

U.S. NAVY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL HISTORY WITH ENS (ret.) ARTHUR BEALE, USN

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TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW

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**Telephone interview with former POW and survivor of the *Oryoku Maru*,
ENS Arthur G. Beale, USN.**

When did you join the Navy?

June of 1940. I wanted to fight Hitler. I was working for a CPA in Bridgeport and I was going to take the CPA exam in October of 1940. I had had this guy Hitler figured out when I was a kid in high school. A guy who has all the kids running around with wooden guns is up to something and I felt he was going to cause trouble and that we ought to start getting ready for him.

Why did you decide on the Navy?

I lived in Bridgeport which was on Long Island Sound. I was in the Sea Scouts. I could row a boat before I could walk. I built a little boat in my basement and it turned out to be a Snipe class. Have you ever heard of it?

Of course. We had Snipes where I grew up on the Great South Bay. What's the first memory you have of being in the Navy?

There were three of us in this back room of the CPA office. We were talking about Hitler and we all felt that we'd end up fighting him. I had a friend in ROTC at the University of Illinois and he was telling me that I should try out for the Army. All of a sudden a big advertisement showed up in the Bridgeport papers asking for

young fellas to answer this officer training program. They called it the V-7. It was sort of a reserve cadet type of thing. So I told the other two guys that I was going to check into it. I talked one of them to go with me. The other guy wanted to fly P-40s.

So the two of us went to the armory in New Haven. They just happened to have a doctor there so we took the physical and both of us passed. We then signed up for this officer training course. Instead of taking the CPA exam in October 1940, I was on a battleship taking a training cruise down to the Panama Canal. Then we were ordered to the midshipman school and spent 3 months there. Then both of us got commissions and split up. He went down to South Carolina and I went out to the Naval Torpedo Station in Keyport, WA, on Puget Sound, and studied torpedoes.

I then got orders to the Philippines and went to the Naval Air Station on Sangley Point. The Naval Air Station was right next to the Naval Hospital at Cañacao. I lived there in Cañacao.

What was your rank at that time?

Ensign.

And did you remain an ensign while you were a POW?

Yes. My class got promoted to lieutenant j.g. a month after I was taken prisoner. They gave me my promotions when I was freed.

Do you remember the day you heard the war had broken out?

Yes. It was a big surprise to us because we didn't think the Japs would be crazy enough to start a fight with us. For a guy who wanted to fight Hitler, I felt, believe it or not, a little bad and frustrated because here I am out in the Philippines as far away from the fighting as you could get.

I wasn't there very long, maybe a couple of weeks, before this thing started. We lived on Cañacao Boulevard and the houses were tropical types with the windows open. There was a whole row of them and young officers lived in most of them. They guys in the next building started to make a ruckus by turning up their radios very loud. They just hollered out into space that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. It was very early in the morning, probably 5 or 6 o'clock. Out there it was Monday, the 8th, due to the International Date Line.

I was originally supposed to go to the air station to be a torpedo officer but when I got there they sent me to the navy yard where I got a job working for the public works department out on the docks. I ended up building air raid shelters but didn't have a chance to do much of it.

On Wednesday, the 10th, they bombed the Navy yard and some bombs fell on Sangley Point. They also bombed Nichols Field.

Where were you when that was going on?

I was home eating lunch. They bombed during lunch hour so a lot of people had left the yard. We were in our quarters at Sangley

Point. But they dropped bombs on Sangley Point, too. In fact, they made two runs on Sangley Point and knocked down one of the two communications towers. You know what was on Sangley Point, don't you?

It was a low frequency transmission station.

Right. There were three big towers, which were the main links to the United States. The hospital was there; the Naval Air Station was being built, and there was also a fuel depot there. So there was a lot of activity. The first run they went over the top of it to the yard. We thought they were our planes. When they bombed the yard, of course, we realized they weren't. I came out of my quarters and walked across the street. They had made what they called a bomb shelter. All they did was drive a bulldozer and make a square. You had to climb up over this square and lay down in the thing. Sangley Point was all sandy property so it was easy for them to bulldoze.

After that first run, the bombs landed very close to me. I looked up and said, "What the hell are they bombing?" So I looked up and saw these towers and I was practically at the bottom of one of them. So I got the hell out of there. I ran down the street to the bay and lay in the sand with some other people. There were no holes or anything; we just lay in the sand. When they made the second run, one of the bombs landed in the water so close that we all got a shower bath.

After that, we looked over and saw all the smoke coming from

the yard and realized that they were in much worse shape than we were. We jumped into a pickup truck and went to the Navy Yard to see what we could do.

What did you see when you got there?

When I looked at the bombings of these buildings in New York, it was sort of the same thing. The yard had been bombed pretty bad and the admiral who was there told everyone to get out. So as everyone was trying to get out of the Navy Yard we were trying to get in to help.

We finally got into the Yard. There was a baseball field there and it was covered with bodies; some were dead, some were injured. Everybody devoted all their time to picking up the wounded and getting them to the Cañacao hospital. And then we went around picking up the bodies. The bombing had destroyed the yard. There was nothing left of it. There was an ammunition depot there. I ended up fighting the fires. But the fire engine there in the Yard was usually manned by two Filipinos but they had been killed in the bombing and the engine was completely destroyed.

About that time it was getting dark and the admiral had said, "Everybody out of the yard." So we left the Yard and rendezvoused in the little town just outside. We no sooner got there than somebody said, "The admiral wants volunteers to go into the Yard to fight fires." So I got a truckload of sailors and we went back into the Yard and found some fires over by the ammunition depot. So here's

this brand new fire engine down there with a hose out into the harbor. Someone had been using it but had left when the order came to evacuate the Yard. Anyway, here I am with this fire engine with the hose in the bay. The key was there so I was able to start the engine. But then I had to learn how to pump the water out of the bay onto the fires. I was reading all the labels by all the dials on the side of the engine to try to figure out how to get the pump going. This fellow came up and said, "Can I help you?"

I said, "Yeah, I'm trying to get this goddamn thing to pump water." So here's this lieutenant, j.g., a submariner. He said, "I was on the volunteer fire department in Pearl Harbor. Maybe I can help you." So the two of us got the thing pumping water on the fires. Of course, we paid attention to the ammunition depot first. We drenched it. If that depot had gone up there would have been nothing left of the yard.

Was all this happening on the late afternoon or night of the 10th.

Yes. The same night. About that time, a sailor told us the admiral wanted everybody out of the yard because the ammunition depot was about to blow up. We were standing right next to the depot and had already put all the fires out so there was no danger. So we sent the kid back to tell the admiral that there were no fires near the ammunition depot and it wasn't going to blow up. So he disappeared for a while, then came back and said, "The admiral says everybody

out of the yard. No arguments." So we had to drag the hoses and put them back on the fire engine and get the hell out of there. We pretty much left the yard to burn itself out.

When did you see your first Japanese?

On Corregidor, just toward the end. Well, the first Japanese I saw were the Japanese people in Manila. As a matter of fact, the Saturday night before Monday we were in a Japanese restaurant in Manila eating sukiyaki. There were a bunch of us young ensigns and had heard about this Japanese restaurant where you took your shoes off. Sunday was peaceful and then Monday is when they bombed Pearl.

How did you get over to Corregidor?

We stayed at Sangley Point. The shipyard was right next door. I would go to the Navy Yard every day with a lieutenant. We were doing some salvage work. Then the Japs landed in about four places. They landed up in northern Luzon and a couple of places in southern Luzon.

Southern Luzon was what concerned everyone. To get to Bataan, we had to drive through Manila and up towards Bataan and then turn left or south to go down into the peninsula. The Japs were coming down so fast that if we didn't get around the corner we'd be trapped in Manila and not able to get to Bataan. I was working with the public works department. The admiral said, "Everybody go to Bataan."

So the three of us went around to make sure everything was

smashed and out of order. We had an old 1929 Buick I had fixed up and gotten running down at the Navy Yard. Then I'd find a better car and get that one operating and I'd drive it to Sangley Point at the end of the day. And then someone would tap me on the shoulder and say, "Commander so and so wants that car." So they'd take it away from me and I had to go back to my old Buick. That happened to me two or three times. So all I had was that Buick. Every window was broken. It was full of shrapnel holes and it wasn't in very good shape but this was what we were driving around in.

We went to the gate to join the parade going to Bataan and there was nobody there. We were the only three people on the point and all we had was the old Buick. I then said, "What are we going to eat." So we went down to the officers' club to see if we could scrounge some food. We loaded up the Buick with some cans of food we found and headed for the gate again. We saw some smoke and headed down there. What we found was a destroyer, the USS *Perry* (DD-340). They were topping off their tanks at the fuel depot there. We went to the dock and asked the skipper where he was going. He said they were going over to Corregidor. We asked if we could have a ride and the ship took us there and dumped us off. We were supposed to go to Bataan but he took us to Corregidor.

When we got there we went to the Navy headquarters and we found our boss, CDR Wilson. He had some jobs for us to do there on Corregidor and really needed us. My job was to run the motor pool.

Did you end up anywhere near the Malinta Tunnel?

Yes. The Navy had a tunnel right next to Malinta called the Queen Tunnel and that's where the Navy headquarters was. It was much smaller than Malinta. There actually were three tunnels there. Queen was the main tunnel and they had some laterals. There was a communications radio room there. There were also some tunnels up the side of the hill with separate entrances. They had a submarine workshop in the rear of Queen Tunnel, where they worked on torpedoes and stored spare parts.

At the very end of Queen was a lateral that went over to Malinta. It wasn't finished. In fact, they had railroad tracks in there with mining cars on them. They were enlarging the hole. You had to bend over or you'd hit your head on the rough edges. But you could get through to the Malinta Tunnel. Later on, we got some engineers from the Army and they cleaned it up a bit and made it easier.

Do you remember the bombardment?

Yes. They started shooting from the south, from Cavite Province, which is down on the south side. They were small guns. The first shots landed down by the south dock. They were after the industrial area, which included the refrigeration plant and the power plant and everything that was in that little ravine on the north side of the island. The south dock is where the submarines came in. Then they'd walk the shots across the island to get to those other things.

They didn't vary much. Very conveniently, they always started

shooting around 10 in the morning. They weren't trying to be nice guys with us. There was a reason. They were shooting out of the sun so we couldn't tell where the stuff was coming from. But it was very convenient. If you were out on the island doing some job, when 10 am started rolling around, you'd start looking south to see what was happening. That's when I got a little lesson in physics: the speed of sound and the speed of light and that sort of thing. The first thing you'd see was the flash. You don't hear anything, just the flash. You then knew it was on the way. They were shooting at a maximum range for those guns. So the trajectory was high up and it took a long time for the shell to reach us. They would start at 10 and shoot at us for about an hour and then stop for the day.

It was sort of a nuisance. There was a little dugout in the side of a hill. What I used to do was sit up against the wall of that hill and the projectiles would go right over my head. I didn't worry too much about it because there was no way they were going to get to me.

In fact, I didn't even like to sleep in the tunnel. I put a cot and a chair outside in this location and that's where my headquarters was.

Bataan had not fallen yet when all this was going on.

We were transferred to Corregidor on Christmas Eve. On December 24th, everyone left Cavite and Sangley Point and went to Corregidor.

Bataan fell on April 9th and then you guys were really in trouble after that.

Yes. We held out almost for another month till May 6th. The shooting from the south never amounted to much. They never were able to hit the power plant. It was in a little valley and they couldn't train their guns on it shooting from the south.

