next hut." So, I go over there, and here's ol' Douglas Bogue. He's pretty well banged up, too. He said, "'Mack,' I'm in bad shape." So, I started to get...the Filipinos had a a pair of

tweezers there, and I started pulling little hairy maggots out of his feet where he had them all cut up.

So, we spent a couple of days there recuperating, and then one night Phaie came in, and he said, "Fellows, I've got to get you out of here! Somehow the 'Nips' [derogatory term for Nipponese or Japanese] have heard that you're here, and they're coming in. I've got some native boys coming in. They'll get you out of here tonight. They're going to bring in a *carabao*." Have you ever ridden a *carabao*?

Alexander: I know what they are, yes (chuckle).

McDole: He said, "You'll be going pretty close to a Jap outpost, so you'll have to real quiet." Then he said, "These natives can't speak English."

So, we rode out of there that night and down through these jungles--all night long. There was just nothing--just a big ol' *carabao* bouncing around. Then the next morning, we came off of this mountainside and down into a little valley. You talk about a peaceful-looking valley--this was it. The natives--three of them--started looking at each other, and started grinning and looking at Bogue and I, and, so help me, God, they broke out in perfect singing--"God Bless America."

Alexander: Did they, really?

McDole: "God Bless America."

Alexander: Oh, goodness gracious.

McDole: Bogue looked at me, and I looked at him. One of the natives said, "You are now in the Free Philippines!"

Alexander: Wow!

McDole: "You are now in the Free Philippines!" And so there we were.

Alexander: What a moment.

McDole: They took us into a little village called Aborlan. And that was Christmas Day.

Alexander: In 1944.

McDole: In 1944. This was kind of a Moro village, and there was something that I couldn't believe happened. On Christmas Day, they wouldn't move. This was the day that they'd bring in their infants for a ceremony on Christmas Day--all day.

Alexander: Is that right?

McDole: But we could hear a plane that day flying up and down the beach. Of course, these natives did not move from there, so we sat there. The next day we started moving again. They had picked up another fellow by the name of Fern Barta--a Navy guy. They brought him in, and, oh, he was in bad shape. He had gotten lost in the jungle. He had crawled up a bamboo tree to see where he was at and to get his bearings. The bamboo limb busted off, and he came down and straddled it.

Alexander: Oh, gee!

McDole: So, I had to doctor him. This was in this little village that night when they brought him in. I don't know what in the world makes people do things like this, but the natives had something that was purple and looked like something that the Navy used all the time. They make it out of bark and different herbs. By torchlight, they'd take the maggots right out of that kid's scrotum.

Alexander: Oh, gee!

McDole: So, we started moving out the next day, and we came wound up at Brook's Point--clear down at the southern part of Palawan Island. There we ran into Captain Nazario B. Mayor. He and his family treated us just like lost relatives. They had a little girl--Mary Ann. I was laid up in this bamboo hut. This little tot--she was only seven years old then--would come to the door and look at me, and she'd just kind of stare at me. She said, "You want drink?"

Alexander: (Chuckle)

McDole: I'd say, "Yes," because I had malaria and everything. She'd bring it in. She'd bring me a drink,, and then she'd lay her arm down against mine, looking at her skin coloring and my coloring, you know. So, after I got to feeling pretty good, I told Captain Mayor, "I'm going to Australia." A submarine had come in and put off a reel-driven [generator] wire radio grinder for

these Filipinos.

Alexander: Oh, yes (chuckle).

McDole: So, they had radioed [American forces of our presence].

Alexander: They had brought that radio in by submarine, yes.

McDole: They had radioed Melbourne [Australia] that there were three of us there and that my intentions were to leave there and row across to Balabac Island and then to Borneo and the Celebes and to work my way to Australia that way. The message came back: "Tell those men to stay where they are!" So, on January 21, [1945]...we had a system set up--a smoke system. The natives would climb coconut trees when they heard an American plane or could identify it, and they would set off these smoke bombs.

Alexander: I see.

McDole: You could see a big ol' PBV, and it had six fighter planes escorting it in. These natives put out their smoke signal, and that plane made one big circle. The three of us were out there.

Alexander: Oh, he landed there.

