**ORAL HISTORY RECORDING**

TITLE: R T COWAN

INTERVIEWEE: R T COWAN

INTERVIEWER: DR JOHN MITCHELL

SUMMARY: WORLD WAR II POW - BURMA/THAI RAILWAY

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START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A.

Identification: This is the first reel of an interview with Gunner R.T. Cowan VX35126 4th Anti-tank Regiment. Interviewer John Mitchell, the interview took place at Numurkah on the 24th of August, 1990.

And when did you set out for the railway, Reg?

Well, I'd been a prisoner of war for approximately 19 ... nine months when on 16th March, '43, no that would be wrong ... we left Changi camp for ... it wasn't '43 it should be '42. There was a 1,000 men in our working party. We were put on the train at Singapore, twenty-eight men to a carriage ... to a truck it wasn't a carriage, they were just open sided trucks. We had to sit up for five days and five nights before we reached [Kamburi].

And that was D Force wasn't it Reg?

That was D Force. And we ... the only times we were let off the trains was for our meals. We stopped and had a meal and then we went back on the train for five days and five nights. First when we arrived at Kamburi we walked into camp. The first sight we saw was an Englishman sitting out in front of his tent. He had testicles almost the size of footballs. And chaps walking around with tropical ulcers. It was a terrible sight to see and we wondered what we was in for.

We were sent to a ... the first camp we were sent to was a ... we had to build a cutting ... build an embankment, large embankment. And for fourteen days and fourteen nights we worked on this embankment. It was two men with a bag strung between two bamboo poles and we had to carry a metre of dirt. We had to take a metre by a metre by a metre deep, and that was our job to carry this dirt up and put it on the embankment.

Can you remember the name of that embankment, where it was Reg? If not it doesn't matter.

It was ... we called it Sandy Ridge, I think. It was not far from Tarso, I'd reckon, from memory.

Oh, right.

But we ... our shift was night shift. We worked from nine o'clock at night till eight o'clock next morning and it was a very severe job. When it rained we'd be slipping up and all over the sides of the embankments climbing up - it rained fairly often. And the meals were pretty ... although it was mainly rice although they did give us some dried yak, those dried yak was bought down in bags and cooks had to knock the maggots off before they cooked it. They couldn't cook it, they used to try and grill it on the open fires but we couldn't even chew it, it was just like rubber, old leather. And luckily we never ever got it again but that was the only meat we had with our rice for those days. And our last shift on that job lasted for nineteen hours to get the job finished and we went on and we didn't finish until twelve o'clock the next day, before the job was finished. We left ninety men behind in that camp who had got sick and were not able to carry on.

And we went from there to ... back to [Thonshun] for the ... we went to Tarso, stayed a day and then we marched eighteen miles ... eighteen kilometres or was it twenty eight

kilometres, to K3 that's Conue 3 and that was finally later to be called Hell Fire Pass. It was here that ... we marched for two days to get to Conue and then the first night we stopped at Thonshun, I think it was. It was two big huts, stayed for the night. And we had to bury two Tamils who had been left behind by their mates before we could have moved into those huts for the night. We don't know what they died of. And the next day we marched to K3 which was 25th April, it would be '42, would it?

It would be '43.

'43 ... 25th April we marched in in the morning and they gave us the rest of the day to cut our camp site out of the jungle. We had to cut bamboo poles for our floors because the rainy season was coming up and we had to put floors in our tents. We put up eight-man tents and we had twenty eight men to a tent. We had to dig our latrines, make our kitchen area and ... all in that day. There was twenty-eight men in our tent. One of our mates, Dick Herring, decided it was too many men in one tent so he hung a hammock between two trees just beside our tent and that was his home for ... till he died. He was one of the first to die, Dick. And that was his home he allowed a bit more room for us in the tent by putting his hammock up.