The distance from Cavite to Corregidor was about 12 miles. But the distance from Bataan to Corregidor was about 2 miles. So when Bataan fell, we were naked to the north. We had a lot of big guns but most of them didn't traverse 360 degrees. They were pointed out to sea and were of no value to us at all. When the Japs took Bataan, they lined up their 240mm guns hubcap to hubcap and then we paid a price. We thought they would knock Malinta Hill down and level Corregidor to sea level. We had big storage areas for projectiles. One guy in one of them told me that when the Japs started shooting at it, it was chip, chip, chip. One of the projectiles finally got through to the magazine and there was quite an explosion. It was like an earthquake. That was Battery Geary.

When they were shelling, you couldn't stick your head out of a hole. And we had no more anti-aircraft ammunition to take care of planes flying over. If you left to go on an errand in a vehicle, some plane would chase you down the road.

Was MacArthur still out there?

No. He had gone in March.

But before he left, was he telling the troops that help was on the way?

Yes, he did. And help was on the way. There was a big convoy that was supposed to come to us but the war started and they were diverted to Australia. Once he got to Australia, he was trying to get some inter-island steamers and pay them big bonuses if they would steal their way up through the islands and drop off some stuff to us. One of the ships got through, but every other one after that was sunk by the Japs.

What do you recall about when the Japanese finally landed on Corregidor? What happened to you and your comrades?

Nobody ever mentioned surrender. Submarines used to come into Corregidor. The first ones came in pulled up to the south dock. Later on, when the guns started shooting from the south, they didn't feel it was safe to continue. The first volley usually landed in the water close to where the subs were coming in. So they'd lay to out in the bay and then the passengers would be taken out to them in small boats.

We had some submarines in our Asiatic Fleet and they all went to Australia. All the ships went south. Many of them were sunk around Java and Sumatra. When subs came in I was busy. I had to get a working party to get the stuff from the torpedo tunnel down

to the submarines and do other errands. All these subs were from the Asiatic Fleet and I knew all the names of them.

One day the officer of the day called me on the loudspeaker and told me to report to the duty officer. He told me to have a work party and vehicles ready at 7 o'clock that night. I wondered what the hell he wanted with my vehicles and men that night. I found out. A submarine came in. I knew that whenever he said that, a submarine was coming in and I'd sit down and write a letter to my mother. I'd get it through the censor and get it out on the sub.

But then one night the duty officer said, "Get a work party and go to the vault." There was a tunnel with a big iron gate and armed guards. That's where the gold was stored--the whole Philippine treasury. So we took the truck in there. There was a big stack of gold bullion like loaves of bread. I had two 1 ½-ton trucks. I thought it would be easy because it didn't seem like that much gold. But when we started loading that gold on those trucks, they went all the way down on the springs.

So we loaded the gold and went down to the dock where the submarine was. We couldn't get down to the end of the dock with the gold because they were unloading ammunition. So we had to park at the head of the dock and wait until they finished. While I was standing there, a young officer from the submarine came by and we started talking. For the first time I was told what happened at Pearl Harbor. And when he got through telling me, I knew we were not going to get any help and we were in deep trouble. Our command never told

us Indians what happened. The Japanese newspapers that had been printed in Manila and smuggled out to Corregidor said it was pretty bad but we didn't believe them. A lot of the guys were still waiting for that convoy to come in any time. I said to the young ensign, "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

He said, "Have you got any sugar?"

I said, "Sure, I'll get you some."

So we started walking up the supply tunnel and about half way up I asked him how much sugar he wanted. He said, "About 500 pounds."

I stopped in my tracks and said, "I don't think there's 500 pounds of sugar on the whole island. I'll give you a couple of cups and that's about it."

So we turned around and went back to the dock and he went back to his submarine and away they went. And it was dark and you couldn't even see anybody's face. The subs always came in in the dark.

When did the Japanese show up?

They didn't show up until the night of the 5th or 6th of May. Their landings were goofed up too. We expected them to land at sea level. Corregidor has a funny shape. There was Topside, Middleside, and Bottomside. That was on the western half of the island. We figured they'd come at sea level at Bottomside. And there were some ravines--James Ravine, Ramsey Ravine, and Government Ravine. The ravines went down to sea level. We figured they'd be coming in in those places because the rest of the island in most places

was sheer wall.

They weren't very good navigators and so they drifted to a different part of the island and ended up on the eastern end, which had a lot of cliffs. But most of the big guns were on the western half of the island. Of course, Malinta Tunnel is right smack in the middle. Originally, there were two roads along the side of the hill and it was one-way traffic. When you were coming from the western part of the island you had to take the road on the southern part of that hill. When you were going from east to west you had to take the road on the other side of the hill. Those were narrow roads with big cliffs on either side.

During the peacetime years, the Army Engineers managed to steal enough money to build Malinta Tunnel. It was big enough to have trolley cars running through it from one end to the other--all the way out to Monkey Point on the eastern part of the island.

Anyway, the Japs drifted toward the eastern part of the island. The Marines were doing a good job defending the ground but there were too many Japs. The Marines were just overwhelmed.

How did you get the word to surrender?

When Bataan fell, a letter was put out by GEN Wainwright which said, "This mighty fortress can and will be held."

What would you think if you were in my shoes? I thought, "This is going to be the Alamo. We going to keep fighting until there's nobody left." And later on in the prison camp, that's what everybody

told me they thought, too. We all thought we weren't going to surrender but instead fight to the last man.

When the war started, I went down and got a .45 pistol. When I got to Corregidor, I got a .30 cal. rifle, a Springfield of World War I vintage. Guns were pretty common in my house when I was growing up in Connecticut.

So, you were pretty comfortable around guns.

I knew how to handle them. But most of the guys never saw a gun before. When Bataan fell, some of the men managed to get to Corregidor. But when they got there, they had nothing but the clothes they had on. They had no weapons or anything else. So they came to me and took my .30 cal. rifle away and gave it to one of those guys. Well here I am with a .45 pistol. There's no range to it.

How did you hear you were going to surrender?

I was finishing an errand and standing out in the South Shore Road and the loudspeaker went off. "Ensign Beale, report to the duty officer." So I hustled into the tunnel and the duty officer told me to destroy the submarine spare parts because we were going to surrender in a few hours. Now we had all these parts lined up on the South Shore Road. They must have anticipated something. We went out there and pushed these boxes of parts over the cliff into the water.

Then the word came that the Japs had gotten some tanks on the

island. I still had a few vehicles that were still operating, even though most of them were shot up. I got a hold of some of my drivers and we took these vehicles down the South Shore Road to the eastern end of the island where all the action was. We parked the cars in the road to block the tanks then hustled back to the Navy headquarters. As I was running down the road, I saw a 37mm gun pit beside the road and there was nobody on that gun. So I put on the brakes and stopped and said to some guys standing by, "Who's on this gun?"

And they said, "Nobody."

And I said, "Well, I'll take it over." I then jumped into the pit and said, "Where's the ammunition?" And the guy says, "There ain't any, that's why nobody's there."

There were some guys on the top of the hill who were shouting down to us on the road. They were up there with guns but no ammunition. Things didn't look too good.

We were told to destroy our weapons so we just threw the pistols and everything into the water. Then we stood around to see what was going to happen. A Navy officer was sent up the road with a white flag. And the Army did the same by the Malinta Tunnel.

When did you see your first Japanese?

When they came into the Queen Tunnel.

What was that like?

We didn't know what to expect. They had a bad reputation. They were more interested in stealing everything they could get off of us. If you had a watch on, they'd take that. They took fountain pens, rings, anything they wanted. They told you to hand it over and that's what you did. They didn't beat us up or anything like that at that time. Then they started swarming in there.

After a couple of days, they marched us down to the 92nd Garage Area. They jammed a zillion of us down in that space. They didn't have any plans to feed us or give us water. When they wanted a working party, they'd take a bunch of guys out. I think we stayed there about a week.

I want to pick up where we left off in the last interview. You were talking about being brought down to the 92nd Garage Area.

We stayed there about 10 days. They crammed us down there like sardines. It seemed that the Japanese didn't know how to do anything but crowd people together. And they didn't make any arrangements for food or water. We had a bit of a rough time. Finally, they lined us up and took us to Manila.

How did you get to Manila?

They had to bring ocean-going ships in. We marched from 92nd Garage to South Dock, which was on the south side of Corregidor, just below the Navy tunnels. That's where the submarines came in.

They could have taken us to Pier 7 in Manila but they didn't.

They took us to Pasai, which is where the International Airport is now. They then transferred us to landing barges. They then could have taken us in where the water was shallow, but they didn't do that. They just kicked us off into the water. That meant that everything we had on, including all of our baggage, was wet, which made all that stuff a lot heavier to carry for the march.

We marched from Pasai to Bilibid Prison, which was just on the other side of the Pasig River. If we had gone on further, we would have come to Santo Tomás, where the civilians were interned. We crossed the bridge, walked a bit, and turned left, and then right into Bilibid Prison.

Did you encounter any of the Filipino citizens on the way?

Oh yes. They were lined up along Dewey Boulevard. Later, they changed the name to something Filipino. Both sides of the street were lined with Filipinos. They obviously didn't dare wave at us or do anything friendly because they were put there by the Japanese to witness our humiliation.

What was your first impression of Bilibid?

It was a shithouse. But by that time, the Navy medics had come from Cañacao to Bilibid and they had been there for a while and cleaned it up pretty well. It was much better than it was before they got there. They did a good job making a little hospital. Bilibid became a trans-shipment place for anybody who was going on a work detail.

Usually they took them from Cabanatuan, they stayed a night or two at Bilibid, and they got on ships or trucks and were taken to the work site. Some of the work sites were on Luzon at Nichols Field. That was a tough detail.

As an officer, did they put you on those details?

No. They started to take us out of Bilibid probably the day after we arrived. The first detail went out and LTC [Curtis T.] Beecher was in charge of that detail. They took them out on the train to Cabanatuan. Now there were three camps at Cabanatuan. Actually, these camps were outside the boundaries of Cabanatuan. But they were always referred to as Cabanatuan by us and everybody.

These camps had been built for the Philippine Army. The first camp you came to we called Camp 1. That was just past the 9 kilometer post. In the Philippines, they had stone markers which gave you the distance from the big city. We could see some people in the distance but not very many. They marched us past that one to another camp on the right hand side of the road.

Up the road a little further was Camp 2, which was about 15 kilometers. It was on the left hand side of the road. Just east was the Pampanga River. We stayed there only a few nights because there was no water or facilities there. So the Japanese turned us around and marched us back to Camp 1 and that's where we originally set up house. They divided the camp up among all the facilities that were available.

What kind of buildings were available?

They were nipa shacks with a door on each end and bamboo slats maybe about 15 inches from the floor. And they had a second tier. We had to climb up a little ladder to a level that was a duplicate of the first floor. We were putting four to five men in a section that the building was built in--four or five men in each bay.

They took the medics and put them in a separate building and that became the hospital area. All the medics pretty much worked over in that area.

At the very beginning, they separated the officers from the enlisted men. In fact, right after we were captured, they took all the brass--colonels, generals, Navy captains and admirals--and they took them away from us and put them in separate camps. We never saw them until the end of the war. The highest rank we had with us in the prison camps was a lieutenant colonel or a full commander. The officers were in some buildings and the enlisted men in other buildings. All the officers were crammed into the building next to the road.

What were the conditions in that camp?

Pretty bad. The latrine facilities were not very good. LT Cecil Esty, a civil engineer officer, came up to me and said, "Could you take care of building latrines with some enlisted men?" He was a lieutenant and I was an ensign, so I said, sure. It was pretty

obvious that if we didn't dig latrines we were going to die of the flies. They multiplied like crazy.

