

JOHN HERBERT HARDY

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War, World War 2

Interviewed by

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Charles G. Roland, MD:

Mr. Hardy, I thank you for being here. Could you first give me your full name, your birthplace and your birth date.

Jack Herbert Hardy:

Fine. My name is John Herbert Hardy. I was born on October 1st, 1920.

CGR:

And your parents' names?

JHH:

My father's name is Fred Hardy, who's deceased, died in 1951. My mother, Alice Hardy, is still alive at present; she'll be 100 years old on 8th of October.

CGR:

Isn't that wonderful! What was her maiden name?

JHH:

Barker, Alice Barker.

CGR:

And where were you born?

JHH:

I was born here in Winnipeg, 1920 as I say.

CGR:

1920, yes. Did you live in Winnipeg then for the rest of your...I mean, prior to the wartime?

JHH:

Right till 1939.

CGR:

Where did you go to school?

JHH:

I went to, well elementary school, I was in Norwood, King George School. And then we moved to Fort Rouge and I went to Riverview, Lord Robertson, and later to Kelvin.

CGR:

What were you doing in '39 when the war began?

JHH:

I was working at Eaton's. I was working in the C.D. Returns, getting \$12 a week.

CGR:

Big money.

JHH:

Yes. I enlisted on September 10th or 11th, I'm not quite sure, 1939.

CGR:

In the Grenadiers?

JHH:

In the Grenadiers.

CGR:

Tell me just briefly what you did between then and, say, October '41?

JHH:

Well, when we joined in '39 we were originally a machine-gun battalion and we were sent to Jamaica, and one company went to Bermuda, as garrison troops. We were there until September [1941]. We went there -- we left Winnipeg on May the 24th, I believe it was, 1940, and we were there until coming back on September, 1941. We were given a month's furlough, and we left

for Hong Kong on, I think it was October the 25th, 1941, and we landed in Hong Kong on November the 16th. We were initially, I guess, sent as garrison troops. I don't imagine they thought initially that the Japanese were going to -- thought it was just going to be a lot of war noises, all smoke and little fire.

CGR:

How did you feel about that? Did you think you were likely to be going into combat, or did you think about it much?

JHH:

No. To be perfectly honest, I guess the truth of the matter, we were disappointed. My father and mother both coming from the old country (came from England) and having a number of cousins and so forth over there, I thought, well, I was disappointed in the fact that we went east instead of going over to Europe. But, as I say, I never gave it much thought. I guess, being a little naive, I didn't realize probably just how grave the situation was at the time. You know, just the number of troops that we had as against what they had.

CGR:

Well, tell me a little bit about your first impressions of Hong Kong. What was that like?

JHH:

I could tell you a funny little anecdote about that. When we arrived in Hong Kong, in the harbor, there was two or three old British aircraft came over, about 1914, 1918 vintage, and the following day they came over and our chaps were cheering and waving at them. This little anecdote that I was going to mention -- one of the pilots later on was on the prison ship that left

Hong Kong to go to Japan with us, and I know one of the comments that was in the paper the following day after we had landed -- "Canadian contingent arrives in Hong Kong and RAF roars out to meet them." One of the chaps (I forget his name now), he was an Irish chap, said, "RAF roars out to meet Canadian contingent," and this chap had the usual Irish malarkey and he said, "Fellows," he said, "I felt," he said, "I really felt so self-conscious and sorry." He said, "We buzzed over your ship and all you fellows were on board deck waving at us," and he said, "I would have loved to wave back but I was busy holding one of the wings on." But that was just, as I say, that was about it. These planes were absolutely useless.

CGR:

They didn't have much air force, did they?

JHH:

No. Of course I didn't see it myself -- we did notice that there were no British planes in the air after the Japs landed -- and I understand that they were shot up while they were still on the ground.

CGR:

What were you doing? What was your military responsibility? Were you a rifleman? What company were you in?

JHH:

I was in C Company. When we landed, as I mentioned to you, on November 16th, a short time afterwards they wanted to frequent [acquaint] us with the various pill boxes and so forth, and areas that presumably we were supposed to defend in Hong Kong. We were in Kowloon, which is on the mainland, at our Sham Shui Po Bar-

racks, and we were over there it seems to me about a week or ten days, and we were just about due to come back when the Japs attacked Hong Kong. But as I say it wasn't really any great major air raid by any means. They were just dropping small bombs, and I understand they did damage to some of the ships in the harbor, but they were just small bombs that they were dropping.

CGR:

So as the war began you were in Kowloon.

JHH:

No, this was in Hong Kong.

CGR:

Oh, you come back from Kowloon?