Next morning we were soon to learn what the job was to be. We were up early in the morning before breakfast, had our rice breakfast, filled our dixies with our rice and marched out onto the job. One man didn't understand what the Jap guard wanted so he got a bit of a bashing and was told ... was given a big rock to hold up above his head. That was our first ... idea of what was going to ... how our Jap guards were going to treat us. Luckily he only had to hold it up for a quarter of an hour or so. Later on it got worse they held them. And we were ... our gang - we had different gangs - our gang was to clear the rubble after the hammer and tap men had made a metre hole in the rock and charges were put in and they were blown. We used to move in and roll the rocks over the edges of the cutting and then scrape the rubble away with our shovels. And then after that was done the next thing the hammer and tap men would come back and would just carry on and do the job. The trouble was the ... two men were supposed to lift ... one man would have to lift a rock that two men should lift and two men should lift the rock that four men should lift it. They always made us work hard and carry things and using the shovel and the rubble they wouldn't let us stand up and have a rest. I remember one day I stood up and lent on my shovel and the one of the guards, the 'Silent Basher' we called him, he called out, 'Soldier' - and he was standing up on a big rock about twelve foot high - and he indicated for me to stand up in front of the rock or the edge of the rock that fell away and then he started to lay into me with his bamboo rod. Luckily I ducked and weaved and I side stepped and I slid down the side of the rock and I grabbed me shovel and put me head down and I didn't lift it up for until we were finished.

We got ten minutes smoko each hour for the first month or so. And they'd allow us if we wanted to go to the toilet we used to go over to a ... make a little hill or hillock, we'd have a bit of a spell over there now and again. But other than that we had to work on these constantly, every day.

It was here in this job that I saw men literally collapse from sheer exhaustion. Some men over worked and some men didn't know when they'd had enough and they just collapsed from sheer exhaustion.

After about the first month on this horrific job, my boots wore out and I went to Captain

Parker who was our medical officer in charge of our camp. He was a very overworked man and he had a job handling the Japanese guards, trying to keep the sick men from going to work. But, anyway, I got a job in the kitchen and he helped me considerably and we had a terrible job trying to get enough food for the men to ... we only had mainly rice. The Japanese guards did give us one pig a week, for three weeks. I think we had three pigs. The first pig we'd given, the cooks had cut it up and boil it in the water and we had a couple of cubes of pig in a watery stew which didn't help the digestive system because very fatty pig wasn't very good for most of us and a lot of us got diarrhoea or I don't think it was the start of dysentery but a lot of men did get dysentery and ...

How many people shared that pig? You mentioned a thousand people ...

Well, it'd be the whole camp, the one pig was ...

... the whole one thousand people?

... that was a week, we'd only get the one pig. We had three pigs. Towards the end they used to let us kill one yak a week. The poor yaks used to be tied ... tethered in our camp and they weren't very fat. We used to only get about five or six kerosene bucketfuls of meat off the yak. And we even fried the blood of that. We saved everything; nothing was wasted. We fried the blood up to try and give our extra sick men something extra, whether it did them any good we don't know but ...

And while we ... the rainy season began. That was traumatic. The campsite became a quagmire. The men with dysentery couldn't reach the latrines and you know what sort of a mess that would make. We rushed around in the mud and slush. And then the dreaded cholera broke out. We ... in our camp we tried to keep it out. We had a camp next door they'd brought in ... that's right the speedo season began half way through this job on K3. Word came through that we had to get the job finished quicker because it was going to hold up the line. And they cut out our - we always used to have Friday rest day - they cut out the Friday rest day, they put on an extra shift and the men worked through the night. We used to have to build big bamboo bonfires to work by the light. And then this cholera broke out. They did bring in another camp of a 1,000 men a few hundred yards away and they lost over a hundred men in the first week with cholera. And we were very meticulous in our cleanliness. We used to put a bucket of water and soap at each end of the kitchen for the men to wash their hands before their meals. We boiled, doubly boiled the water and ... but we couldn't keep it out. I think out of ... we had twenty seven cases I think, in our camp and we lost twenty-two men. And of course men were being sent down river to the hospital camps. We were getting less and less men in our camp all the time and the food improved because we had less men to feed but ...