When did all this happen?

Early June.

And it must have been hotter than hell.

Oh yes. The rainy season was just beginning. Anyway, I went out to this place to get some men and dig latrines. They were all Army people from Bataan and I was the only Navy guy there. I took one look at these guys. They had a hang dog expression like they didn't give a damn about anything. They were young, disillusioned, and bitter. Then I heard what a tough time they had on Bataan and really had sympathy for them. They certainly weren't in love with officers, MacArthur, or anybody. Nor was I. I never dreamed that the United States would let us down and not make any attempt to get to us.

Anyway, I got the men in a group and said, "Look. I'm in the Navy and you're in the Army. I was on Corregidor. I know what happened at Bataan. I feel for you and I know you had it tougher than we did. But we've got to get the latrines dug and get rid of these flies or else we're all gonna die of dysentery. So let's get with it."

Somebody had already started a hole and I insisted that we take turns getting in the hole. You see, nobody had enough energy to swing

the pick too many times. I jumped in the hole first and swung the pick maybe half a dozen times and then I was out of breath. Then we shoveled the stuff out and then another guy would get in the hole and he'd do five or six strokes with the pick, then he'd get out. And we'd just rotate around digging the latrines.

One day I went down there and there was a guy lying in the bottom of the half finished latrine. He had his head down and arms out. I thought he was dead. So I jumped in the hole and grabbed him. He was alive. I said, "What are you doing down here?"

He says, "Leave me alone; I wanna die."

He was a young kid. I says, "Come on, you can't stay here. You're gonna get sick."

He says, "I don't care. It's my body. I'll do what I want with it. Leave me alone."

So, we had to pick him up and get him out of there. That's how low the morale was. It was particularly tough on these young kids who were 17, 18, and 19.

And this was pretty early in the experience.

Yes. This was only the second or third day when we were digging latrines. I was tired swinging the pick. I felt just as bad as the guys did. When the day was over, I was pretty goddamned tired and dirty. We'd call it quits and I'd go to the officers' barracks. I was sitting there catching my breath when someone came around and said, "The camp commander wants some volunteers--some officers to

go to this other camp up the road."

Well, I already had a job so I didn't put up my hand. But nobody wanted to put up their hand. So, finally I raised my hand and they snatched me. . . . And they wanted junior officers. So they put us on trucks and took us up to Beecher's camp--Camp 3. Beecher had a lot of enlisted men there but no officers. They were dividing men into barracks, about a hundred to a barracks. Beecher wanted a junior officer to live in each barracks. I got a barracks with about a hundred men in it. And they gave us a senior petty officer--a Navy chief or a Marine sergeant as an assistant. So, I moved from Camp 1 to Camp 3. The men there were in better shape than the ones in Camp 1. So we did a lot better.

Were the rations better?

No. The rations were about the same. It was just that we had a better start in life. The Men were mostly from Corregidor.

What were the rations?

They gave us this gooey rice, and not much more than that. It was gummy and absolutely tasteless. Of course, we weren't accustomed to rice. And, of course, there's no vitamins and no real nourishment in plain rice. We didn't even have salt. Anything we could get, we put on it to eat it. If we got lucky enough to get salt One time the Japs gave us some Pepsodent tooth powder. Anything they found in a warehouse in Manila that nobody wanted they'd

give to us. Well nobody wanted tooth powder. We were putting it in the rice and mixing it up to get a little flavor.

Then we started to have vitamin deficiencies. We had a bout of scurvy. Fortunately for us, COL Beecher got along good with the Japs and they really respected him. He was really a fine officer. He told them that all he needed was some limes so they brought in some baskets of limes, rationed then out, and in no time we got rid of the scurvy. And periodically they would continue to bring in limes so we never had any more problem with scurvy.

What about beriberi?

Beriberi surfaced right away. It didn't take very long. That's lack of B1. You've heard about it.

Yes. The wet and dry variety.

Yes. With wet beriberi, you swell up like a balloon. When the water got up to the vital organs, you died. Dry beriberi was nerve endings. You could hardly walk on your feet because the pressure of your body on your feet was very painful. Some of the guys would get a bucket of water, put their feet in the water, then lay back on the bed and go to sleep that way. I had it; everybody had it. I don't know anyone who didn't have it, even though some had it worse than others. Mother Nature didn't give us all the same body. Some people have better genes than others. That's the only way I can account for it because everybody was pretty much getting the same rations. Some guys started to fall apart while others didn't.

Plus, I have to give myself a little credit. I was afraid of this goddamn dysentery so I made damn sure I washed my mess kit and kept everything as clean as I could. If anything was suspicious, I just didn't eat it. You may find something that's lying on the ground and enjoy it for an instant, but you're going to regret it. You're going to shit your brains out.

Was there a significant medical presence there? Did you have corpsmen and docs trying to help you out?

We had a lot of doctors and corpsmen but they didn't have anything to work with. And they were performing operations and everything else. I can't say enough good things about them. The medical professions held together very well. The same with the nurses and the chaplains. Why? Because they had leadership there. Let's take the Navy medics. The corpsmen maintained their discipline because they had senior chiefs. And they had the doctors. They were very concerned about the condition of the men and did everything they could for them. I don't know any one of them who was a slacker. They invented things. We had a veterinarian there. He was trained to doctor animals, and a lot of things that were good for animals were good for human beings if you could get your hands on them--weeds, grasses, and certain things like that.

What was a typical day like for you in Camp 3?

You got up before sunup, then you went out to work on something,

then you came in for lunch, then went right back out until the sun started to go down.

What type of chores did you have to do?

Sometimes you did things inside the camp; sometimes they took you outside the camp and worked you on roads and stevedoring, and God knows what else. Don't forget, every time you walked to Cabanatuan to Camp 3, that was 20 kilometers, about 12 miles. It takes a long time to walk 12 miles on your bare feet. Our shoes wore out pretty fast, and if you had made some wooden clogs, you don't walk very fast under those conditions. Of course, the guards who were escorting you were always hollering to hurry up. So, it was back and forth, back and forth till whatever they wanted to get done, got done.

Did you ever talk among yourselves about being left there or wondering if your countrymen were ever going to come back and rescue you?

Yes. There was a lot of bitterness but after we got into the camp a lot of information came out that we'd never heard before. Don't forget, we had some young kids there who were waiting for the fleet to come into Manila Bay every day. That submariner who was on the dock the night we loaded the gold had told me what happened at Pearl Harbor. So, mentally I was prepared. I knew the ships that were supposed to bring the goodies to us were at the bottom of Pearl

Harbor. And, furthermore, we had a radio in the camp so we knew they were fighting like hell down at Guadalcanal. Most of the Asiatic Fleet was being sunk, so there wasn't very much good news.

Did you say you had a radio in the camp?

Yes. We didn't have one in Camp 3 but they had one in Camp 1. And, of course, anything they heard they passed up to Beecher, and he passed it around. We could never tell any of this news to the men directly right away. They had tried it and then the men would go out on a work detail and talk to the Jap guards about who was winning the war. Pretty soon the Japs would be wondering how these prisoners were getting that kind of information. And they got suspicious and began pulling these surprise searches in the camp.

I was able to get in on this information because I had a chief electrician's mate in my barracks and he was one of the guys who used to work in our little power plant in Camp 1. He would take turns listening to the radio, which was something some of the guys made from pieces of wire and other parts. They hid it inside of a canteen. The Jap would come in and find the canteen but he wouldn't find the radio.

But even then, they'd move it around the camp so no one person had it for very long. Nevertheless, they had to stop telling the men what was going on. They'd wait for a time then start a rumor and let it filter around. You'd ask a guy where he got the information and he'd say, "The third hole on the latrine." So these

guys maintained secrecy. Finally, the guy I was getting the inside information from told me not to talk about it and I didn't. He said, "I can't tell you any more because the men are arguing with the Japanese guards and the guys who are listening to the radio are saying, 'The hell with this. If the Japs find out about the radio, they will catch us and we'll be the ones who will be shot. So we're not going to listen anymore unless you tighten up on security.'" So we had to wait for a time before they leaked the information.

When you were in the camp, did you ever have any encounters with the Japanese guards?

They usually didn't come into the camp very much. They didn't speak English and they couldn't take care of us. They very wisely selected officers. They had a senior officer in Camp 1. Anyway, the Japs put the officers in charge of running the camp.

Just an aside here. The guys never talked with their families about their experiences. It was really terrible and I felt it when I was National Commander of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. All the requests we got from the next of kin asking if anybody knew anything about where their father died or where he was or what he did. The guy just passed away and you'd ask, "Why the hell didn't he tell his family about it. We had to do a lot of research before we could come up with information for them. They needed it to write obituaries. We always did it, and were glad to do it but . . .

When did you learn that things were beginning to go badly for the Japanese?

They eventually sent so many people out on work detail that the population of Camp 1 went way down. And the population in Camp 3 had gone down so there was no sense in having two camps. So the Japs consolidated what was left and put us all in Camp 1. It was after we got to Camp 1 that we got our hands on some of this information.

Was that in '43?

We moved from Camp 3 to Camp 1 in October of '42. It was pretty much the beginning of '43 before some of this information leaked out. Of course, the Filipinos used to put notes under certain tree logs because they knew that the wood chopping detail would chop wood in the jungle for firewood and find them. But some of their stories were so obviously wrong that we wondered where they got their information. Our radio in the camp, which was tuned to San Francisco on the short wave, gave us better information.

Did you know any of the doctors or corpsmen?

Oh, yeah. Many of them were in Bilibid. The work detail that went out to Nichols Field, was near Manila and was a killer. It was under the supervision of a naval officer. He was known as a "white angel" and was a real bastard. He just worked the men until they were half dead. Then he took them to Bilibid. Maybe he'd take a

hundred men to Bilibid because they couldn't work anymore. Then he say, "Give me another hundred." So we had to take another hundred men and send them to Nichols. Then he'd wear them out and go to Bilibid to get more. The broken down men that were sent to Bilibid were in terrible condition. The corpsmen and doctors really saved their lives.

How was your health at that point.

Well, I was losing weight but, miraculously, I didn't get dysentery. And most of the malaria cases were the Bataan people. We didn't have too many mosquitoes on Corregidor. Corregidor was an old military base. First the Spanish were there and cleaned things up, and then the Americans went in there. There were no drainage problems. There was always a breeze which prevented the mosquitoes from getting on the island, and if they did get there, they took measures to make sure they had no place to breed. So most of the malaria cases were from Bataan.

While you were in Camps 1 and 3, did you ever experience any brutality on the part of the guards?

I did get whacked but I think that anything that happened to me was not the worst that some of the guys experienced.

I was a barracks officer and had to take care of from 80 to 100 men. It was not as easy as it sounds. I had to get the work details from headquarters. Then I had to line up the work details and rotate

them so everybody got a square deal. I'd get up in the morning and take them over to get breakfast, and take them over at noon. Any work that came up in camp, they rounded up the barracks officers and we did it.

I had a certain amount of latitude running my barracks. I had a senior gunnery sergeant, who helped me. The second guy I had was a Marine sergeant major. Those guys were like gods to the rest of the enlisted men. They felt like they were entitled to certain privileges. The Japs always asked for more people than we had. If you didn't meet the quotas, you were in trouble. One time, we didn't. Japanese guards in and pulled guys who were lying on their backs and took them out on the farm. And they all crapped out so they ended up having to carry half of them back into the camp. So the Japs thought that wasn't a very good idea and the Americans didn't want that to happen. Finally they said anybody who was too sick to work would go to the hospital area, and you'd then have a barracks only with people who were fit to work.