JHH:

No. I was still in Hong Kong -- I was going to say we were due to come back when the Japanese bombed Hong Kong. And then, of course, I never got back to Kowloon. We were on little patrols that were on road blocks and things of this nature. They mentioned there was a number of fifth columnists on the island. I never saw any. I'm sure that maybe some did, but I didn't see any. Prior to the Japanese landing on the island, I wasn't in any action or anything like that with fifth columnists at all, but I did hear that they were there. As I say, I didn't see any.

CGR:

Could you just tell me what your war was like, your three-week war. For you. What were you doing, where were you?

JHH:

You know, it's a funny thing, this may sound a little silly.

A lot of the unpleasant things I've forgotten about, and things that stick out in my memory are little funny things. I guess that really, truthfully, it's the same as in our prison camp. I've forgotten a lot of the fellows that were even in my camp now. I'm sure you can understand this, you know it's difficult maybe to -- of course it's 40 years ago, but besides that, I think that things we don't want to remember we put in the back of our minds, and when we have our reunions (our chaps get together and we tell funny stories and lie a little), but I think I've noticed that with nearly all our chaps, they remember the little funny things that happened and those things that you like to forget, you forget.

CGR:

Well, tell me some of the little funny things.

JHH:

Okay. Well...

CGR:

Let me just say, thank heaven the human brain works that way. That's a very good thing for us all, that we forget the bad things and get on with...

JHH:

Well, I think that's right. I mean, I'm sure that everyone, be it in a war or anything else, that you have personal tragedies that we all do, when you lose someone you love that you know, you just can't dwell on that forever, can we, life goes on.

Well, you were asking me for a funny anecdote. Well, we had, there was Bert Delbridge, who was the president of our organization, and a fellow by the name of Cecil Lavery, who's

dead now, and I forget who the other one was now, but Lavery and Del we used to call "The Gold Dust Twins." When you saw one you saw the other. This is before the Japanese had landed on the island and they were sending these reconnaissance planes over, so they knew exactly where we were, and they were dropping these little anti-personnel bombs. This particular time this plane came over, and when these bombs are coming down they whistle, as you probably know, and you generally get an idea that they're going to come reasonably close to you. Well, at the time we were just having our suppers and we had the mess tins, and if you know anything about these mess tins they were scalding hot. If you had hot tea in them, gosh you wouldn't dare put these damn things, just about burned your lips off; we had stew in one of the mess tins and hot tea in the other and we were, as I say, just having our meal and this plane came over and this bomb came down, and everybody was diving for cover. I think it was Lavery (I'm pretty sure it was Lavery) that flew to one side and I think Delbridge, or this other chap, I forget who it was now, threw their scalding hot tea and it landed (we were just in these little K-shirts) and it landed on Lavery's back. He made the most ungodly groan just about the same time as this bomb landed. He was groaning and moaning and I guess he thought he'd been wounded in the back. And I'm sure it was Delbridge said, "For God sake, it's only hot tea, that's not blood!" So that was a little -- but as I say, I guess I've embellished on this story, but it probably seems funnier to me now than it did even then, you know, but even then it felt funny.

Another little episode I remember; we were on Bennet's Hill

-- I told you about these planes that were coming over all the time, spotting our position -- we used to shoot at them just for something to do. This is before the Japanese landed on the island. We would "chase them on their way." I remember that I was on this Bren-gun on this aircraft mount and they had on the side of this Bennet Hill, they had these big ditches (because they have a tremendous amount of rain, I guess, as you probably know, in Hong Kong), and this rain is kept going down to the fresh water reservoirs for the drinking water for the people in Hong Kong. I was perched on this thing firing away and it went, I guess, over my head and I reached back and, of course, I fell over backwards still squeezing this trigger of this Bren-gun and firing bullets all over the air. It's a wonder I didn't kill some of the fellows in my own section. They all, of course, all kidded me for that for a little while -- "If the Japs don't get us, Hardy's going to get us." As I say, that seems maybe funny to us and to people that were involved, but it probably wouldn't sound that funny to someone else who'd say, "You know, that was pretty stupid on your part."

CGR:

Well, these things happen.

JHH:

There was an arms depot down in Aberdeen and we were to go down there and blow it up. I wasn't involved in that, but I remember I went down there and I think there was about a platoon of us, and I came back with a Smith and Wesson .38, and all the fellows, we were like a bunch of cowboys with these revolvers stuck in our waistbands. That was a little comical. It wasn't

comical to a particular chap. There was a fellow by the name of Archie Rutherford -- we were pulling these quick-draw things and darn if he didn't pull it out and hit the trigger and blew the end of his penis off. So you can imagine -- and right down his leg. It was, I guess, a little bit of foolishness on our parts. Poor old Archie, he died in prison camp. At least he wouldn't have to explain to his wife how it had happened to him.

CGR:

Well, tell me then -- the surrender was on Christmas Day.