Towards the end it was just speedo speedo and bashing, a lot of bashings that men that didn't understand or knocked up and they'd be bashed. They'd stand a man out in front of a guard house and bash him for doing something wrong. And at the finish of the job ... eighty-eight days after we walked in, 900 men walked into that camp, of the 900 men there was a 120 supposedly fit men walked out of that camp. We marched down to the river camp, there was this little camp on the river and they gave us seven days' rest period.

Excuse me Reg, now that was at Conue 2 ...

Conue 2, I think, yes.

Right. Conue River Camp, anyway.

Yes. Yes, that was Conue 2 we ...

Now was that also known as the Cholera Camp or was that another one?

No, I think the Cholera Camp was a bit further up. No, there was no cholera camp at this one I don't think.

Oh, right.

We were right on the river, anyhow, and they gave us a week's rest. And the night before we were going to be sent up to Hintock to help finish up the work there, one of my mates couldn't eat his rice or couldn't eat all his rice for tea so he said to me would I like it and so I ate it. We went to bed, next morning we woke up before daylight to be taken up river and he said to me he said, 'I can't go' he said, 'I've got cholera'. I looked at him and I couldn't believe my eyes, he'd wasted away so much over night, not that there was much of our bodies at the time, we were pretty thin but he was just skin and bone. And we left him behind and went up to Hintock. That night we received word that he had died. Of course I ate his rice then for a fortnight or so I wondered what would happen but I thought, 'Well, if it happens it happens, if it' ... luckily I didn't get cholera.

But up at Hintock it was still the raining season and we had to walk at least a mile through the mud and slush to our job on the line. We lived reasonably well at Hintock because we were ... the cooks were doing a good job with what they could get. We were allowed to buy ... we could buy a egg or a banana from the locals on the way to work which cost us ten cents. Of course we only got ten cents a day for work. And walking through all this mud and slush to work caused my feet to get a type of trench foot I think. I had me first attack of malaria at Hintock. For a day I shook and shivered and for a day and the next day I was okay and then we went back to work again. And I developed these trench feet and from these there was little blisters all over me feet. I don't know it was because of wearing Japanese boots and walking through mud and slush nearly a foot deep in places, skidding in, sliding to work caused it. But anyhow I developed two tropical ulcers, one on my left ankle and one on my left big toe.

And approximately a fortnight later I was evacuated down to Tarso hospital into the ulcer ward. Luckily for me Colonel Weary Dunlop had taken over this camp approximately two days before, took over in charge from an English doctor who was unable to handle the Japanese and the job had got him down and things were getting out of hand. But luckily Weary straightened things out. And we moved into this ulcer ward: what a stinking place. Our mates wouldn't come into or hated coming to visit us because of the smell of rotting flesh. And there was approximately 100 to 150 men in an open-sided hut, bamboo benches on both sides with split bamboo for a floor. And we layed in these floors with just enough room to roll over. And of course as our ulcers got worse we couldn't walk, we finished up we never ever got off the beds. And the orderlies used to ... we had I think four orderlies during the day, two orderlies at night and the doctor in charge or the two doctors in charge of my hut was Major Callette and Captain Millard. Captain Millard, he looked after us mainly. This, well, it was these tropical ulcers, we never had any medical treatment at all, all we had was the doctors' knowledge and the orderlies handling of our ... they used to ... when Weary took over he made the orderlies get a fresh dish of water for each ulcer.

Before that they'd been using one dish of water to go over half the ulcers and they were re-infecting each others ulcers. But Weary told the orderlies they were to use a fresh dish of water for every patient. Our bandages were made out of ... well mine was made out of the bottoms of an old mosquito net.