There couldn't have been that many people fit to work after a while with no rations.

At first I was making the decision and I didn't like it; I'm not a doctor and I made some mistakes. I was very happy when the doctor began making those decisions. It got to the point where you took the best of the bunch even though some of that bunch was not fit to go to work. But you had to produce those bodies or the Japs

were going to come into the camp with their bayonets and there would be a helluva mess. In my barracks one of the three of us--my two assistants or myself--ended up going on work details. None of the other barracks did that. But that's the way I ran my barracks. I was no better than anyone else.

When were you transferred back to Bilibid on your way to Japan?

October of '44.

What do you recall about that transfer?

Everybody but the sickest men went to Manila, got on a boat and went.

How did they inform you that you were going?

None of us wanted to go because by that time we knew about what was happening. People had come back into the camp whose ships had been sunk.

So then you knew that if you were going to Bilibid, that was a way station for getting on to one of those ships.

Yes. It was a death sentence. The mortality rate on these ships was awfully high. The closer it came to the end of the war, the worse it got. People who went to Japan early on in '42 and '43 ended up having a better shot at living than those of us who got the

later boats.

When they closed up Camp O'Donnell and all of the Bataan people came to Camp 1, I watched them come in. They were in terrible shape and I stood at the barbed wire fence and watched them coming in on trucks; some walked. They were living skeletons. I mentioned to one of the guys that these were living dead men. And unless they got special treatment in a hospital they weren't going to live. When they got into what they called the "Zero Ward," we were burying up to 50 people a day.

Years later, when we used to get together at conventions, the survivors talked. I mentioned that there were people there who had been on the Bataan march but they never talked about Bataan. They always talked about the boat trip. Finally, one day, I went to one of them and said, "You were on the Bataan Death March and you were on the *Oryoku Maru* trip. Which was worse?"

Without hesitation, he said, "The boat trip."

I then said, "I always thought the Bataan Death March was the worst thing possible."

He said, "Hell no. The Bataan Death March was over in a few days. But this boat trip to Japan took 45 days and we got two ships bombed out from under us."

Eighty-two percent of the people on that trip never made it. Those are worse statistics than the death march. I went to everyone I knew was on both the death march and the *Oryoku Maru* and I asked them which was the worst. Without hesitation, every single one of

them said it was the boat trip.

In yesterday's interview we were talking about your trip back to Bilibid on the way to the *Oryoku Maru*. Did you already know what was going to happen?

Yes. That was the standard routine. Take a bunch of people to Bilibid, maybe they stay overnight, and then they get on a ship and they go someplace. They did that pretty much the whole time we were there. Bilibid was a trans-shipment place.

When you got to Bilibid, had it changed since you had last seen it?

Oh, yeah. They had cleaned it up quite a lot. They had used a lot of ingenuity to make things better. They had arranged the latrine so it tapped into the public water supply. At intervals, the water went underneath you and washed all the stuff away. That was a big improvement once they had that problem licked. They had a flock of corpsmen there--practically the whole Cañacao hospital--and they did a great job with sanitation.

This was October of '44.

Yes.

Were American planes evident at that time?

No. When they took us down there, there had been a lull in the

air activity. Two ships had already left in October. We weren't supposed to stay there very long but the air activity had gotten very vigorous. We could look out the window and see dogfights and see our planes shooting down the Japanese. And the Filipinos were keeping us posted as to whether any ships were available to take us out. They kept telling us that American planes were sinking ships as fast as they were coming into Manila Bay.

Then, about the 1st of September, there was a lull in the air activity. We had already been there a lot longer than we were supposed to. We got there in October and here it was the 1st of December and we were still there.

Then around the first of December the air activity seemed to stop. That's when the *Oryoku Maru* came in without being sunk. On the 13th they marched us down the streets to Pier 7, one of the longest piers in the Orient.

You must have had mixed feelings knowing that your countrymen were coming back in force and yet you were going to end up on this ship.

Oh, sure. It was as though someone had signed your death certificate. In fact, one of the ships had been sunk right outside the entrance to Manila Bay with British and Australians aboard. Some of the survivors came into the camp. That had happened in September. So we knew that submarines and bombers were active. We were not looking forward to this trip.

What do you remember about the morning you marched down to the pier?

You would have done anything to have gotten out of it but your name was on the list and you formed up and marched out.

Was it a long march?

No. Just from Bilibid to the pier, maybe a couple of miles.

What did you see when you got to the pier?

The first thing you saw was Manila Bay filled with sunken ships and buildings with holes in their roofs. You could tell there had been a lot of bombing there. The *Oryoku Maru* was on the right-hand side. Further out on the dock there was a ship that had been bombed and was just not capable of moving.

We had to sit on the dock until they got ready to load us onto the ship. This ship was pretty nice looking. It had cabins and was really first-class. The first thing they did was load the cabins up above with Japanese, including women and children and merchant marine people whose ships had been sunk.

Then they started loading us into the three holds. You didn't have much to say about which one you were going to get. It turned out I was put into number 1 hold right up in the bow. It had about 700 people. Number 4 in the rear also got about the same number. Number 2 up toward the bow right behind number 1 was a small hold and didn't hold many people. I think it had 236 people. Most of

them were medics and doctors. It was a much better deal because they had more room. But in numbers 1 and 4, we were jammed in like sardines.

They were trying to pack an enormous number of people on that ship.

How would you like to go on a week's trip standing up? There simply wasn't enough room to lie down or anything.

How did you get below, through a hatchway?

You went down a vertical ladder into the hold. The hold had sort of a mezzanine. So some people had to crawl under this and some people stayed on top of that shelf.

As I understand, there were no portholes, no ventilation down there.

The only ventilation was what came down from up above through the hatch. Once they put the hatch covers on, it was very limited; we just weren't getting enough air so people immediately started to suffocate, and it got worse all the time.

If someone had asked me where I wanted to be, I would have picked a spot right up in the point of the ship. It made less of a target for a bomb. I was one of the last ones to get down into the hold. When I got down there, there was no room. I was like poison ivy. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with me because there was no

room for me.

Finally, I was able to get up on that shelf. I was sort of hanging on by my fingernails because if anyone between me and the bulkhead took a deep breath they would have pushed me off the shelf on top of people below. So I wasn't very happy being in that location because with the hatch covers off, I could see the sky and the gun position. There was a gun position on deck manned by the Japanese so I wasn't happy being there because I figured if the Americans came and strafed, there was nothing between me and the bullets.

But it didn't work out that way. Actually, I ended up in one of the better places to be. First place, if there was any air at all, I was going to get some of it. And secondly, to get into that hold, there was a large steel piece that went down. Then it turned and went underneath. And number 2 hold was on top of that shelf.

When the planes came in and strafed the gun positions, they'd kill one crew, then more Japs would man the gun and start shooting again. During those strafing runs, the angle was such that they were able to shoot and kill the gun battery personnel, and the bullets came into the hold and hit that sheet of steel which was right over my head. They didn't come in at a steep enough angle to get me. But when the bullets came in over my head they ricocheted around the hold. Some of the people who were hit were in the point of the bow. That was the spot I would have taken if I could have.

The ship was at the dock before it left, wasn't it?

As soon as it was loaded, it got under way and they went out and anchored out near Corregidor. At dawn on the 14th we got under way and started to leave the harbor. Airplanes came over almost immediately and attacked the convoy we were in. It turned out that the reason they hadn't come sooner was that the Americans had finished up with Leyte and were going to make a landing right outside the entrance to Manila Bay on the same morning of the 14th. To cover the landing, they had a lot of airplanes up, and when they saw our convoy out, they went after it, bombing and strafing us all day.

Here you are below decks and you've not had a lot of food?

Every time they tried to feed us, the planes would come over and the ship would zigzag like crazy. A lot of times the food just went onto the floor. When we did get water they were measuring it by the tablespoon and we weren't getting much.

So things had gotten pretty bad by that time.

I think that was the worst night of all--the night of the 14th.

And, of course, if you had to relieve yourself, there's no place to do it. Didn't you have to use buckets?

They gave us a 5-gallon kerosene can and that was it. But how the hell were you going to get to it? But I'll tell you one thing. If you don't drink, you don't pee, and if you don't eat, you don't shit. We weren't getting anything to eat and nothing to drink so

your bowels were useless and your kidneys were the same. I didn't go to the bathroom that much the whole trip.

And it was also suffocating down there.

When the American planes first came over, you could see the men at their gun positions. The hatch covers were open. But then the prisoners started screaming and yelling and the Japs were probably afraid we were going to mutiny on them and take charge of the ship. So they started putting hatch covers on. And the louder we howled, the more hatch covers they put on until there was practically no air coming down into the hold.

The guys were going crazy--out of their minds. And we were crammed in so tightly you became separated from your friends. I ended up with an Army lieutenant. And don't forget, I'm on the edge of that shelf now. Everybody was screaming. I saw this guy coming out of the back of the hold and he was swinging his canteen and hitting everybody on the head with it. He was climbing right over people to get air. He was a lieutenant commander, the commanding officer of one of our minesweepers. I was a little ashamed of him because he was one of the oldest and most senior officers there. I thought he wasn't behaving the way he should. But then he came close to me and I looked at his eyes. They were glassy. He was crazy. He finally got to a place where he had some air. But that's how bad it was and more than one person went crazy. People who are suffocating fight like hell to get air. In other cases, people get

a little groggy and sleepy and if you don't do something about it, you go to sleep and just don't wake up. It's a very peaceful thing. I think that most of the guys who suffocated just closed their eyes to take a nap and never woke up.

This all happened the first night.

Yes, the night of the 14th and morning of the 15th.

What happened the next morning?

That night the people in the cabins took a real shellacking with the strafing and bombing. A lot of them were women and children. Many of them were taken off the ship. By the time the sun came up in the morning, they were all off the ship. The only people left aboard were the prisoners in the three holds.

How did they get them off?

They had little boats and took them ashore. There was a Japanese navy detachment at that location. The Navy used to have a base there--Olongapo. There was a floating drydock there and a PBY base. When the Japs took over, they stationed a detachment of marines there. When we started to swim ashore, they sort of marked out the zone we were supposed to stay in swimming ashore.

Before we talk about you leaving the ship, I want to go back a little bit. How did the Japanese let you know it was time to abandon ship? The ship had been bombed and strafed.

In the first run, they dropped a bomb in the rear of the ship almost on top of hold number 4 which started a fire. By this time most of the Japs had abandoned ship and some of the guys from hold 4 came to our hold and hollered down to us that the Japs had gone and that it was okay to come out. That's when we started to climb up the ladder onto the deck. Number 2 hold had emptied pretty fast because there was only 236 people. Number 1 hold had 6 or 700 and it took a long time to go up the ladder one at a time. Plus the fact, that we gave preference to people who were injured. Someone would have to carry them up the ladder and take them out first. It was very slow going.

Somebody up there threw a cargo net down into the hold and most of us that got out of there climbed up to the deck using this cargo net. We no sooner got up on deck when the goddamn airplanes came over for another run on the ship. We were in g-strings; we were skinny, and we were very dark-skinned because we had been out in the sun working all the time so it was hard for those people in the airplanes to determine who we were. It was too late for us to go back into the hold and too late for those guys who were in the water swimming. We were immobilized where we were. So we started waving at them. We stood there, put both our arms up in the air, and waggled them back and forth. Those planes were coming in towards the bow. I thought they were going to pull the trigger because they didn't seem to change course. They got very close and then veered away. We figured that they probably recognized us. We heard later that

they thought we were Filipinos because we were so dark and skinny.