JHH:

Yes.

CGR:

And what happened then? How did you become a prisoner?

JHH:

Well, at that time I'd had what I thought was a minor wound in the top of my leg. We had our these little, oh I guess what would you call them, clips of .45s on, just on the little patch, on your battledress, and I got hit there. My leg was black and blue and it was just a minor scar on my leg. Well, it was classified as a minor at the time. It stayed just like a white line across my leg. I never gave much thought to that, but that later on seemed to give me a lot of trouble and the doctor said it caused a lot of nerve damage to my leg. Then later on, when I was in the hospital (I took very sick while I was in there, I got this malaria) and then they had a number of people in there with amebic dysentery. I got this dysentery, no it wasn't the amebic dysentery but it just about killed me. It was a funny thing, I guess, summing that up, when you're -- I just turned 21 and when

I think back -- at the time I wondered what was the matter, the fact that I was laying in bed and I couldn't lift my cover off and I couldn't see across the room. They were messing around with me all the time, taking my blood pressure and things like that. But I guess at the time I didn't realize that I was probably just about cashing in. I was in Bowen Road Hospital then for a year. My leg...

CGR:

Were you in at the time of the surrender?

JH:

Yes, just shortly after. Yes. And as I say, I was in there for a year. I guess this is one of the things you would be interested in. Bowen Road Hospital, the Japs initially made a few noises and so forth, they came through with a Dr. Saito who was the medical doctor. He was a little awkward, it seemed, to the staff, to the medical officers and so forth in there. But they had a fine hospital, this Bowen Road Hospital, it was a military hospital. They had some fine surgeons. They had a Dr. [D.C.] Bowie there who, I think they said at the time, was the first or second surgeon to the King. I think this is an honorary degree given to a number of doctors, I guess, probably not that he was the number one doctor to the King. And there was a Dr. [S.J.] Squires [actually a padre] and, oh Lord, there was two or three others that I knew.

Really, we had it a lot better than the chaps at the prison camps because they brought in a number of fellows with diphtheria later on and quite a number died from that. A number of them died in the hospital with that diphtheria. I was fortunate -- I

guess I was very, very fortunate -- that I was at the hospital when I took sick. There was a lot of boys died with dysentery.

When I went back to the camp, Sham Shui Po Camp, as I say this was a year after, I certainly noticed a big difference there. We had, of course, like most hospitals, we had sheets in there. These fellows the bed bugs, no sheets. The food wasn't nearly as good. I think I was about 145 lbs. to 150 lbs. when I went to Sham Shui Po, maybe even a little heavier. I was there, I guess at Sham Shui Po, for, oh I guess, about 6 months, and we went to Japan. We landed in Osaka.

CGR:

Excuse me. Before we get to that (I want to hear about that very much), but let me ask a few questions about the Bowen Road business if I can?

JHH:

Sure.

CGR:

What does it feel like to have malaria?

JHH:

Well, as I say, we had (when we were down in Jamaica) we used to get this dingy fever [dengue fever] and having the chills and bit of nausea were, I would say, pretty miserable. I guess that's the way I could describe it. With this dingy fever, it would hit just like that. So I thought it was dingy fever first off, and then as I say I had the diarrhea with it too and then with the combination of the two, I can't really remember too much about it. I was pretty sick. (I'm sorry, I'm just trying to concentrate on the Bowen Road Hospital again). We had, as I say,

all our own doctors, our own nurses.

CGR:

The nurses were still there?

JHH:

The nurses were still there. Then they sent the nurses -- there was an exchange of, not prisoners-of-war, but I guess internees you would describe them, and a number of the Canadian nurses -- there was Kay Christie and...

CGR:

I've interviewed her.

JHH:

They were wonderful. They had also the young women volunteers, they were sent, I believe, to Stanley. I really don't know, or if I did, I've forgotten now. There were quite a number repatriated and I know that while we were in the hospital the rumor was going around that they were going to repatriate a number of the fellows that were in the hospital and so forth. We were glad, as I say, to see the women -- Kay Christie and the girls -- get away.

CGR:

Some of them were pretty badly treated.

JHH:

Yes, yes. They brought in a number of Royal Rifles that had some pretty horrible experiences and some of our guys too. I, fortunately, can say that I didn't have any of those experiences, where they were rounded up by the Japanese and, unfortunately, a number of them murdered before they really got anywhere. Nothing like that happened to me. Really, as I say, Bowen Road Hospital

was -- if you were going to be in a prisoner-of-war camp, that would be the place to be. It was much different too later on when we went to Japan and so forth.

CGR:

At Sham Shui Po, you were reasonably healthy then?

JHH:

Oh yes, yes. I was one of the ones that -- mind you, I lost a bit of weight, as I said, I might have been between 150, 160 lbs. When I saw other chaps in the camp as against myself, a tremendous difference. And when we went -- do you want me to carry on just a little bit from that time?

