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Mr. Hipolito P. Lizama
July 18, 1994

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Interviewee: Mr. Hipolito P. Lizama

Military Rank: NS 2nd Class, Insular Force Guard

Interviewer: Al Miller

Hilton Hotel, Guam

Date: July 18, 1994, 1:15 PM

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Q: My name is Al Miller and I'm here at the Hilton Hotel in Guam on July 18th, 1994 at 1:15 PM to record an oral interview history with Mr. Hipolito P. Lizama, who served in the Guam Insular Guard before World War II. This interview is being made by the National Park Service, War in the Pacific National Historical Park in conjunction with Guam Cable Television. Mr. Lizama, I understand that the National Park Service has your permission to make this recording and to retain all literary and property rights deriving from it. Is that correct?

Hipolito Lizama: Yes, sir.

Q: For the record, Mr. Lizama, could you please tell us your full name.

Hipolito Lizama: My name is Hipolito Pablo Lizama.

Q: Could you spell your last name, please.

Hipolito Lizama: L-i-z-a-m-a

Q: What unit were you in during the Guam campaign?

Hipolito Lizama: I was in the, ah, Insular Force Guard. **Ah it was established here for Guam only.**

Q: When and where were you born?

Hipolito Lizama: I was born in Agana and the year, 19—Nov. 6, 1920.

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Q: You grew up and went to school on Guam?

Hipolito Lizama: I was, yeah. I, I attended, ah, **Barrigada Outlying District**. They **called it Outlyin District** at that time. And, ah, then I graduated from sixth grade, **went down** to Agana, **George Washington Junior Highschool**. That was the first time they had a junior high school in Agana, a public, public school.

Q: When did you join the service?

Hipolito Lizama: I joined the service in, in April 1941. I forgot the day, the day when I joined.

Q: Why did you join?

Hipolito Lizama: Because, ah, I—there was a rumor going on that, ah, we probably be having a war with the, with the Japanese.

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Q: If you could, we'd like to go back to before the war started, before the Japanese invasion on **December the 7th '41[on Guam it was December 8, 1941]** and give us some background information on your, what you were doing in the Insular Force Guard at that time.

Hipolito Lizama: Ah, we just started the Insular Force Guard in April, that is, ah, the time when I enlisted. And, ah, we were supposed to, I believe I think the intention of that Insular Force Guard, um, by the governor, McMillan at that time, to replace the Marines on guard duties and we took over the, ah, the guard stations, the **different** guard stations **around** the island and when the war broke out.

Q: What happened to you on December, in December of 1941 when the Japanese came in?
What were your experiences in those first days?

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Hipolito Lizama: I was stationed at the Talofoto Lookout Station and, ah, when the Japanese started to move **to** Talofoto I tried to, ah, call up, ah, I was the, ah, what do we call it? Ah, **petty** officer of the guard. I was the petty officer of the guard, PO of the guard. And ah, we tried to call **Agana** headquarters that the Japanese were landing on December 10. **That was Wednesday** morning, but there was no, no communication. The telephone was out of order.

Q: Did you come under any fire from the Japanese?

Hipolito Lizama: Yes, ah, on December 8 there was no strafing on our **lookout** station. And on December 9 we had been strafed by the Japanese, ah, um, plane, you know, and it was so low I could hit him but I didn't have any gun. We were, ah, stationed over there without gun. And, um, when I call up I could still contact Agana and, ah, I was reporting that there was no gun available because I wanted to have my gun back to shoot at the Japanese airplane, you know, but they told me, or somebody told me in the Agana Headquarters that, um, all the guns were gone. They were being distributed out to other military people, **no** **[Chamorro expression]**

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Q: How long was it before you were captured?

Hipolito Lizama: Ah, you mean how long?

Q: When? From the time you saw the Japanese planes strafing how many days was it before they took you?

Hipolito Lizama: April, May, June, July—about three months.

Q: You were in concentration camp for three months?

Hipolito Lizama: No, no, no. No. This was before the Japanese came in. I was, ah, in the
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service three months. **We just organized**—in fact, we were still on the, where we call it boot camp. We were still **under** training when the Japanese attacked on December 8th. And they started the landing here on December 10. And, um, that's when they took over the island.

Q: And they put you in a concentration camp in Agana?