That was another thing, the only clothes I owned was a pair of shorts, an old mosquito net which we used to lay on on the split bamboo, otherwise we would have got bed sores and a blanket and our eating utensils. That's all we owned. And the old mosquito net I tore the strips off the bottom of it for bandages. And they used to unwrap our ulcer in the morning and scrape them out and they started off of course they were only small at the start but the one on me ankle was the worst one. The ulcer on the big toe it got infected under the toe nail and one day Captain Millard said, 'I'll have to take you over to the theatre'. We had a little theatre where they used to do amputations and all operations. He took me over there and he cut my nail into three sections: straight down the centre and a 'V' cross each side. And ripped two sections off without any anaesthetic ...

That would have been painful.

... and, yes, it made me lift me bottom off the table. And then about a week later he - he used to come around every morning and just inspect our ulcers, he couldn't do any more, he had no medical treatment - and he said to me this morning, he said, ... Neil Constant remembered this, Neil was one of my mates that was next door, and he said, 'Captain Millard said to me, "Look over there"'. And I looked over there and he ... and the next second he ripped the rest of that nail off. I yelled out, 'Ow, you rotten bastard'. And all he did was smile and walked on. But that ulcer healed up after that. And the one on my ankle was getting bigger, it grew to seven inches in diameter I think. I was on my back in Tarso ulcer ward for approximately eight months and it got worse and worse.

One morning prior to this, one morning I woke up and had palpitations. Me heart was beating fast and wouldn't stop. Captain Millard came in and he couldn't do much about it. And he came back that evening about five o'clock and they were still going and he said to me, 'I think I'll have to give you an injection'. I don't know what it was but he gave me an injection which did stop the palpitations. Luckily I never got them again but I remember when I came home to get my discharge I was trying to explain to one of the doctors I saw when I was getting my discharge and I explained to him that I had these palpitations while I was a prisoner of war and he said to me, 'Nothing wrong with your heart that a bit of hard work won't do'. So, I never said any more, I've never ...

Stories of lack of sympathy later, it seemed some what like xxx or beri-beri, which you would expect the beginning of that.

Anyway, he fixed that ... This ulcer of mine was getting worse ... he got Captain Millard did get a small quantity of iodoform. It was the only treatment we got for the whole nine months, we just got a little bit of iodoform and he gave all the worst ulcers about the amount that sat on a sixpenny piece, I think. And he sprinkled it on the ulcers and we left it on ... they left it on for four days. It might have done some good, I don't know, it must have because ... Anyway one morning the orderly - our orderly - took my bandage off and there was a little bit of gristle hanging out the top of my ulcer and white gristle it was and it looked like it was fairly thick, nearly as thick as a pencil. So he grabbed hold of it with these tweezers and he pulled and he pulled approximately a foot of tendon out of my leg. It had been rotting up me leg by all accounts into the calf of the leg and that's what disappeared

this foot of tendon and of course from then on it used rot up ... build up in the calf of my leg for a week, perhaps three or four days ... excruciating pain. That's what I can never understand how the human body can stand so much pain from these tropical ulcers, it was like a rat gnawing at your raw flesh. It just constant nagging pain, biting pain it was from these ulcers. Anyhow, this used to fill up in the calf of me leg and then it'd burst and it'd drain out and it would relieve the pain. And Captain Millard said to me one morning, he said, 'Looks as though I'll have to cut your leg ... take you over and open your leg up so that will clear'. And I thought, 'Oh well, looks as though I lose my leg', but luckily one night it started to haemorrhage and when I woke in the morning I had a leg was swathed with bandages they wrapped bandages ... it'd stopped bleeding, luckily. And from then on my ulcer healed up and it ... that was approximately eight months, I suppose from the day I walked ... went into that camp.

During the time we were there there was a few different ... One, well it's humorous now I suppose, episode, it wasn't too humorous at the time. We used to wash our ... the orderlies would bring us in a bowl of water and we had our own face washer, we used to just give ourselves a sponge over every morning and this morning I picked up this bit of old mosquito net - I used as a face washer - put it in the water and I started rubbing me hand, my arm up and down with the face washer and I thought, hello I've got a needle or a bit of wire in it. And I opened it up and out fell a scorpion. Well the scorpions tail or his sting had scraped ... I had two or three scrape marks on my arm and for a week I had a red welt on my right arm where he'd scratched me. Luckily he didn't get his stinger right in.