When you finally got up on deck after they had veered off and left you there, what did you do?

I just stood there drinking in the air. I needed to fill my lungs with air and get my head together.

What did you see on the deck?

Just a bunch of guys trying to get out of that hole. And while I was standing there a friend of mine, ENS George Petritz, came up to me and started talking with me. He said that Bob Glatt died in his arms. I was sorry to hear about Bob and we talked for a little while. I then said, "George, I think we'd better get the hell off this ship before they come back again. And we parted company.

Did you see any of the dead Japanese civilians or gunners on the deck?

No. All the Japanese had been cleaned off the ship. I didn't see a single one. Take George Petritz. He had been in command of a little boat called *Fisheries 2*. He would come into Corregidor for supplies and I'd take care of him. We were pretty good friends and remained so in prison camp. I looked over the side of the ship and knew I wasn't going to jump off because I had dived from high places and know that when you hit that water it's like hitting cement. I didn't want to go in head first and I didn't even want to jump. There

was a line tied up to the ship and it was lowered over the side. So I used it to lower myself into the water. Except I ran out of strength and slid down and got a good rope burn on my hands.

But I have to tell you this about George Petritz. When we mustered on the tennis court, he was not answering up. I knew he was a good swimmer and I knew he was alive. It turned out that George waited until everybody left the ship. The Japs told us to go straight ashore and no deviating from the path they had set up. People who had tried to go in the opposite direction . . .

The Japs had little boats out there and when they found anybody trying to get away, they shot them.

Didn't Petritz escape?

Yes. George hung around until things quieted down and then he went in the water and swam to the other side of the ship. He got behind some wreckage until some Filipinos noticed him and picked him up. So George escaped. There were only two people who got away, George and this other guy who was in pretty bad shape and just drifted wherever the current took him. His name was Kadolf. He was an Army guy, the drummer we had in the little band we had at Cabanatuan.

What happened once you got in the water?

Before I hit the water, I wondered if I would be able to swim the few hundred yards to shore because I was so wiped out. But when I hit the water it revived me to the point where I later thought that

had I felt that good while I was still on the deck, I would have gone with Petritz.

Did you see the Japanese shooting people in the water?

No, I didn't. But I know they did it because some people started ashore but drifted out of the passageway and the Japs were shooting them. One guy I knew was a good swimmer and was heading for shore. He never made it. We concluded that he deviated and been shot by the Japs.

Anyway, I started swimming for shore and the first guy I ran into was a Navy lieutenant who had jumped off the ship. His back was all screwed up so he was having a lot of trouble. His name was Hugh Magowan. He was a friend of mine and I knew him pretty well in the camp. I was afraid he wasn't going to make it so I found a crate and pulled it over for him to hold onto. It's difficult to push a crate in the water because there's a lot of resistance. I was having problems getting him in. I then saw a hatch cover floating not too far away so I swam to it and brought it over. I told him, "Mac, hang on and I'll push you in." I then ran into a Marine captain named Huddleson. He was gonna drown so I pushed the hatch cover over to him and told him to hang on. He didn't have the strength to hang on so I had to hoist him up on the board. Then I took him and Magowan in to the beach.

When I got there I saw a lieutenant, junior grade, named Kenny Wheeler. His best friend had been hit in hold number 1 by one of

the ricochets, a tracer bullet from the airplanes. He was in great pain so Kenny got him up out of the hold by telling him to put his arms around his neck and to hold on. Then he crawled up the ladder with his friend holding him around his neck.

When they got ashore, they were standing on a little bit of sand. I hollered over to Kenny, "How's Bill doing?"

"Not so good," said, "He needs medical attention; we need some medical supplies." So I got my hatch cover and swam back to the ship to see if I could find any. I couldn't leave the board in the water because someone would have taken it and I wouldn't have any way of getting medicine ashore dry. I happened to see an Army corpsman I knew walking around on the deck so I shouted up to him saying that we needed medical supplies ashore and could he go find some. He said okay and took off looking for them.

I was in the water with my hatch cover to see what was going to happen. I looked up and saw a friend of mine up on the ship. He was stark naked and had two empty canteens tied together around his neck. His name was Al Gorski. I hollered up at him but he was in a daze. It was quite a while before I could get his attention. I said, "Come on, get off the ship; it's burning."

He said, "I can't swim."

So I said, "Come on down and I'll take you ashore."

So he came down the gangway, I put him on my hatch cover, and took him ashore. When I got there, Kenny Wheeler was gone. I then tried to drop Al Gorski off and have him go where the Japs were telling

him to go. Then I was going to go back out to the ship and see about the medical supplies. But Gorski was in such bad shape he couldn't even walk. So I pulled the board up on the beach and helped him get to the tennis court where they had corralled us. When I dropped him off and tried to go back to where I left my board, the Jap guards wouldn't let me do it. So I never was able to go back to the ship.

I imagine the Japanese guards were pretty nasty at this point.

Some were. I understand they were part of the Japanese naval landing party, which was similar to our Marine Corps, so they were tough nails. They were usually bigger than the average Jap. When they told you to do something, you had better do it or else.

Anyway, I went back to the tennis court. They corralled 1,300 of us on that tennis court. It was crowded like you can't believe. Fortunately for us there was a water spigot. You had to get in line to get your canteen filled. Eventually, if you stayed in line long enough, you would get some water. But we didn't get anything to eat for about 4 days.

And you also had the tropical sun beating down on your heads.

Yes. That was terrible, too. As a matter of fact, I blacked out for a short period. Some of the guys let me get in the shade of their bodies and kind of kept me out of the sun for a while and the next day I was all right.

What was the first night like?

The strange thing is that during the day the sun is hotter than hell and you're perspiring and about ready to pass out. But at night, it got cold. The ground absorbs the heat from the sun and it stays warm pretty far through the night. But when the night air finally catches up with it, the ground has lost its heat; so it's cold. So, we were too hot during the day and too cold at night. Remember, we didn't have any clothes on. I swam ashore in a pair of skivvy shorts. When we had gotten on the ship, the Japanese told us to take off our shoes. And when we swam ashore, they told us not to take our shoes. They were afraid we'd try to make a break for it. So, most of us landed ashore without shoes. So that's all I had to wear. The only time I got any other clothes was when someone died. Then they brought some clothes in from Manila. I got a thin, blue denim jacket and for a long time that's all I had, along with my skivvy shorts. I made the rest of the trip to Japan with that clothing.

How long were you on the tennis court?

About a week.

Was there any food at all during that time?

The Japanese guy--LT Toshino--who was in charge of transporting us to Japan, went to the local Japanese who were stationed at Olongapo and told them that we needed some food. And they wouldn't give him any. They said, "This is our rations and you have to get your food

some place else." They had to get a message to Manila to send us some food. Then they brought us bags of raw rice. We had no cooking facilities so we ended up getting about 4 tablespoons of raw rice in our canteens. And then, of course, we had the water from the spigot and we'd soak the rice for awhile to soften it up and then we'd eat it. And that's all we got.

Didn't you also have a bunch of injured people on that tennis court?

Yes we did. As a matter of fact, a couple of people had their arms amputated. There was a Marine in the camp who used to come over to my barracks to visit with other Marines. His name was Carl Logan. Someone mentioned to me in the tennis court that he had gotten hit. I liked this kid. He was always cheerful. He was very young. So I went to see if I could find him. They had roped off a piece of the tennis court which they called the hospital area, where they put all the injured people. I was at the opposite end of the tennis court but we were all crammed in so tight that a guy would be sitting down and he'd spread his legs open and you'd be sitting between them. When I tried to get over to the hospital area, I'd have to tap someone on the shoulder and say, "Do you mind if I put my foot here?" He'd either say okay or else he'd cuss at me and say, "Sit down and stop jaywalking." By doing that, I finally got over to the hospital area and found Logan. He was lying on his back and I knelt down to talk to him. I said, "Logan, I'm sorry to hear that you got hit."

This kid had guts. He had a grin on his face. "Dr. Schwartz, [an Army doctor] told me that I have gangrene in my arm." Imagine that. In almost no time at all, he had gangrene. Logan then said, "The doctor's going to cut my arm off tomorrow."

So I said, "I'm sorry to hear that."

And he said, "It's better to lose my arm than lose my life."

He was cheerful and in pretty good physical condition. I thought he'd be able to survive it.

But the doctors didn't have any instruments.

No. Dr. Schwartz did the job with a mess kit knife which he sharpened on a piece of cement. One of the people who observed the operation said that he took it off at the elbow just like you take the leg off a chicken at the joint.

Did Logan survive?

Yes. So I said, "I'll come back tomorrow and talk to you." Then as I walked back, I ran into this colonel, Sam Freeny. He was a big guy, about 6 foot 4. He was an athlete. He was lying there on his back. Even though I was never fond of this guy, I figured I should stop and say hello. I knelt down and said, "Colonel, I'm sorry to see you're in bad shape."

He said, "Things don't look so good for me, Beale."

I asked him what was wrong.

He said, "Well, I'm paralyzed on my left side, and there's

nothing they can do about it."

I said, "Maybe they will take you to Manila and take care of you."

"No, things look pretty bad for me." I think he knew what was going to happen to him. I then found my way back to where I started.

The next morning, they took half the group by truck up to San Fernando Pampanga, which took most of the day. And they put us in the provincial jail. So I didn't get a chance to see Logan.

Who were the ones they took away by truck?

They took 50 percent of the people on the tennis court. Anyway, I was with the group that went to the jail. The group they took to San Fernando Pampanga they put in a theater building. So we were separated.

Somebody came around and said that the Marine who had his arm cut off died. I said, that was Logan. I was surprised because I thought he was in good enough shape to survive it. But I figured it was Logan. I then talked to a guy who had witnessed the amputation so I know it was done with a mess kit knife and disarticulated at the elbow. That's the language he used, just like a turkey leg at Thanksgiving.

Then the Japs came around and they wanted to get the names of the people who couldn't make the trip. The brass in our outfit looked around to see who was the worst off. We could have given them 100 or 200 people. But they said no. They wanted 15 people. So then

there was a big pow wow to see who would be the lucky 15. We figured they would take them to Manila and give them medical attention. They finally came up with the names of the 15 which included this ensign who had the tracer bullet in his back.

After the war was over, I ran into Kenny Wheeler at the Navy building in Washington. I asked him whatever happened to Bill. He said, "You know what those bastards did?"

I says, "No."

He says, "They took the 15 of them down the road to a cemetery where there was a big hole. They beheaded some of them and bayoneted the others. And then they buried them in that one big hole." That's how nice the Japanese were.

Logan was not one of them. When the Graves Registration people came back after the war and got all these bodies, they got 18 bodies. They got the 15 that were executed and 3 that died a natural death. There was a Navy lieutenant commander and the Marine who got his arm cut off, and another person. They couldn't find Logan in there but did find another Marine corporal named Specht. I happened to know both these Marine corporals. The Graves Registration people identified the Marine as Specht and he had Specht's dogtags on. So it wasn't Logan.

For years there was an argument as to whose body it was. I insisted that it was Logan; everybody else said it was Specht because of the dogtags. So finally a guy named George von Peterfy, who was writing a book, had contacts in Washington and he got a drawing of

the body. And he showed it to me. And then I knew it wasn't Logan. Logan was short and husky, and Specht was about 6 feet and a string bean. And furthermore, the body which was Specht, had the arm cut off at the right shoulder, whereas Logan had his arm cut off at the left elbow.

So, then, what happened to Logan? It turned out that he survived the surgery but was killed when the second ship was bombed. He died of head injuries. So that ended that.