CGR;

Yes, please.

JHH:

We went to Japan and I recall we had to march from Sham Shui Po Camp down to the docks. One thing stands back in my memory at the time was, as you probably know, we were on the rice diet and that was a long march and, gosh, your bladder was bursting and the boys as they were marching were having to pee on the march, and some of them were in pretty bad shape. I was one of the ones that was in much better shape than they. We were on this, it was just a river schooner that ran between Hong Kong and Canton (I can't remember the name of it now), we were down in the hold of the ship, where they had all the coal, and as they used the coal we gradually got a little more room. There was 200 of us in this hold. There wasn't enough room -- you either had to stand or else squat down, you couldn't lay down. There wasn't enough room for us all in this little hold. The Japs were pretty rough with

the fact that some of the fellows had dysentery. You had to go up on deck to go to the latrine and it was only at certain times of the day, so some of the fellows were in pretty bad shape. It seems to me that one or two died along that trip. I can't remember now. There was 100 English and 100 Canadian, and they were all Grenadiers, that initially went and then we landed, as I said, in Kobe, Osaka.

CGR:

How long was the trip?

JHH:

Gosh, you know, I forget. It seemed years, when you couldn't sleep and couldn't stand. I mean you had either to stand or just sit, squat down, and that was about as much room you had until they used up a little bit more coal, and then you were laying in all this coal dust and so forth. You were a filthy mess.

I remember when they stopped in Formosa or Taiwan -- and that's another thing that stands out in my memory; there was this vessel there and it looked like a schooner and there was a swastika on there. It was a German armed raider. When we were allowed to go up on board deck to the latrine, we were weren't supposed to look at it (you know the Japs were so silly -- as if we had cameras and everything, we weren't supposed to be looking at their fortifications, you looked straight ahead, and you do this and you do that, we were told by the interpreter there). When we got on deck there was, as I say, this German armed raider. I didn't wave that I can remember, but I remember the fellows saying that some of these Germans waved to us and we presum-

ably waved back to them, but I can't remember that. But I remember the ship very well.

When we were there, they also tested us for amebic dysentery. They sent all these nurses on and we all had to strip off and they put this test tube up your rectum, and they gave you a number, and they were very, very concerned about amebic dysentery getting into Japan. I think that nearly everyone I spoke to, at some point or other had this same experience.

When we landed in Kobe we met some Englishmen who, unfortunately, had been on a ship that was torpedoed from Hong Kong and their commanding officer, a fellow by the name of Stewart, Colonel Stewart, was pretty badly wounded. The Japanese, I guess, must have fired on them when they were in the water and they kept him afloat and he was certainly beloved by his men. Greatly respected. I can remember that. I can't even remember Stewart himself, if I ever did see him, but I knew that the fellows from the Middlesex Regiment certainly thought a great deal of him. That's something that sticks out in my memory. As I say, the old esprit de corps, and the fact that they felt about their commanding officer, something I guess like the "Bridge on the River Kwai" type of thing, you know.

CGR:

This would have been what, the middle of '43 when you went to Japan?

JHH:

Yes. That would be approximately the middle of '43.

CGR:

Okay. Well please go ahead with the time in Japan.

JHH:

We went by train to Oeyama and the Oeyama is on the Sea of Japan directly across from Korea. I found out this of course -- I wanted to know where I was. And we were near a little town called Miyazu but the town we were in was Oeyama. This was the name of the camp.

CGR:

Can you spell that?

JHH:

I think it's O-e-y-a-m-a, or something like that -- Oeyama. Ken Porter (I think he's coming to see you), he was in our camp as well. When we arrived there we had so-called interpreters, but Lord! they were like a couple of these Filipino boys that arrive here in Canada and learn a little bit of English and this is about as much English as they knew. It was funny thing. I hope you don't mind me reminiscing a little bit on these funny things.

CGR:

No, that's part of what I want to get.

JHH:

Fine. Well anyway, we were presumably supposed to march like Japanese instead of like ourselves, like "attention" is "Kiotske," and "stand at east," is "yosme." Well, first off they would come along and they'd give you, you know, click their heels together and that was "Kiotske," so you gathered that one, but instead of putting their feet apart, they put their right foot forward, and that's "yosme." So that was fine, so they'd go

through -- this would happen for about a week, they put us on like drills, parade square drills, so we would presumably, they would be able to march us back and forth so we would be able to understand their commands. Then they got to right and left turns and all these other turns. Well, then is where the fun started. When we guys get together we talk about these things. One fellow would turn this way and another fellow turn that way. The Japs, they'd get furious and come along and give you a clunk beside the ear. Well I can imagine how frustrating it must have been to them, when you're trying to explain something to somebody and they can't understand a word of what you're saying and you can't understand a word of what they're saying. So, as I say, that was really comical.