Hipolito Lizama: Yes. Ah, when I, um, when ah, the Japanese started to pull in, in Talofofo Bay I told my other, the three of us there, I told my other two, ah, ah, guards, you know, to go to Agana to report and on **our** way down there's some Guamanians fleeing, getting away from Guam, I mean, from Agana and, ah, they told us don't go down there because the Japanese were already in Agana. That was probably about 7 or 8 o'clock December 10. And then, um, I said, ah, we have to split up, go your way and if you have a chance, I told the other two boys to go down to Agana to report and, ah, then we, we split up. So ah, I went to, ah, a farmhouse there, a friend of mine and, um, we, I changed my uniform because the farmer told me that, ah, if they find me with a uniform they shoot me. So, ah, he get me his ah, work clothes and

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ah I changed my uniform to his work clothes, you know. It was a little bit tight but, ah, I could manage, you know? So, ah, and he said you have to stay here on this farm and that was probably right around the golf course in Talofofo. I forgot what is the name of that, ah, golf course now. And, um, he said, ah, there will be some Japanese coming in here for transportation, to take you down to Agana for pass, for a pass, I said, but I'll take the pass for you because if they—if you go there to get the pass yourself you're going to be, ah, persecuted because, ah, they'll ask you questions and, ah, you have to tell the truth that you are in the Navy. So I just waited for him. He got the pass and gave it to me and then I

went up to, to my family in Barrigada. This was in Agana, the, the time that ah, the Japanese ah, headquarters, you know? I think that it was right there in the Cathedral, because I didn't go to get my pass because my friend took it for me. And then I took the pass and, ah, I met some Japanese, you know? They just let me go to Barrigada. That's where I met my family. When I got to

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Barrigada that was probably Wednesday afternoon. Ah, Thursday morning they told me that, um, I have to report back down to Agana. If I don't report down to Agana they'll kill my family. So I had to report, and then they put me in the camp, concentration camp. And we had our camp down there in Agana close to the, ah, governor's house, ah, office. We call it **Dorn Hall**. We stayed there until, ah, maybe December or January, and they send the Americans to Japan as prisoners of war and, ah, they kept the, ah, Guamanian, I think, they wanted us to stay to work for them. Because, ah, I don't know. Ah, maybe the Japanese wanted us to stay with our families, they don't have to feed us and then we had to work for them. So I, ah, they had us work at the manganese, um, mining up at **Nimitz Hill now**. And then maybe for about two years, 1945, oh, no, no, 1943 and, ah, they closed the manganese—I believe they closed it because none of the manganese hit **Japan**, I think. Because some fisherman was telling me that, ah, they found some, ah, boxes floating on the ocean when we ship out, you know? And then, ah, I think they were sunk by our submarines, you know? And then, after that, we went on to Naval Air Station. We built that Naval Air Station by hand. And, ah, some even children were put to work in **pulling out weeds at Kalaguak, we called it Kalaguak**.

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that is the NAS now. And ah, we worked there by hands only and we cut down coconut trees and, ah, cleared the ground, leveled the ground, and then we paved the road, I mean, the runway. So, ah, we started the, they started the ah, air strip. And, ah, we worked hard—day and night. Days and **nights**. And, ah, at times we were so tired, you know, we could not work on **our** field, you know, on **our** farm. But, ah, we managed to grow our own food because, ah, we didn't have time to work for ourselves because they wanted us to work, especially the prisoners of war were meant to, to work for them. And, ah, during the, the

building of Agana **ah** air strip, ah, I think, ah, sometime in 1944, in July, or June maybe, they started to strafe the island. The Americans started to come back and, ah, when we were strafing the island we were put under, ah, very hazardous work, you know, because, ah, whenever the bomb the air strip we have to run out and, ah, fill up the holes. And, ah, they had this, ah, work done at night, because daytime they were strafing, you know, bombing. And, um, that was my time

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during, ah, ah, when they started bombarding the island. Then later on, I think the Japanese knew that the Americans are coming back to Guam. They put us on the concentration camp in Manenggon—**ah in Måta, Talafofo**. And then, ah, after the Marines cleared the island on that side, on the southern end they **moved** us down to Manenggon and that's when, ah, um, the Marines came in. They told us to go down to Manenggon and, um, but we still had to work with the Japanese. We, we were scared of the Japanese now because, ah, they'd probably shoot us or kill us if we show any suspicious action, you know, by us. So, um.

Q: You mention that you went down to Big Navy to work after the Marines came on and liberated Guam.

Hipolito Lizama: Yeah. Um, about, ah, maybe after July, after the Americans took over the island, we were told to report to Navy, Lion 6, ah, to report back—because we were freed already and those who were able to work, um, I think we had, ah, some kind of physical examination before we were put to work, you know? I was stationed with the **Seabees Construction Battalion**. Ah, we built a naval station and, of course, only Quonset huts at that time, you know, nothing permanent.

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Q: What happened to the gentleman that helped you? The man you talked about that got you the pass so that you wouldn't be found out, the farmer?

Hipolito Lizama: Oh, oh. What happened to him?

Q: Is he still around?

Hipolito Lizama: No, he died some time ago. But um, he was also, ah, part Japanese, you know, I mean, ah, half Japanese. Part Japanese. And, ah, he was, he was—he worked with us but, um, **especially his father**, his father was a, a Japanese citizen, **no**. Ah, he came to Guam and married to, to a Guamanian and, ah, this gentleman who helped me, ah, well, he, he had a good time, a good life during the Japanese occupation.