How long were you in the provincial jail?

Just a few days. Then they got some trains. The puzzle then was which way were they going to go--north or south? If they went south, they were going to take us back to Manila. If they took us north, they were going to try to get us on another ship. Well, they put us in boxcars and went north so we were going to continue on the trip. As we were going by Clark Field, American bombers were hitting the airfield, and the Japs were afraid they were going to strafe the train. So they put some people on the roofs of the boxcars and some white sheets. And they said that if the planes came over to wave at them. But luckily, they didn't attack the train.

So, we got to Lingayen Gulf and got off the train. We stayed there a little while with very little food and water. They were measuring our water at 8 tablespoons a day.

A lot of ships were there unloading Japanese troops and supplies. These were the people who were going to go down and join

up with the Japs who were already there and fight the Americans. So they put us on two of these empty ships.

How did you get out to the ships?

They brought these little boats alongside the dock and then we had to jump off the dock into the boats. A lot of guys got hurt just jumping off the dock into the boats. There were broken legs and injuries of that type.

Then they took us out to the ships. The skippers of those ships didn't want to hang around because they thought the American bombers were going to get them. So they started loading us onto one ship. Then they wanted to speed things up so they took about 230 people and put them on the second ship. Then both ships took off for what turned out to be Formosa.

Do you know what ship it was?

The big ship that took about a thousand people was the *Enoura Maru*. And the other one was the *Brazil Maru*.

Which one were you on?

I was on the *Enoura Maru*.

And you went to Takao, right?

Yes. Takao. We were there a few days and then they decided to take everyone on one ship. So they took everyone off the *Brazil*

Maru and put them on the *Enoura Maru*.

What were the conditions in the hold of that ship?

That was one great big hold we were in. There was plenty of air and we were getting a little bit of food and water. It was a very deep hold and they wanted to put a cargo of sugar in the lower part of the hold. So they told everybody to get out of the bottom of the hold. There was a mezzanine there holding a smaller number of prisoners. I was down in the bottom. We all got in line to go up to the deck and go down into number 1 hold. Normally, that would have been a good deal because that would be the pointed part of the ship.

I was in line with all of my buddies. All of us young ensigns stuck together. Another ensign and I took everything we owned and put it into a little sack. His name was John Needham from Chicago. I was elected to carry this little bag around my neck by a string.

As we stood in line waiting to get into the hold, I had to go to the benjo. So I said, "John, save me a spot; I have to go to the benjo." I went over in the corner and got a 5-gallon can and did my duty. Then I went back to the line. You know, in those days you didn't buck a line. You got to the end of the line or you'd get your arm broken off or get whacked around. So I went to the end of the line. And the line progressed. When I got to the ladder--It was a single, vertical, steel-runged ladder. When I got up to the deck, there was a Japanese guard there and he said, "No. You can't go."

Apparently, the guards were told to count out a certain number of people, and when they got to that number, they wouldn't let anybody else go in. I think that number was about 500.

I put up quite an argument with this guard to let me go to be with my friends but he wouldn't let me. Finally, he got mad and took a swipe at me with his gun. I realized I wasn't going to win this argument. So I backed down the ladder and went off at this mezzanine. I was nearly all by myself because my buddies were in number 1 hold. We had to crouch around the rim of this hole on the mezzanine. They lowered a lot of cargo down into the bottom of the hold and then put hatch covers over it. Now we had lots of room and were able to walk around the hold. It was heaven compared to what we had been accustomed to.

We hadn't been there very long when on the 9th of January '45, the antiaircraft guns on the ship started shooting.

Were you still at the dock?

No. We were at anchor with another ship tied up alongside of us. By this time we were up in Formosa and felt we were out of the range of American airplanes. We didn't know about Halsey and his carriers. So we figured it was some kind of a drill or something and didn't pay that much attention. Then all of a sudden, we heard a noise. It was a bomb. Once you've been bombed you know that sound. And you know by that sound whether it's going to be close or far away. And this bomb was going to be very close.

Did the bombs make the classic whistling sound?

Oh, Jesus, yes. About the time I came to the conclusion it was ready to hit, I just fell down to the deck. A lot of guys jumped on top of me. There was a string of bombs that landed on the ship starting at the bow and going across the top of the deck. They knocked all the hatch covers down in on top of us in the hold.

I crawled out from beneath this crowd of people and there was blood on me. I didn't know whose blood it was. I was sort of moving my arms and legs to see if it was me. Then the damn bombers came over again. This time I tried to get away from the open hatch and up against a bulkhead someplace. So I ran and then dove into a pile of guys huddled against a bulkhead beneath the bridge. We thought we had some protection. Then the second string landed and duplicated the first one. But this time there was a lot of shrapnel flying all over the place. I wasn't lucky enough this time to get at the bottom of the pile. I landed about half way up. But I had other guys on top of me and the only thing exposed were my two legs. And I got hit in both feet with shrapnel.

I got out of the pile and could see blood on my feet. Most of it was on the right foot. And the left foot had a hole in the upper part--the instep. I turned my foot and there was no hole in the bottom. So whatever went in was still there. The one that was bleeding was just a scratch that bled for awhile and then healed up. But the one with the hole on the left foot got infected.

And you didn't have shoes. You had lost them when you went over the side of the *Oryoku Maru*.

Yes. We were prohibited from taking them with us. Well, there was no help for me. Of course, the doctors were busy because we had so many people banged up. I was able to walk a little so I looked through a hole into hold number 1 and saw a guy sitting up against the bulkhead. If he had been lying down, the shrapnel would have gone over his head, but it came through the bulkhead and took his head off his shoulders and it was laying off to one side.

As bad as things were in number 2 hold, it was nothing to compare to what happened in number 1 hold. What a mess it was. Some of the people in our hold tried to go up and get into number 1 hold to help but the Japs wouldn't let them up on the deck so they had to take care of themselves. They lost several hundred people.

Meanwhile my foot swelled up like a balloon to the point where I couldn't walk. I just wrapped my foot up in rags and sat down, putting my arms behind my back, and then I took my left leg under my right leg. You had to do that because of all the people walking around. That's the way I was sitting there with my left leg tucked way under my right, and getting around on my haunches by lifting up on my arms in the rear and my good leg on the right. I could go about a foot at a time.

We left you the other day wounded on the *Enoura Maru*. What

happened after the ship was bombed? What did they do for the wounded?

They didn't do anything for a few days. We had a lot of doctors there but they had nothing. We were tearing up shirts and everything else to try to help out with the injured. Don't forget, I had been hit but was able to walk around on the foot. I was looking for a doctor to take a look at it but they were so busy with real bad cases that I felt guilty even trying to take one away. So nobody looked at it for about a month.

I was hit on the 9th and on the 13th we transferred back over to the *Brazil Maru*. It was a junky ship and they didn't even waste any bombs on it. I was down in this hold and it was quite a distance up to the deck. I couldn't walk and had tucked that left leg under my right leg sitting down and my two arms behind me. I'd lift up on my two arms and my one good leg and move about a foot at a time. That's how I got along. I was wondering "How am I gonna get out of this place?" It was a vertical ladder with steel rungs and people were climbing up it to the deck to move over to the *Brazil Maru*. With one foot and two arms it was pretty difficult to climb up a ladder. And I was pretty weak.

You must have been in some kind of pain with that foot.

You can take a lot of pain when you got other things that are bothering you more than that. So I was pretty much able to ignore it.

Anyway, I was sitting there in the opening of the hatch looking

up to the deck and wondering how the hell I was going to get out of there when two guys came over to the edge and looked down. I happened to know both of them. They were in my barracks at Cabanatuan. One was a sergeant major in the Marine Corps from Cavite. His name was Jimmy Jordan. The other was a guy named Furnari. He was a chief petty officer. I waved at them and said, "How the hell am I gonna get out of here?" They went and got a line from someplace. The chief knew how to tie a knot where you put your legs through and hold on and they pull you up. So that's what happened. They hauled me up on deck.

They were taking the wounded over to the *Brazil Maru*. The crane on the *Enoura Maru* was working so they were able to hoist people up and down. They put me on a pallet with a lot of other guys who were injured and lowered us over the side to a small boat which took us over to the *Brazil Maru*.

I might add that we had all those dead bodies and most were in hold number 1. The Japs wanted to get them off the ship. So they got volunteer prisoners to get all the dead out of that hold and take them ashore. By this time the bodies had been there long enough that they had deteriorated. Some of the guys who did it told me that when they tried to pick a guy up, the skin would come right off in their hands. They had no gloves. They put them in a sling and hoisted them up to the deck and put them on small boats to take ashore. There was some question as to what happened after they got them ashore. Some people say they were cremated. Others say they were buried.

I don't which is true.

So we all got on the *Brazil Maru* and took off in a convoy.

Were there any guards harassing you at this point or were you on your own?

They were just overseeing us. They had so many other things to worry about and certainly didn't have to worry about us trying to escape. They were just anxious to get this job done as fast as possible because they didn't know whether those bombers were gonna come back to finish the job and they wanted to get out of the harbor as fast as they could.

When this little boat got over to the *Brazil Maru*, I had to hoist myself out onto the little platform and go up the steps one at a time by the seat of my pants. When I got to the deck they were putting everybody into this one hold. The hold had steps in it. It didn't have a vertical ladder. And the hold wasn't too deep. In other words, there wasn't much overhead. It was really a much smaller hold. But by this time so many people had been killed that they were able to get all the survivors into that small hold.

When I got to the bottom of the hold they directed me to an area which they named the hospital area. I get a kick out of that because there was nothing that resembled a hospital there. When I got there, there was a corpsman named Jack P. Morgan. He was a first class pharmacist's mate. He had been in my barracks. To the best of my knowledge, he hadn't been hit by the bombs but he had dysentery--poor

bastard. He just had a hard time. He went into the hospital and was right next to me on the *Brazil Maru*.

The only clothing I had on me was a pair of skivvy shorts and that blue denim jacket. Of course, we're now heading north and this is January. We huddled together for warmth. Some people started to get respiratory problems. I don't know why I never got any.

What were you doing for nourishment at this point?

They came around every morning. The interpreter would put his head over and call down in the hold, "How many dead?" Then the people in charge of the detail--LCOL Beecher, Jimmy Keene, a 1st lieutenant in the Marine Corps, and LTJG Kenny Wheeler--went ashore with the bodies.

Did they ever talk about that when they got back?

Oh, yeah. They said that whenever they handled a body, they didn't have any gloves and the skin and everything else would come off the bodies.

I was asking you how they fed you.

They were giving us a canteen cup of rice for three people and eight tablespoons full of what they called tea. They gave us that a couple of times a day. Obviously, we weren't doing too well with a third of a canteen cup of rice and eight tablespoons of tea. Everybody was dying. I understand that the brass--the people in

charge--were wondering whether anybody would live to tell the story. I understand there was a pow wow in which some said, "The injured people are going to die anyway so there's no use in wasting food on them." That's really personal because I was one of those wounded people. I may have been injured but I had no intention of dying. I didn't know about this pow wow until I got home.

Nevertheless, the hospital patients started to get a canteen cup of rice for four people instead of three. Everybody else got a canteen cup for three. We got the cup for four. One of our four was Jack Morgan. We always called him J.P.

He had diarrhea, poor bastard. Frankly, I can't remember ever having a bowel movement when I was there. If I did, I didn't go up on deck. They had this platform hanging over the side of the ship. Anybody who had to go had to go up on deck, get on the platform, and let go into the sea. And it was cold. Of course, I couldn't walk anyway. J.P. had dysentery and was always running up to the deck and out onto that platform. He was getting weaker and weaker and losing his strength. I felt so sorry for him.