We thought things were going to be pretty good. I remember when we first got there, instead of a rice diet they gave us some beans and barley. So we had a little bit of barley, a little bit of beans with rice. And reasonable portions. We thought, well, this is not going to be too bad.

And we got used to understanding the psychology of the Japanese. The Japanese got a real sense of discipline and we've got to accept that. Like most soldiers, you just accepted your lot. If you were caught turning left when you should be turning right, well if they give you a clunk beside the ear, maybe next time you'll remember it.

When we initially got there it was entirely new huts, it was an entirely new camp and we got away from the bed bugs. That was the big thing. Lord the bed bugs in Sham Shui Po! Good Lord they were -- I'm sure everybody will tell you that they pick you

up and carry you away, they were monstrous things! And me, when I arrived there I guess I was a big fat morsel for them and they sure chewed me up for quite some time.

When we arrived at this camp, as I say, I thought things were not going to be too bad and we were quite optimistic. Winter set in and gosh, I never saw so much snow in all my life, and cold, and we were working -- they called it the factory but in fact it was a type of a smelter. It was open-pit mining. You had to go out and slosh away some of this heavy clay and you put it in these little carts and you push these, like little hand rail carts, push it down. If you weren't working there, that was like on the field, you were working at the factory. Like I told you, I was one of the ones in better shape. My leg still bothered me quite a bit, but I was in really a heck of a lot better shape than 90 percent of the other fellows. They had me shoveling coal and they had these big slag heaps, and you loaded these cars and then pushed it into the factory for their big fire pits. And the sons-of-guns, if you were to lay down your shovel for a minute, they yelled at you. Let's face it, we hadn't done any labor for a year and a half and as I say, you put your shovel down and they, instead of having the proper swords a lot of these honchos (or foreman, they called them honchos), had like a wooden sword shaped similar to a sword and they used it like a sword, they'd give you a two-hander across the shoulders or something like that. I remember, Lord, they'd come along and give you a wallop with this thing. Well it was either myself or somebody else, thought, "Well, the hell with this, we just can't keep on with this, we'll just have to pretend that we've fainted." So

I'd be at the top of the slag or some of the guys would be at the top and we'd be shoveling it down to below and the fellows below would be throwing it into these cars. We'd take a tremendous tumble, you know, and pretend you fainted and lay down on this slag heap and they'd come along and "kura" "kura" meaning "hey" and they'd give you a kick in the ribs and of course you remain motionless and they'd leave you along for a minute, and then of course if you were wise you got up and "Where am I?" type of thing and climb back up. But this was a procedure that we all perfected over the course of time. I guess the Japs knew what was going on. But they were just -- well, I think they thought we were machines, and unfortunately, as I say, it carried on.

But that winter, as I said earlier on, we got this snow and things really turned tough. Now 100 Englishmen that were with us had been in Hong Kong and India, some of them, for the last four years. Those poor devils, they didn't last. In fact, that first winter, of the 200, 40 of them died, 40 prisoners of that 200 died. They brought in an Australian doctor, a Dr. Stenning, and they said all right, there would be no more work for anybody, and everybody was, everybody in the camp -- I, by this time, was I guess down to a 104, 105 lbs., some of the fellows were below that, in the 90s. The beriberi and the pellegra had set in. Some of the fellows, their stomachs were all swollen up with the beriberi. I mean these English fellows, their stomachs were all swollen up with the beriberi. These English fellows, they just weren't as strong as we were and I guess there was a lot more of them died than the Canadians. I think it was around about 25 to 15, that first winter that we were there.

This Dr. Stenning -- you know, I think you'll agree with something happens like this, the people involved are the last ones really to understand how serious it was. You know, Stenning, we were told, went to the camp commander and at this time they also had three Englishmen who were, what we classified as collaborating with the Japs -- there was a fellow by the name of Harvey and Tugby, and Rogers. I don't know, after all these years I don't like to sound vindictive and so forth, and maybe under different circumstances who's to say what you're going to do, but they saw a way of making it a lot easier for themselves, so they took it. Unfortunately, this meant maltreating the rest of the prisoners. They told the Japanese that they [the Japanese] didn't have to discipline any of their or the British or Canadian troops, that they would do it for them. And where the Japanese, unfortunately, were using their open hand as a slap, these guys were using their fists on the fellows. But I shouldn't dwell on that. I mean that's maybe something that should be forgotten. I perhaps better not say anything more about that.

CGR:

But it does happen.

JHH:

And it did happen, that's right, that's right.

CGR:

Maybe you'd just finish that off. How did that end up?