And one other: we used to play bridge, we started playing bridge - we had cards - so every morning we'd start playing bridge after breakfast. We played I think for months, we played bridge from morning till lights out. And we got that good at bridge, contract bridge, we were experts - almost champions. We never got sick of playing our bridge but same old few.

And no poker?

No poker, no we didn't play.

Did they ever subject you to XXX, scraping the ulcers?

They used to just scrape it, some of the ones on the shins ... they never scraped mine a lot, it was on the ankle it seemed to be a different ... they used to scrape it lightly. But the chaps with them on the shins used to get them scraped out. There was one young chap that was brought in, he was put on the bed opposite me, he'd put a pick through his foot and he seemed to be coming on all right but one morning he was sitting up talking and just fell back and died, I don't know ... he ... and he wasn't there very long, he'd only been there for a couple of weeks when that happened.

What did we do? I'd better mention now bamboo urinals and bedpans. We had our bedpans and urinals were made out of bamboo, bamboo and [tar and grease] was, oh, up to a foot in diameter and we would cut a section of bamboo approximately the sections were in foot to fifteen inches long and that's what we used for our ... and in the middle of the night we'd call our orderlies, sing out to the orderly 'Bedpan', something and they were always on the job. We were treated very well by our orderlies and whenever we needed something, they were always there. And many men owe their lives to them.

There was hardly a night went that we never lost some patient whose ulcer had got too bad,

who'd died. And every ... we'd always hear the orderlies carrying out the odd man that had died. One duty we performed every day was delousing our trousers. Of course in bamboo huts and up in that climate, lice and bugs were one of our worst enemies. The lice would come out at night, have a feed on us while we were asleep and then they would go to rest in the seams in our trousers. We only had trousers, they were all we owned, they always seemed to stop in our trousers. So we'd take our trousers off after breakfast and we'd have great fun cracking all the lice that was ... hundreds of lice that were asleep in the seams of our trousers.

The ulcers on the shins of men on the shins, they used to sleep with their legs folded up so the pain wasn't so bad if they had their leg above them and they always had their leg bent. And when their ulcers healed up their legs wouldn't touch the ground, so they had weeks and weeks of work to get their tendons and sinews working again. My ulcer on me ankle, when I started to walk ... we had to learn to walk again, when the ulcer came good. It was just like learning to walk we were like babies, we couldn't ... I started walking with two sticks but I couldn't get my ankle within three or four inches of the ground because it had stiffened, the tendons had all stiffened, even today I haven't got the same movement in that ankle. And they were some of the problems.

And that would take quite a few weeks and months, I should say ...

Yes, weeks and weeks before I got my ankle back onto the ... my heel onto the ground. Men who had one leg or some had two legs amputated, a lot of men died of course after the amputations but the lucky ones who lived had ... we had a workshop in the camp and they used to make wooden legs. And most of the amputees were all given a leg after their ulcers had healed ... there wounds had healed and some of them got on very well, some of them had troubles but they did very well with walking.

Reg, can you remember roughly how many amputees there were with you at that time - very approximately?

I'd say there'd be more than a hundred or could have been hundreds, I don't know. I know there was approximately a hundred that lived, I don't know how many that ...

They would have been Australians wouldn't they?

They were all Australians out that tent, that big hut. And I was still there for nine months at Tarso hospital, the last month I was just learning to walk again. I don't don't know whether there was any other episodes that happened during that time that I can remember. I know we never ever saw any Japanese guards, never ever came near our camp to worry us, they wouldn't come because of the smell I suppose but ... was one reason but we never ever saw any Japs and of course they never worried us.