Anyway, we sick and injured got a canteen cup for four people.

Was this boiled rice?

Yes. And the four of us took turns rationing it out. We'd get the canteen cup of rice and put it in a mess kit and level it off. Then we'd divide it up into four spots. The rule was that the guy that did the dividing took his quarter first. And there was always

a suspicion that he was getting a little more than he was supposed to get. Even a few grains of rice got to be important. My turn came to divide it up and I divided it into four pieces and pushed it all so there was a little channel between the four pieces.

Now there's a lot of tricks when you're dividing up rice where you can give yourself the advantage. For example, you could compress it more in one quarter and that would be yours. There was always that suspicion. So when I divided it up I divided it into four pieces. And then I surprised them. I gave it to the other guys and said, "Take one." We had a lieutenant colonel in there who was part of our party. His name was Wilson and his initials were O.O. I forgot what his first name was. He was a West Pointer and his nickname was Zero. When I handed it to Zero to take his piece of the action, he looked at me and said, "You're supposed to go first."

I said, "Look, Colonel, I'm so sure that every one of these pieces are as identical as can be, I'm willing to let you three guys take your shot at it and I'll take what's left over."

So he said to me, "Would you mind dividing the rice up every meal?" Anyway, I thought that was a pretty good compliment and it eliminated anybody's being suspicious.

This was one meal a day?

I think it was two meals a day.

So, each one of those little sections of rice that you divided

into four hunks . . . Would that fill a teaspoon, a tablespoon, or what?

Most of us had salvaged at least one utensil, usually a spoon, and we used that to do all the dividing. I should add that these mess kits and spoons were never washed for the whole trip. Nobody wasted water washing anything. We needed it to drink. If there was any disease around it was pretty easy to catch it.

I don't remember what was wrong with Morgan, why his bowels were out of control.

Anyway, we got to Japan, a place called Moji on the island of Kyushu. Then they divided us up into groups. One group went to Fukuoka #1 and that was LCOL Beecher and his people. Some went to Fukuoka #3. About a hundred men went to each of these places. Then they sent some to Fukuoka #17. That was a well established camp with a lot of people. I think most of the enlisted people there had the idea that they were going to put them to work. But there was nobody on that ship who was able to work.

All of us who were injured they put on vehicles and took to a hospital. That hospital had different names. We always called it the Moji hospital because we didn't know anything else to call it. We went in there with about 120 or 130 people; we're not even sure what the total number was. They put us into two rooms. Those with contagious diseases went into one room, and those with other problems went to another room. I didn't have anything contagious so I went in with the ones who weren't sick. J.P. Morgan managed to get into

that room with me and the rest of this gang even though he had diarrhea. All the other diarrhea cases went into the other room. I think everybody died in that room. Actually, I think there were only two guys who went into that room who came out of it. One was Ed Koenig, an Army lieutenant, and an Army medic named Danny Weitsner. All three of us were from Connecticut and we all survived.

Who was taking care of you in this hospital, American doctors?

Yes. When they shipped us out on this truck, they had a few people who didn't have anything wrong with them and they sent them there to take care of us. And they were medics. Dr. Carey Smith came with us. And there were two corpsmen I knew--Cecil Peart and Loren Stamp.

Dr. Carey Smith was a wonderful guy. He was the one who took care of me. We got no treatment until the 10th of February. We landed in Japan on January 30th.

When you got off the ship in Moji, it must have been freezing cold.

Oh, it was--colder than hell. I just missed a very important thing. When we got to Moji, anybody who could walk they took up on the deck. And they gave him clothes and they gave him a little physical examination, usually it was a rod up the rectum to see if they had any dysentery. The Japs were afraid of that. And then they took them away. Now one guy was going through that and just dropped

dead on the deck. That's how bad off we were.

Then they took them off the ship and they disappeared. Well, the only people left on the ship were the ones who were dead or injured. And I was one of them. We wondered what they were going to do with us, those of us who were still alive. It was not a nice thing to worry about because the Japs didn't think very highly of people who were not able to take care of themselves. They'd just as soon wipe you out.

By this time I still had the skivvy shorts and that blue denim jacket and no shoes. Actually, I think I still had shoes but couldn't put them on. To those who were still alive, I said, "I'm gettin' the hell off this ship." Someone then asked me where I was going and I said, "I don't know where I'm goin' but I'm gettin' off this goddamn ship." We were wondering about two things. If American ships came back and found that ship tied up to the dock they would bomb it. That was one thing and then we were wondering if they would take us around a corner and kill us.

But I only had these skivvy shorts and jacket on. And it was cold; there was snow on the deck. I saw a dead guy fairly close to me and he had a pair of these one size fits all pajama bottoms that the Japs wear. So I crawled over and pulled those trousers off the body and put them on. Now I had something on my legs--not much, but something. I wrapped my feet up in rags and humped myself over to the stairwell. I got up on the stairs. There was nobody on the ship except some stevedores unloading the cargo. And most of them were

women. They didn't pay much attention to me so, using my arms and my one good leg, I humped myself over to the gangway and was going down to the dock and two guys came over.

These were POWs?

Yes. One of them was Kenny Wheeler. Kenny saw me there coming down the gangway on the seat of my pants. He and this other guy picked me up and carried me over to a building where the rest of the people were. Then they dropped me off and went back to get somebody else.

I can't say enough about some of these guys. All during the prison camp experience, I always managed to hold on to my health. And I was always helping other people. All of a sudden, I'm incapacitated and relying on other people to take care of me. I was very impressed with the unselfishness of it all.

Anyway, I'm sitting there in this building where they deposited me against the wall. There was a sink and a water tap in there and I was dying of thirst. A civil engineer guy I worked for, Cecil Estey, came walking in, saw me, and began talking to me. We chewed the fat and talked about what happened to the other guys. Most of the other civil engineers were dead. It seemed that he and I were the only ones still alive. Then they hollered out for people to muster up. He said he had to get going but asked what he could do for me. I said he could fill my canteen with water, which he did, and he then had to go away. I found out later that he went to Fukuoka #3, and then he died. There I was in terrible shape and he was walking

around. And when the war was over and I began checking up on the civil engineer group I was with, I was amazed to find out that Estey didn't make it. He was a great guy.

Anyway, they took these people away. They had some vehicles there and they took all us cripples to a hospital. They didn't give Dr. Smith or the corpsmen anything to do anything with so they couldn't do much for us. Then a Jap doctor came around and he had some tools. But he wouldn't let Smith do any of the work. He wanted to do it himself. So the only thing he would let Smith do was walk with him and observe.

They came up to me and I had not taken the rags off my foot until then. The Jap doctor took the rags off and I took one look at my foot. I'll tell you. There was nothing there. It was rotten. It was very dark. I said, "Jesus Christ. If I've ever seen gangrene, that's it." And you know what happens when you get gangrene. I looked at that foot and said, "They're never gonna save that foot; they're gonna cut it off." I figured the foot was gone and they'd probably have to take it off at the knee. So I was mentally prepared to lose my leg up to the knee.

When he saw the looks of it, he did that little hissing thing that Japanese do. He took a pair of scissors and just went into the foot and cut all the dead flesh away. As he was messing around in the hole, my toes started to go up and down like player piano keys. I was happy about that because it indicated that something still worked in my foot. But it was bothering me because as he was fiddling

around in there, my toes were going up and down. So I reached over and grabbed my toes with my hand and held them while he was doing this thing.

When he got through cleaning it out as best he could with a pair of scissors and a swab, he took a glob of something that looked like grease and put it in the hole. Then he wrapped up the foot. I thought, That ain't gonna do any good. Why doesn't he just cut the goddamn thing off and get it over with?

The guy next to me was an Army 2nd lieutenant. He had the same kind of injury that I had. I watched that Japanese doctor do him before he did me. He died and I didn't. His genes may not have been as good as mine.

The Jap doctor came around and Smith was watching him. The flesh in the hole started to turn pink. Smith and I figured out that I might not lose my leg. Then the Jap doctor stopped coming around and Carey Smith took care of me. There wasn't much else he could do except look at it.

But there were other people there who were helping Dr. Smith and the corpsmen take care of us. They too, had been injured but they could walk around. There was a Marine warrant officer gunner named Ferrell. He had lost an eye but could walk around and he helped get the meals and get the people fed. There was also a chaplain, Robert Taylor, who had shrapnel in his arm but was still able to help.

I forgot to mention something. When we got to the hospital in Moji, we were lousy with lice. We hadn't had a bath in almost 2

months. So we finally talked them into giving us a wooden tub of hot water. The first guys in got clean water; the guys who got in later got dirty water. The corpsmen--I think it was Peart and Stamp--helped me get into the tub and wash up. Then the Japanese rolled in a big scale, the kind where you move the weights back and forth. And it was in kilos. They wanted to weigh us; why I don't know. They set the weights but the scale didn't move. So they kept pushing the weight down and I started to get a little alarmed. When they hit under a hundred pounds, then I got mad. And I said, "There's something wrong with this goddamn scale. I weigh more than that."

The corpsman ignored my big mouth and kept moving the weight down. He finally stopped at about 70 pounds. I was so upset, they decided to stop at that weight.

Did you weigh under 70 pounds?

It got down to 70 pounds and they still hadn't hit the bottom. Later, I talked to Danny Weitsner, who was built about the same as I was, and I told him about this incident. He told me he had gone down to 65. So, it's very possible that I could have gone down to 65 pounds also. I weighed about 90 pounds when I was liberated in Manchuria.

What became of Morgan?

Morgan was near me and was having helluva time with diarrhea. Finally, one day he says, "Well, I can't take it anymore, guys. I'm

crappin' out tonite."

I couldn't walk but I could sure talk, so I said, "J.P., don't you dare give up now; we're almost finished. The war is almost over one way or the other. Just hang in there a little longer."

I chewed his ass out and he did not die that night.

But the next night, he says, "Mr. Beale, I just can't go any further. I've run out of gas. I'm goin' tonite." So the next morning he was dead. He was such a good friend of mine.

Then another thing happened. We had people dying so the chaplain was always paying attention to the ones who were worse off. The only problem with that was that every one of them he talked to died. So then he comes over and starts talking to me. I knew Chaplain Taylor. He was a nice guy and I liked him a lot, but I thought, "What the hell is he talking to me for? I'm not going anywhere." I appreciated his visit but wondered if he knew something I didn't.

We had found out in the prison camp that once you stopped walking and moving around, you were going to bite the dust. You gotta keep active and moving around. Well, I couldn't walk but I wiggled my toes and moved my arms and figured that I was in better shape than he thought I was. So I got Gunner Ferrell over and I said, "Gunner. I wanna get up and walk. See if you can get a pair of crutches from the Japs."

By that time Gunner had gotten to know some of the Japs. He was helping out and they kind of liked him. So he was able to talk

them out of a pair of crutches. He came over to me and I told him to stand me up. So he stood me up and gave me the crutches. I put them under my arms and he says, "Okay?"

I says, "Okay, Gunner, let go."

He turned around and started to walk away and I fell right on my face. I had no equilibrium at all--no balance. He turned around and said, "What the hell are you doing down there?"

I says, "Goddamn it. Shut up and stand me up again." So he stood me up again, I put one crutch out in the front and one in the back and just stood there and wobbled until I got my equilibrium and started to move around on the crutches.