JHH:

These chaps, well, later on, at the end of the war, they were beaten up mercilessly by our fellows. It was a number of

circumstances that came on later on that they brought in other prisoners -- Americans -- that were working as stevedores in Kobe and Osaka, and these chaps were, gosh, they're big "Man Mountain Deans" to us. Everybody figures that they were in the worst camp. But I think that really, if they were to check our records, I think that Oeyama probably had as many fatalities as anybody. It was a fact, I guess, where we were, we were a bit isolated, we weren't near any major city, and the fact that a lot of the Japanese, other than a few, had probably never even seen many Caucasians before, couldn't understand us, and probably didn't have much more to eat than us. But I guess they were like chickens, they'd scratched around and got every bit of nourishment out of what little they had, and we didn't. It was pretty grim there.

I should get back to a little thing that happened to me. Dr. Stenning (like I mentioned, I'm rambling here. I'm not even co-ordinating my thoughts that well.)

CGR:

That's okay.

JHH:

Dr. Stenning, we were told, told the camp commander that unless something was done that nearly everybody in the camp was going to die, and this is what we heard. You know, he was exaggerating and things like that. But at that time -- and gosh I don't think sounding too morbid, but this is the first time I've really said anything like this, I never said anything to these other chaps that came because, I don't know, I guess it bothers me and something that I shouldn't be even saying. A lot of our

fellows, as I say, they were in pretty bad shape and we were taking them to work and the poor devils were dying while they were out on the job. It was pretty grim.

But anyway, Dr. Stenning -- nearly all of us had to have this medical. They brought the Japanese doctors in and Dr. Stenning. And at this scene I, initially, started with my leg, I'd lost my sense of equilibrium -- stand up, had to keep our legs apart, and when my eyes were open, fine; close my eyes and boom, I wouldn't even feel myself falling, I'd fall over backwards. I wasn't the only one and Dr. Stenning managed to get some vitamins and he gave us spinals. He removed some of the spinal fluid and inserted this, I guess a vitamin B complex, or whatever it was. I can remember, gosh, the headaches we had from those things, oh Lord they were terrible! I had six of those injections and after I'd finished with those, I got -- we'd had these sore feet, we got these electric feet. I imagine the fact that -- I guess I'm trying to be a doctor and trying to figure out what happened to myself, but I thought, well, this is possibly the first vitamins they got. I got these happy feet, and that was just like toothache in your feet. Well before, you know, they'd swollen up, my legs. I could push my hand in and leave an indentation. Well, it was like women, old women with (oh what they call it now, the swelling of the legs, phlebitis, it is?).

CGR:

Yes, and edema.

JHH:

Edema, yes. But after that edema left, they got these

electric feet. God! that was wicked. The pains in that, you couldn't sleep or anything. But it wasn't too long a duration. I guess I was fortunate in that sense. I know some fellows had it for a lot longer than me, and the fact that maybe that I hadn't got in quite the condition for that period of time, I'd only been in a year and these other fellows that had it for two, getting on towards three years by this time, you know. But Dr. Stenning, as I say, gave us these injections. I seemed to be, well, in fact Dr. Stenning told me, you're getting your feeling back. Dr. Stenning was with us, I think, for about a year and then he was replaced by an American doctor.

CGR:

Do you remember his name by any chance?

JHH:

No, I can't. [Actually, Capt. LaMoyne Bleich, USAMC.]

You can check with the records of Harvey, Rogers, they charged them here. They were court martialled. I know a number of the fellows that were asked to, in fact, we were all from Oeyama camp, we were interviewed and asked if we wanted to testify. I said no. Really, to this day I don't hold any malice to anyone, because as I say, if everyone is really to be honest with himself -- what's that song, "If you walk in my shoes," what were you going to do if you had similar opportunity, because the will to survive is pretty high, isn't it, eh?

CGR:

That's true. On the other hand, a lot of people did have that opportunity and didn't take it.

JHH:

That's right.

CGR:

But I'm certainly not going to be in judgment, not even if I was there.

JHH:

No. Well this is what I say, that you have to look at yourself in the mirror and you're the one who's saying, well you know, "Maybe I wasn't the greatest hero in the world but," well that's what I say, that I don't profess to be any hero but I went everywhere where I was told and I stayed there for as long till somebody told me to move. I guess that's about all that really to say.

CGR:

I was just going to say, tell me something about the hook-worm business.

JHH:

Oh yes. When the war ended we all went to Guam, and we had real good medicals and they discovered quite a number of chaps, in fact, for our little area there, who had tuberculosis, some of them had to go right into Ninette Sanatorium. In fact my best friend a fellow by the name of Johnny Popo -- I remember when we were in this big Quonset hut and we were going for these various tests, like I'd be going eyes, ears, nose and he'd be going somewhere else, and I came back and all his equipment was gone and they refused to tell me where he was. Then finally this nurse said to me, "Oh he's got tuberculosis, he's in quarantine you can't go anywhere near him." I said, "Good Lord!" I said,

"We smoked the same cigarette and everything for four years," and I said, "if I haven't got TB I'm sure talking to him; I'm not going to catch it now."