McDole: He landed there to pick us up. Then from there we went to Mindoro and refueled. Then we went from Mindoro to Tacloban and on Leyte. We got in there and spent the night aboard a hospital ship. The next day, we went down to Tacloban. We were there for two days

before we got to be interviewed [be debriefed] by anybody. Some lieutenant came up one night, and he said, "Hey, do you know, if there's some escaped POWs here?" We said, "Yes, that's us." "Well, it's been rumored around here, but nobody could believe it." So, we went into headquarters to be interviewed.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: When we walked in there, you know, we got in front of as bunch of "brass" [high-ranking officers]. We snapped to attention, but they kind of looked at us and shook their heads. This one officer said, "Man, you fellows look like you've been through hell. Sit down and tell us what happened." So, we just relived the whole story to them. The one officer said, "In the morning, you're going to be on your way out of here." So, the next morning, I went aboard a plane and could go home. I went to Pearl Harbor. At Pearl Harbor we had to go through a lot of debriefing and everything.

Alexander: Sure. I'm sure.

McDole: And we got new uniforms.

Alexander: And I would think some free medical care.

McDole: Yes. Then we got ready to leave there. In fact, I helped them with the landing operations for Palawan.

Alexander: Oh, you did.

McDole: I told them all about the [gun] emplacements and

everything and where would be the best place to come in. From there they sent us...they told us, "From here, you're going to Washington, D.C. You're not to talk to anybody. Don't tell anybody what your stories are until our forces have landed at Palawan, and then you can confirm it." So, we were flying on a big MARS flying boat.

Alexander: Flying Boats, yes.

McDole: Of course, it was transporting a bunch of...

Alexander: ...wounded back.

McDole: ...wounded back. We were sitting there on one of the [bench] the seats, and pretty soon the cabin door opened, and there was a major who came back. He said, "Can I sit down with you fellows?" We said, "Absolutely, sir!" (chuckle)

Alexander: "Whatever you say."

McDole: "Whatever you say!"

Alexander: (Chuckle)

McDole: So, he said, "Where have you fellows been?" We said, "Tacloban." Just questions like that. He said, "I understand that there are some escaped POWs aboard here." I said, "Major, they must be some of those litter cases back there." So, when we "pancaked" [made a seaborne landing] into San Francisco [California], he got up and shook our hands and said, "Fellows, I can trust you by yourselves the rest of

the way into Washington." (chuckle)

Alexander: So, you did it just right.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: He was just making sure of us.

Alexander: He was going to find out if you could keep your mouths shut or not.

McDole: Yes. That's what he was on there for.

Alexander: Isn't that something?

McDole: I wish now that I remembered his name and had written it down. You know, so many things happen, but you're so happy and so enthused that...

Alexander: Oh, well, your mind has got to be on too many other things than that. Good Heavens, you were looking at sights that you just weren't ever sure that you were ever going to see again. Yes, that's an incredible story.

Let me ask you this. When did you leave the service? In other words, did you leave right after the surrender?

McDole: No, I didn't leave the service until November of 1945.

Alexander: Of 1945, yes. November, 1945. You were mustered out at that time, and where were you mustered out?

McDole: At Camp Pendleton [California].

Alexander: Oh, out on the West Coast.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: And they sent you home with a few "bucks" [accumulated back pay for the period during imprisonment] in your pockets, and you got out.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: What was your rating [rank] at the time?

McDole: I was a corporal. Well, I take that back. I was a corporal when I got back to the States. Then my first duty station after I left Washington, D.C., was at Hastings, Nebraska...

Alexander: Oh, that was nice duty.

McDole: ...at the naval depot there. So, when I was there, they promoted me to sergeant. I guess that they just felt sorry for me and gave it to me.

Alexander: (Chuckle) Felt sorry for you, yes.

McDole: I was there for thirty days, and, you know, there's always a shipment [a levy of men] going out. So, you go down to see where all of your buddies are going.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: I went down and looked, and [there were orders posted that said]: "Sergeant McDole...." I said, "This can't be because when I left Washington, they [his orders] said that [Hastings, Nebraska] was my permanent duty station.