As the ulcers healed we were taught to walk again. Then on the ... I left Tarso hospital on 20th April, 1944. We were evacuated on a train on a ... I was taken to the train on a stretcher. The train took us to [Onpoduck], we stayed there for five days and then we were put on a train to Nakhon Pathom. Thirty-one men to a truck and we arrived at Nakhon Pathom on 25th April. This camp was built under xxx supervision. It's a remarkable camp, we had attap huts with walls, wooden floors, concrete latrines and very good kitchens. The two men in charge of Nakhon Pathom was Colonel Dunlop and Colonel Albert Coates.

This camp would hold - when full - would hold about 10,000 men, it was 200 men to a hut. It was ... we were all still learning to walk and we didn't have to work for the Japanese. Although periodically the Jap guards would come in to line us all up and look for so-called fit men to take back up the line for repairs. Because as soon as we finished the railway line the American planes came in and started bombing the bridges and I don't think the Japs got much use of that railway line. But they would come in and line us all up and anyone who had a tropical ulcer ... a bad tropical ulcer scar never had to worry much because the Japs didn't want anything they could see they said we couldn't work but any men with dysentery, diarrhoea, malaria or beri-beri they couldn't see what was wrong with them and they would pick a lot of them out and sent them back to work. None of those men who would we ever see again, we don't know what happened to them. A lot of them never got back off the line, I don't think.

We were given jobs, we all got jobs at Nakhon Pathom. The first job I had was peeling potatoes, peeling vegetables for the canteen. And that lasted ... we were getting twenty-five cents a day ... twenty cents a day for that and then we got offered another job. We had the job of spinning cotton but for some reason or another the Jap guard stopped us from doing that job. And then I got a job of rolling cigarettes for the canteen. And we were given twenty cents a day plus ten cigarettes and a handful of tobacco was our wages and three of us used to roll eleven hundred cigarettes in a morning.

Reg, what were the people working on the line getting at that stage, were they getting as much as twenty or just ten?

We was only getting ten cents a day, I think. I don't know whether they put them up later but while I worked we only ever got ten cents a day. After the cigarettes job I was offered the job of ... On the cigarettes we used to split paper for the cigarette paper and the better the quality of the cigarette paper the better the ... the easier it was to split. We even used the leaves of bibles, that made terrific paper, it was high quality paper and it's very easy ... we were specialists in splitting paper.

Were the padres insisting different paper?

Yes. Padres didn't seem to mind either but there was a lot of old books that were cut up for cigarette papers. And then I got offered the job of cutting hair, so I finished up a barber in the camp. We stayed at Nakhon Pathom till the end of the war and most of us never worked for the Japs again there but as I said some were taken away on jobs. I even cut the hair of a Japanese guard once he came in and wanted his hair cut and of course they had their ... used to have to shave their head and they shaved all their hair, even their eyebrows and it took me a while to shave his head but I didn't like to cut his throat ... I mean cut his head, I thought he might ... it took me a while to do his job. Anyway he got up with a grump and walked away and didn't ... I must have done the job all right.

Reg, how about instruments you used for the haircuts and shaves?

Well, we had razors, we had cut throat razors and clippers and scissors which had been carried through with some of the barbers they'd carried them all their days and they pooled them when they came into camp and we used these, that's what we had to use. We even had a strop, our head barber used to sharpen the razors for us, cause we were only learning the job. I always liked hairdressing, I used to cut the hair of our mates a lot of times during the time before we were taken prisoners.

How many a day would he do, Reg?

Well, we worked from ... the eight hour day and we seemed to have ... we'd do one every quarter an hour I suppose, so we'd do twenty or thirty a day. And I even used to cut hair for our ... we had a loony bin - we called it a loony bin - it was a compound inside our compound, a little one hut with a high bamboo fence around it. And there was twenty or thirty chaps in there who, well, we don't know whether ... but anyway they were ... whether it was fair dinkum or not but we one chap we walked in to cut their hair ... we used to go in and cut their hair and one Dutchman was standing in the corner, he thought he was a parson, he was reading out of his book and one of the fellows was walking around with two sticks, hobbling around with two sticks, and all had their different things ... attitudes and mumblings. But when the war finished it was funny these chaps with the two sticks they threw them away and walked out of the camp as good as us so we ... I think they were making sure that the Japs didn't want them to work. And we used to cut their hair too. And I cut hair there until the war was over.