But anyway, I forget just how many had tuberculosis. When we got back here to Winnipeg -- I don't think they diagnosed the hookworm [at Guam] -- but when I got home to Winnipeg we had all the same old thing again, all the medicals. First off, with my leg they gave me a boot and weights to build it up and asked me to make sure that I did exercises and all this sort of thing. Then they brought me in here for some tests and they discovered I had this hookworm. Dr. Williams, the pathologist here, he said to me, "You've got a real dose of hookworms." And they tried (I forget just how many), but at least three treatments and the last one, I said I'm sure they gave me formaldehyde and gasoline because that's what it tasted like! I don't know what it was, but anyway that was the last treatment and I remember he said to me, "Gosh if this doesn't fix you, Hardy, I don't know what will." But it must have done because I never had another treatment. But surprisingly, they never asked me for any more stool tests. Well, after that -- because maybe I guess they could probably tell if the cells were all dead.

CGR:

Did you have a lot of itching around the anus?

JHH:

No. That was more pin worms I think that would cause that.

CGR:

That's true.

JHH:

No, I didn't have those. A lot of the fellows had these big tapeworms, and some of them in fact come through their nose and out their mouths, and everything else, but I never had any of those. Dr. Williams asked me where I was, now I told you that first off I was working outside -- after I took this treatment and I was in bad shape, well I was limping quite a bit and so forth, they had me working in the gardens emptying latrines and we were spreading this -- I was working in the gardens -- and we were using this human feces and I was in my bare feet, and this is where Dr. Williams said that they came in through my feet. So that would have been, I guess, the last year, so just how long I had them I don't know but he said I had a real dose of them.

CGR:

Another thing that I ask everybody about had to do with sex. A lot of young men, lumped together; was sex something that bothered you -- that there wasn't sex? Was that anything you thought about?

JHH:

No. I think honestly that if anyone were to say that it, it was strictly in their mind because...In the hospital, yes, when we were in Bowen Road Hospital, I just turned 21 and I certainly had my eyes on some of the young girls around there, that's quite honest, but it never did me any good. But yes, I would say, there. But in prison camp, no. That was something that no one ever thought of. You know when you're 90 lbs, or 100 lbs, and you're regular 180, that's the last thing of your...

CGR:

That's the impression I had.

JHH:

Yes, that's right.

CGR:

What about the related thing, homosexuality? Were you ever aware of any evidence of homosexuality?

JHH:

Doctor, until I was in the army, and not in my battalion, when we were down in Jamaica we had some incidents with Jamaican civilians. Maybe I was a little naive but I never heard of these fellows before. I guess they were in behind the woodwork somewhere, but I'd never ever heard about them.

CGR:

A lot more publicized now.

JHH:

That's right, that's right. There was something I could say -- I never ever heard of, in fact, it was the same thing with lesbians. I remember we were just in Jamaica a short time and there were these two women dancing (this is down in Jamaica), dancing on the floor and a fellow, a Negro, gets up and biffs this girl across, and knocked her down and a couple of our guys get up and give him a wallop and he's yelling she's a black dagger, and we didn't know what black daggers were, and then he explained. But maybe I was very naive but I never heard of anything like that. Well, here in Canada, and you probably agree, those things were kept pretty quiet.

CGR:

Very quiet.

JHH:

In the army, and in prison camp, I can honestly say (and I'm sure that everyone will say) that that was the last thing in anybody's mind. Grub, food...!

CGR:

Food, number one, yes. That's what everybody says.

JHH:

Yes, that's right. It was an obsession. Fellows used to make menus for themselves, you know -- "What will I have today? Oh some sausages!" It was a funny thing. I told you about this Welsh group, not Welsh, I'm sorry, this English group. There was quite a number of Welshmen in this Middlesex Regiment and on Christmas Eve, the first Christmas we were there, they're in my particular hut, there would be, oh I guess, maybe 25 or 30 people fellows in there, maybe 15 Canadian and 15 of these Welshmen. And they all started to sing, that's something that always comes to my mind. That was beautiful. You know, they're singing their...

CGR:

It's amazing how many of them sing well, isn't it?

JHH:

Oh, isn't it. One would start, and as you say, surprising the number of good voices among them, everyone sings. Gosh, I'm like an old frog.

CGR:

Yes, I'm not a singer either.

Let me go back. I've just a couple of more questions if I

may. When you were in Japan, what were the work hours? What was the normal day?