So, I went in to see the first sergeant. I said, "Say, Sergeant, there's a mistake on that bulletin board out there." He said, "What do you mean?" I

said, "When I left Washington, D.C., they said that this was my permanent duty station." He said, "Well, you're a Marine, aren't you?" I said, "Sir, that's a fact. I'm the only Marine on the base." He said, "What do you mean by that?" (chuckle). I said, "I'm USMC [Regular Marine]. Everybody else is USMCR [United States Marine Corps Reserve]!" (chuckle)

Alexander: Oh, you were a Regular Marine. Yes, okay.

McDole: Yes, I was a Regular.

Alexander: Yes, I've got you (chuckle).

McDole: Of course, I was just "gigging" [kidding] him.

Alexander: That's great. Let's go back to Washington again for just a moment. Who did you debrief with?

McDole: Gosh, there were so many of them on my trip there-- medical.

Alexander: Okay, but let's talk about the G-2-types [staff officer for intelligence]. You obviously had to be debriefed on your experience.

McDole: Oh, it was everything, yes.

Alexander: Yes. And would that have been with a G-2 or S-2 [staff officer for intelligence]? Whichever?

McDole: Yes, G-2. Of course, when we left Washington, D.C., they told us that before they sent us home, we couldn't talk to anybody.

Alexander: Okay, before that landing

McDole: Yes, we couldn't until they landed on Palawan, and we

could confirm it. I think that it was March 7. They landed in the latter part of February, and on March 7...one evening the doorbell rang, and here was a lieutenant commander and, I guess, a couple of other officers and the news media. He said, "Your story has been confirmed, and you can release it to the news media."

Alexander: This was March 7, 1945.

McDole: In 1945.

Alexander: How long did you stay in Washington?

McDole: Oh, about thirty days.

Alexander: Okay. Then you left there. When did you...you were serving out a "hitch" [term of enlistment] then.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Yes, but your "hitch" was up, then, in 1945.

McDole: No, in 1944.

Alexander: Oh, your "hitch" was up in 1944.

McDole: Yes. See, I went in in 1940.

Alexander: That's right. You went in 1940. It was a four-year enlistment. Okay, there's still a little tape left on here. You had a war-related follow-up experience, as I understand it, as a witness at the War Crimes Trials. Where were those held?

McDole: Yokohama was where they were held.

Alexander: Okay. And [off the tape] you were telling me about you were notified that you were going to be asked to

do this, and what your reactions were.

McDole: The War Department contacted me and said that they were going to have trials on thirty-three Japanese who had been picked up on Palawan Island because there was evidence of a massacre there. I said, "There's more than thirty-three of them." They said, "Well, we think that we'll just call you back into the Marines."

Alexander: I was wondering about that.

McDole: I said, "No, I've got a good job. If I go back as a civilian back over there, my job will go on the same as before. I'd go back in the military, but if I go back there as a civilian witness, the pay would be much better than a sergeant."

Alexander: (Chuckle) Yes. Good for you.

McDole: They said, "Okay." Anyway, they sent the subpoena to me, and I took it to get it [the necessary absence from work] verified. I was with [working for] the highway patrol then.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: Then they flew me over there. I got some depositions from some of the Japs who were there and everything. Thirty-three of them were to be tried.

Alexander: You got depositions from the Japs that were what, now? Commanding?

McDole: Well, it was the ones who were there at Palawan.

Alexander: They were there.

McDole: Well, what had happened was that several years ago...how many years ago? My wife can answer that for me. Anyway, Senator [Charles] Grassley from our state [Iowa]...my daughter had been writing a book, and she was needing more information. So, she contacted our senator, and he made arrangements for us to come back to Washington, D.C., and go through the Navy Yard records there.

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: This was where we got all of the information. They just had it laid out on a big desk for me, so we just started going through it. That's where I got some of the depositions from some of the fellows who had escaped; some of the pictures; and some of the Japanese depositions.

Alexander: They had deposed the Japanese as well? That was in the record there, yes.

McDole: That's where I got all of the information.

Alexander: But this was long after the trials?

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: I guess that what I was thinking about was that you didn't have any such depositions with you at the trials. You got them later, but you knew about them, though.

McDole: No, I didn't have theirs. These were given there.

Alexander: These were given there. Okay, that's fine. At the

trials themselves, how long did you...first of all, how long were you there?

McDole: A little over ninety days.

Alexander: Ninety days. And at civilian pay (chuckle).

McDole: I was staying at the Dai Ichi Hotel in Tokyo.