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Q: You joined this guard in April of 1941 and you stayed in it during the entire Japanese occupation, and then during the liberation. How much longer did you stay in the Insular Guard? Were you discharged?

Hipolito Lizama: Ah, right after the Americans came back we were told that there would be no more Insular Guard and no recruitment so we had to get out from the service as a prisoner of war, we **had** to gain points. At that time the, the ah, the discharge was **made** on points, on point system. And, ah, that was in 1945, or '46.

Q: Did you stay on Guam until the war was over?

Hipolito Lizama: No. I went to States to—I, ah, right after the 1945, maybe '46 I went to States to go to school and, ah, I stayed there but, ah, I didn't finish schooling there. I had to finish my high school first and then I took some college courses. So, um, 1950 I came back.

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Q: Did you know George Tweed?

Hipolito Lizama: Ah, personally no, but I heard about him. He was, ah, very much of a symbol to, to the people of Guam that, ah, George Tweed was U.S. That's all I know about him. I didn't, I didn't help him. I did not, ah, meet him, but he was very well known by the

Guamanian people because the Guamanian people thought that Tweed was a symbol of the United States. And, ah, he was, ah, being hidden, or fed by us, no, by the Guamanian people. I was asked one time to go see Tweed. I said, ah, I think we're risking his identity to **many** of his hide out if more people go there. So I told this guy to don't go because we want to keep him as secret as possible.

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Q: Could you describe what your life was like in the Japanese concentration camp? What kind of facilities did they have?

Hipolito Lizama: Ah, we're not actually put on the **concen**—I mean, the, ah, before the liberation?

Q: Right.

Hipolito Lizama: Oh, we have to have our own food. They didn't give us any food, the Japanese didn't give us any food. Um, my father, ah, we had to smuggle our food in because the Japanese would confiscate all kinds of food, you know, for themselves. And, ah, ah we had to scrounge for food, you know, around the camp. Especially breadfruit. It was very helpful, and coconut.

Q: Did they have huts for you to sleep in or did you sleep outdoors?

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Hipolito Lizama: No, we had to put up a tent type, no, with coconut leaves for a roof and, um we were allowed to, to work for them, for the Japanese and at the same time we, we have to look after our family to feed them, because there's no food. I believe, I think we had stayed there longer we would have died of hunger and from disease. Life there was, um, very hard for the Guamanian because, ah, ah, the disease was very prevalent, especially intestinal problem, you know, like diarrhea. And, ah, in the camp, the concentration camp,

just before the Americans came in, ah, we had to help each other as much as possible. So those who had food maybe would share it with somebody else.

Q: What kind of medical services did they have? Were there any doctors?

Hipolito Lizama: I have only—that's what I would like to talk about because, ah, we had only

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one doctor here on the entire island and, ah, he was **also held prisoner** in the concentration camp, and we help him a lot with sick people, you know? By bringing in, taking in, ah, um, sick people to, to his camp. And when the Americans came, and the Marines came, he was given some medicine because he didn't have **much** medicine there, especially penicillin, is just, I think it was just put out, **no**, especially for wounds or scratches, you know? And also, ah we had some, he had some medicine. I worked for him for a little while and, ah, I don't know what happened to him after the, the liberation.

Q: Life, as you described it under the Japanese occupation, was pretty miserable. What was the mood of the people when they found out the Americans were coming?

Hipolito Lizama: Oh, we um, we were expecting it all the time, you know. And ah, in fact, we had some songs like ah, **Uncle Sam Please Come Back to Guam**. Maybe you've heard about that. So we composed that and ah, um, when the Japanese knew that we were singing that they would slap us or, ah, torture us. So ah, we sort of hiding it, you know? When we're singing that we are singing it, ah, away from the Japanese.

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Q: Is there anything else about your experiences during that time that you'd like to tell us?

Hipolito Lizama: Um, that's about, ah, what happened. Ah, during this time, you know, but, ah, after the Americans came back, ah, we were grateful and, ah, at that time the Navy wanted more land for bases, you know, and ah, we were sort of **gratifying**, you know, the

Americans. We gave our land to them for the military to build bases, you know. But, ah, we never had any agreement. I don't know, with my father, whether my father ever had an agreement that this land would be returned back to us. But ah, when the, um, Marines get, got back to Guam we started to build up, especially, ah, areas where they had cleared from stragglers, you know? We started to farm back again, because at that time we, we, um, we were fed by the Marines of course. They had, especially the spam, was very popular at that
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time. And the, ah, corned beef hash was very popular, and we went back to our farm and, ah, we raised our chicken, our cattle. Whatever we could find, you know, over there.

Q: Mr. Lizama, on behalf of the National Park Service I want to sincerely thank you for your time and cooperation.

Hipolito Lizama: Thank you.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF SESSION]