JHH:

Tenko (that was reveille) would be 6 o'clock in the morning; ready for work at seven, till four or four-thirty, and you had an hour off for your lunch. For your lunch they would give you, it was a little wooden box about 6 inches long, 3 1/2 inches wide and possibly 3/4 of an inch thick, with a lid on, and they'd put in what they used to call "lugow," which was like a -- you remember when you were a kid you used to make that floury glue, you remember out of flour and so forth. It was just like a pasty thing, and that's what we had for lunch. Sometimes you got a bun and that was it, just a bun. That would be -- well, you had your three meals a day. You had the lugow for breakfast, the same lugow (only it was cold) that you had for your lunch, and for the evening you'd have, oh, during the summer months they would bring in potato tops, leaves, sweet potato leaves, a few dikons -- dikons are a winter radish -- very little actual vegetables. I don't think the Japanese had much more themselves, you know, because the Americans and British had it blockaded pretty tight.

But, as I say, that really when I look back, considering -- I hold no malice to the Japanese at all. I can honestly say that. Let's face it, they're different to us, their standards are different to us, they're maybe, well I guess you could maybe say we'd classify them as a little cruel, but in many respects I guess many things that we do they'd probably think exactly the same thing.

CGR:

What about the medical men? Generally speaking, do you think they took as good care of you as they could, given the bad supplies?

JHH:

Yes, oh yes. Dr. Stenning -- I had nothing really to do with Dr. [John] Crawford. I understand that Dr. Crawford had a very difficult time, he had malaria and he had that (Dr. [John] Reid was the other chap, the other Canadian doctor and I understand he's dead now), they had a very, very difficult time. I imagine Dr. Crawford got some slaps around quite a number of times for trying to get things for his patients. But yes, as I say, I've got nothing but admiration for all the medical people. I didn't want to elaborate on this American chap, doctor, I didn't think too much of, but I won't say anything more than that. But Dr. Stenning, he was certainly a credit to his profession. He was very, very good and I'm sure that as I had nothing to do other than when we were down in Jamaica and Dr. Crawford -- I have the utmost honor for Dr. Crawford and Dr. Reid, and all the doctors in Bowen Road Hospital. I had the highest regard.

CGR:

Do you remember Dr. Stenning's first name or his initial by any chance?

JHH:

I really can't. He is dead as well because I told you about Popo, the chap who had TB -- Popo corresponded with Dr. Stenning and he was a pediatrician, I understand, prior to the war, in Melbourne and he was in the Australian navy during the war and I

guess he was captured in Singapore. He was a fine man. As I say, he stood up to the Japs and very often got smacked around for it, but he said he needed this and he needed that. And I'm sure they probably smacked him around a little bit, but he got it and he was willing to take that to get the few things -- like just the things I was telling you about, those vitamins and so forth, which was good.

CGR:

Well that's great. Is there anything else you can think of that's come to mind as we've gone along that you'd like to say, that related to my interests?

JHH:

Not really doctor. I like to reminisce just of the funny things that happened and I'm afraid I got carried away on a few things, and maybe I should have said, but really no. The only thing, as I say, I think it was an experience that has benefited me in my life since, but I wouldn't want to do it again.

CGR:

How do you feel it's benefited you?

JHH:

Well, I think that I possibly read human -- well, I shouldn't say "read" human nature any better than anybody else. But as I say, that veneer of civilization is pretty thin and you see pretty basic elements in prison camp. One thing that I will say, that I just mentioned to Roy Robinson -- I was very, very callous when I came back home. When one of your friends died you'd say -- "Sorry, but it's better him than me." When I think about it now, it bothers me, and the only thing that I do notice is that

injustices, real or imagined by me, really upset me. If I see something, as I say, be it real or imagined, the fact that I couldn't do anything about it now, if -- like, I worked at Eaton's for 42 years, if I thought somebody was getting a bad deal I'd try to do something about it, maybe it could be classified as meddling. But it was something within me that I felt that I just had to do.

CGR:

It's not a bad way to be.

JHH:

Well as I say, it was to my advantage, because if I didn't it would chew at me more. I've got my wife to thank, I've been very, very fortunate in the wife that I have, she's most concerned with me and her family. I've been very fortunate to have her.

We used to have to see psychiatrists here and Dr. Marsh was the psychiatrist; I remember she'd be asking me questions and she'd be telling me things and I used to come out of there and I'd think, "By gosh, I've been psychoanalyzing you as well as you psychoanalyzing me," but it was a funny thing. I remember one time she says, "I'm going to prescribe this medication for you." I said, "Doctor, I don't like taking medication. I think they're crutches, I think that they're not necessary." She said, "It's not for you, it's for your wife's sake." But anyway, these are the pills. My wife is -- I don't what, you're probably more familiar with those things.

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