Alexander: Oh, good! That was better than the last accommodations that they gave you (chuckle). The ninety days...do you remember how many days you were being interrogated by the panel?

McDole: Most of it was by deposition.

Alexander: I've got you.

McDole: In fact, that was all of it. I've got pictures of a couple of fellows who were giving depositions there. That's what the tribunal used, was our depositions. We didn't have to get on the witness stand...

Alexander: Okay.

McDole: ...and actually testify against them because they had already accepted [the veracity of our testimony] that these Japs were there.

Alexander: Because you knew them by photographs or something.

McDole: Yes.

Alexander: Okay. So, you never actually saw them again.

McDole: What they would do, they'd bring them up to the Dai Ichi Hotel there...

Alexander: Oh, okay.

McDole: ...in Tokyo. They'd round them up and bring them up

in the elevator, and then they'd stand in a profile. Then they'd make an ID of them: "Right, face!" Then they'd come down the corridor. Then you'd say, "Yeah! That's Naguchi (?). Yeah, I remember him!" "That's [So-and-So]!" I'll give you a little story on this [Japanese guard nicknamed] "Smiley."

Alexander: Yes.

McDole: When he came up in the elevator, he got off. Just as soon as he stepped off the elevator, I said to the interpreter and the rest of them there: "My God! That's 'Smiley'!" They said, "'Smiley?'" I said, "Yeah, he's the one who was in charge of plumbing." So, ol' "Smiley" made his right face, and he started down the corridor. He came down the corridor to where our interrogation room was. So help me, as "Smiley" was walking down there, you could see his expressions changing. He came in the door, and he dropped on his knees. He came up to that desk and put his hand out toward me, and he said [in broken English], "Mack-y Dole!" He said [in Japanese] "But you're [supposed to be] dead!"

Alexander: Is that right?

McDole: I said "Nai!" And I just told him: "'Smiley,' I've got to be honest with you. I know that you weren't there that day, but you know the information that we're seeking. You've got to tell us where the word

[orders to kill all of the American POWs] came from or anything that you know about it. He said, "Nai! Nai!" He said [in Japanese], "I didn't know anything." I said, "Okay! Sugamo!" That was the was a Japanese prison. "Sugamo!"

I don't know. It must have been a couple of weeks later, and the phone rang: "'Smiley' wants to talk." We came in, and I said, "What the hell happened?" It was only two weeks, and this guy was just beat [exhausted].

Alexander: Well, he probably, with the shock of seeing you, was pretty freaked out.

McDole: I told him: "'Smiley,' you weren't there, but I'm going to tell them that you were--that I saw you do [this]!" And I think that he was so petrified that he came in, and he wanted to talk. And that guy--he did. He sat down, and he told us so many things that they wanted to know. He did not involve himself, so we had it all down there. So, they took him back to Sugamo Prison.

When I was getting ready to leave, after everything was over with, I thought, "My gosh! 'Smiley' is still in Sugamo Prison! So, I called down there, and they sent him up. He came in, and you talk about a man who had lost weight. He was just rundown. I looked at him, and I said, "'Smiley,' how would you

like to go home?" He said [in broken English], "'Mack-y Dole!' No [don't] joke! No joke!" I said, "I've come over here and accomplished what I came over for." And I said once again, "Never did I ever see you mistreat anybody. In fact, many a time you'd turn me loose and let me go get coconuts and papayas." He kind of grinned at me, and he said [in Japanese] "Thank you! Thank you very much!" So, I said, "You go home!" So, he got up with tears rolling from his eyes. He said to the interpreter that he wanted to come over and shake hands with me. I stuck out my hand, and, so help me, he grabbed my hand with both of his and pulled me to his bosom, and he cried like a baby. He said [in broken English], "'Mack-y Dole,' This I don't believe. I go home now and tell daughters that an American save my life."

Alexander: Isn't that poignant! My goodness-gracious!

McDole: Oh, yes. And I suppose now today that he's possibly gone [deceased], because he was quite old at that time. I wouldn't say the same thing about most of them.

Alexander: No, no. Of course, you wouldn't. But the fact that you had that feeling of forgiveness for him and the things that he did for you is very gallant on your part, as well. I'm sure that your basic philosophy wouldn't have permitted you to do otherwise unless he