I had a second attack of malaria at Nakhon Pathom and luckily I'd never had much dysentery, although I had a few attacks but seemed to get over them very well. A lot of chaps had dysentery, died of dysentery attacks. And although when I was in Tarso hospital there was flies, blow flies, we used to say they sat up at the rafters and they'd swarm down on our ...

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE A

START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B

... and they'd swarm down on our bandages and they'd blow our bandages and even our blankets sometimes that got a bit dirty. But the dysentery we were able to withstand that. We received some letters from home while I was in Nakhon Pathom. The letters were written on July '43 and we didn't receive them till September '44. That was I think the Japs used to keep our letters in camp, they thought that was one way of getting us ... might affect our morale but we never ever let things like that worry us.

Reg, could you tell me a little about the medical officers please?

Well, our medical officer for our work force was Captain Parker. He was in our camp at K3 at the Hell Fire Pass and he did a remarkable ... he was a remarkable man. He did a wonderful job. He was over worked, he got very tired himself but he kept going and always had the men's welfare at heart. He always got men off work if it was possible, give them a days spell, and he looked after us very well. Major Callette was one doctor, Major Callette and Captain Millard were the two doctors in charge of our hospital camp at Tarso. I never saw much of Major Callette, he used to come through different days. Captain Millard was our main doctor and all our doctors were remarkable men. They did a wonderful job. They had no medical supplies but they always instilled confidence in us, we never lost confidence in any of our doctors. They were always seemed to .. they were always well dressed, they had their shorts and if I remember rightly they had a shirt. And, well, they cured for us through all those terrible months of that hospital ulcer ward. I could never speak highly enough of our doctors. We used to think some of our officers had a lot be desired but our medical men were men of highest repute. We never lost confidence in any of our doctors. I can't really say any more.

Reg, now you did say Doctor Millard looked after you virtually for the eighteen months treatment that you mentioned about the toe nail operation earlier in the piece and he saw you virtually everyday did he throughout that period?

Yes, he came in every morning, walked through with the orderly, one orderly or two and inspected all our ulcers. The orderlies were the ones who cleaned our ulcers and scraped them when they were needed but the doctor always came through and gave them instructions on what to do. And Captain Millard I think was a wonderful man and I can thank him I suppose for still having my leg, although I suppose I was fortunate. We never ... the medical supplies was non existent. While we were working we did get a little quinine, the Japs supplied us with quinine while we were working. I suppose mainly to keep us so we wouldn't get malaria and be off work. Other than that it was hardly any ... oh, they did give us a cholera inoculation once while at K3 and that was to help us to combat the cholera. They did a ... they examined us once for ... give us rod treatment, I don't know whether ...

I was going to ask you about that.

... a glass rod they used to see if we had ... we all had to go through that once on our camp.

The Japanese had to also, didn't they? Did you see the guards or ...

Yeah, I think they ...

... the Japanese Army undergoing it?

Yes, I think the guards had to go through it too. But we periodically had this glass rod treatment. And ...

Just coming onto the orderlies, did you get any impression of the proportion of volunteers as opposed to more or less professional orderlies, Reg or whether some of the people were conscientious objectors?

Well, I think as far as I was ... I don't remember names of our orderlies I knew them as their nicknames perhaps, I've even forgotten them. A lot of our orderlies were voluntary workers, men that took on the job after taken prisoners of war. Of course there were many orderly within the job but on the line we had to ... they finished up with a lot of volunteer orderlies. And they did a wonderful job too the orderlies, they never failed whenever we needed anything they were always there. They were as good a orderlies in those camps as our nursing profession we have today, I think. In the middle of the night we'd be calling for a bed pan or a ... and they were right on the job they always come straight along, never had lights or anything but they were always there to look after us.

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE B - END OF INTERVIEW