The next problem I had was with my leg. I couldn't straighten it out. I got Dr. Smith and asked him what the hell was wrong with my leg. He told me that I had had the leg in that position for so long that the tendons had tightened up and I needed to stretch them out. We finally decided that every morning I'd sit up against the wall of the building. There was a place where the sun came in so the guys used to congregate there, being the warmest place in the room. So every morning I'd go to the wall and Smith would sit down at my feet and he'd push down on my knee and pull up on my heel and stretch the leg out a little at a time. The first time he stretched it out and he let go, it snapped back like an elastic band. From then on, he'd sit in front of me and pull my leg down as far as he could and then I'd lean over and put all my weight on it and stay like that all day. And the next day it would go a little further

and the next day a little further. About 10 days of that, and I finally straightened it out.

How long before you were able to walk around on that leg?

Now that I've got my leg straightened out, I've still got the crutches so I'm doing pretty good. It was something like 15 days before I was able to get around on the crutches. Then the Japs came around. There weren't many of us left at that point. They told us they were going to move us so we should get everything together. So we collected whatever we had left. They came back the next day and took us out to a vehicle. A Jap corpsman came up to me while I was on the crutches. I walked out to the truck with him. To get in, you had to sit on the back board and push yourself in. I put my butt on the back board and he reached out for the crutches so I gave them to him, figuring he'd hold them for me. I got into the truck and reached out to get my crutches, and the sonofabitch had walked away with them. I had never walked without them so I didn't know what I was going to do.

They took us to a railroad station. There was nobody left to help me. One young kid was so bad off that one of the healthier guys carried him on his back. Then there were people who were worse off than I was. Everybody who could give help was tied up so there was nobody left for me. I had to walk from where the truck dropped us off to the station. Then I had to climb some stairs to the platform to get on a train. So I walked. Actually, it was a shuffle more

than a walk. I never lifted up my feet. I moved them without lifting them. I sort of rolled like a barrel from one side to the other.

Did you have shoes at this point?

Yes. My foot had healed up enough so that I was able to put shoes on. Except I didn't have them on. When we getting ready top make the move, my shoes were laying next to me and a Jap corpsman came over and tried to take them away from me. And I held on to 'em; I wouldn't give them to him. He was getting madder than hell and we were yanking and tugging on the shoes. The rest of the guys in the ward were saying, "For Christ's sake, Beale, give him the shoes." I would like hell. But he was stronger than I was and he yanked them away from me and threw them in a pile with everything else he was confiscating. Then he went away and I crawled over and stole the goddamn shoes back. The next day when they took us out to the trucks, I was able to get them on and at least have that much to help me.

Where did they take you?

We got on the train, went a little distance, changed trains, and went a little farther. Then we came to a halt and they told us to get out. So we had to get off the train and start walking. By this time, it was dark and we had to walk up a dirt path to the camp. Again, there was nobody left to help me so I had to shuffle along. And I was always at the end of the line. A Jap guard was pissed off at me because everyone else was going faster than I was. Knowing

he didn't know any English, I said, "If you don't like the way I'm walking, you can goddamn well give me a hand." So I put my arm around his shoulders and made the bastard help me. He was bitchin' and moanin' the whole while but he had to help me.

We got about half way up the road to this camp when a bunch of guys came out. They were all Australians who had been there. The Japs let them out to help get us in. A couple of Aussies came and took me away from the Jap and helped me get into the camp.

What camp was this?

Fukuoka #22. We were the only Americans there.

How many Americans were there?

Twenty-seven or something like that. There were Aussies and Dutch. These Dutch East Indians were black. They were the color of Balinese and Sumatrans.

What was life like in the new camp?

They didn't have any place to put us so they put us in their little dispensary. There were bunks in the dispensary. It was a coal mining camp and the POWs were subject to injuries. So if anything happened to the men, they'd put them in this infirmary until they were fit for duty.

By this time there were air raids and everybody had to go down to the air raid shelters. That meant we had to walk down the stairs

and over to the area where the shelters were. Some of us couldn't make it. By the time we shuffled our way down to the shelter, the air raid was over and the all clear came on. We finally made a deal with the Japs. We'll take our chances in the dispensary; just leave us alone. If we get killed, that's okay. But we can't be running up and down the stairs because we're not able to. We'll take our chances. So we had that arrangement.

We were at that camp when we got word that President Roosevelt died. That was early in April.

How did you find out?

The Japs told us. These were not like the Jap soldiers. These guys were industrialists. They were interested in mining coal. They didn't wear uniforms. They only had a few guards there but most of them were civilians. They were praying the war would end so they could resume their lives. They weren't that tough with us.

You still were unable to work?

I was still shuffling around and couldn't walk very fast.

Were they giving you more food or less food?

They gave us a little better food. It was better prepared. One thing they had there was a big hot tub. On Kyushu there's a lot of volcanic activity and hot springs. They had this great big tub filled with hot water and when the guys came up from the mines they

were dirty. They were allowed to go to the tub. They had little wooden ladles. You squatted at the side of the tub, took a ladle of water, and put it on your head. You had to wash yourself. Then when you washed up as well as you were able, you were allowed to climb into the tub and sit there. Boy, that was something. We were cold. We never did get warm from the time we left the Philippines. For the first time I felt warm. It warmed the marrow in your bones and you felt loose and just wonderful. Unfortunately, they didn't let us do it every day .

Did you know that the war was going pretty badly for the Japanese at this point? Did you see a lot of American planes?

When we had air raid alarms all over Kyushu, you knew damn well . . . And the guards were nervous. They were always looking up at the sky.

How did you guys feel about it?

We were happy about it. Frankly, we were at the point that we wanted this thing over one way or another. On the *Oryoku Maru* . . . You'll get a laugh out of this one. On the first night out, it was bedlam. The ship was zigzagging, the anti-aircraft guns were firing. The crews were being hit and blood was dripping down into the hold. It was a real mess. You couldn't lay down; there just wasn't enough room and you had to sit there and take whatever happened. After we got on the tennis court, this friend of mine,

Paul French, an ensign, came over to me laughing. I asked him what he was laughing at and he says, "I was scared shitless on the ship and I looked over and I saw you sitting there like a Buddha with your hands up in the air with your fingers crossed like nothing was even happening."

So I said, "Paul, I know what I was doing. I was praying."

Now that you were at Fukuoka and saw the nervous guards and saw the air raids, you took it all philosophically.

There's a saying. When in danger or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout. I never in my life saw where you benefited at all by getting upset and running around in circles. When you get into an emergency, you just keep your head and try to take care of it. So that was my basic philosophy. When we were being bombed back in Sangley Point, I thought that if I'm gonna get it, I hope I get one right on top of the head. Nobody will find anything but at least I won't feel it. Let's face it, I've been close enough to bombs to hear all the noise a bomb is ever gonna make. If it hit me I wouldn't have felt it at all. You know the other saying. If your number's up it's gonna get you. I saw plenty of evidence of that. I saw guys in spaces where you'd say the chances of getting hit in that location were minimal if not impossible. And the bombs would come down and the shrapnel would splatter all over the place. At Corregidor, I remember one piece of shrapnel went right into the tunnel and got a guy on a bunk in the rear of the tunnel.

This was in Malinta?

Yes.

In our last interview you were at Fukuoka. Where did you go from there?

We took a train to Manchuria. It was the best transportation we ever had. We had passenger cars. Although we were crowded, as usual, because we're much bigger than the average Japanese person, it was a relatively pleasant trip. They stopped occasionally and they gave us some decent food. They gave us little boxes they called bento boxes, which were the same boxes they were giving to the Japanese passengers.

Did they give you little rice balls?

There was a variety of tasty food in those boxes--rice and a few other things. It was probably the best food they ever gave us on a trip. Anyway, we got into Manchuria.

When was all this happening? Was it the spring of '45?

It was right after Roosevelt died so it was April. We got up to Mukden and they pulled the train onto a track which was fairly close to the camp. There was a big factory there and that's where the men worked.

Here again, we had to walk. As usual, I was at the end of the

line. I shuffled my way inside the camp. It was late afternoon when we came in because the men were there. We were a raggedly-ass bunch. These guys saw us and recognized a lot of us. A few fellas I had been with in the Philippines recognized me. And when they saw us coming in, they came over to our building later on that night and brought food and clothing with them. Oh, God, those guys were so good. I'll never forget them as long as I live.

Then they put us in a separate barracks than the other men. They had just built this new prison camp and it wasn't filled. By now it was spring and the weather wasn't that cold. And we weren't that crowded. Things were pretty good at Mukden.

You say there was a lot more food there than you were used to?

The diet changed from rice and that sort of thing to soybeans. That just raised hell with our stomachs. Just eating beans all the time, you develop a lot of gas. We had a lot of trouble holding on to our bowels. You'd be sitting there talking to someone and all of a sudden the gas would get pretty strong. You'd very quietly get up and start walking down to the benjo. Sometimes you'd make it and sometimes you wouldn't. But fortunately they had sinks on the first floor so if you messed your pants you went over to the sink and washed them out. We had a lot of trouble with that.

But, of course, there's a lot of protein in soybeans and almost nothing in rice so it was much better for us and we started to put on a little weight. Plus the fact, the rations were better. The

men who had been there since 1942 used to go to the factory every day, which was in walking distance of the camp. They had gotten friendly with some Chinese people and were able to negotiate for some food. When they got back to camp, they weren't that particularly hungry for the soybeans so anything they had left over they always brought to us.

There were a couple of guys who recognized me and they took care of me like you can't believe. One guy loaned me his overcoat. If there was any food left over in their barracks, they gave it to me and some other guys. They used to call me "One-bucket Beale" because I'd eat anything that wasn't moving.

How was your foot at this stage?

It wouldn't heal up. I had an open wound and Dr. Smith said it was so bad, I should have had a skin graft. But he was doing the best he could. They had a sick bay at Mukden which was a little better than the average and they had some supplies there. They had silver nitrate. The trouble with my open wound was that scar tissue would form on it. Dr. Smith would burn off the edges of the scar with the silver nitrate and then it would grow a little bit. Then it would form another scar and he'd burn it off again. So, he was burning off the scar tissue so the wound would fill up. And he was doing pretty good at it.

When you were wounded on the ship, you said that you had seen

an entrance wound but no exit wound, indicating that something was in there. Did that Japanese doctor who did all the cutting on you actually pull an object out of your foot?

No. He never pulled it out. He just cleaned all the dead flesh out.

So, it was still in there?

It was a relatively small piece and the reason it's in there today is because . . . Actually, it was miraculous that this piece of metal went into my foot and avoided all the tendons and everything else.

It's still in there today?

Yes. All the doctors who have looked at it say that I'd probably do more harm trying to get it out.

Does it show up on an x-ray?

Oh, yeah. It shows up every time. Once in a while, the foot locks up on me. All of a sudden when I'm walking along, my foot will lock or collapse on me. And I hobble along until I find a place to sit down and relax. And then I start wiggling my foot and let it get comfortable again. Then I get up and I'm able to walk again, but not very fast.

So, Dr. Smith was with you in Mukden also.

Yes. He came home with us.

You say the scar tissue would form on your foot, he would burn the edge away, and then . . .

Yes. He'd use the silver nitrate to burn the scar tissue off. Then it would grow a little bit and form another scar tissue on the edges. Then he'd burn that off. But the wound was still open and what really closed it was the availability of good food after the war was over. All of a sudden, it closed up.

Were you able to work at all or were you still considered to be on the sick list?

Oh, no. I couldn't work. In fact, none of our crowd went to work.

What did they have the other prisoners doing?

The guys who had been there since 1942 went to work every day. But those guys like us who came in late, were in such bad shape that few of us were able to do any work and most of them got jobs inside the camp, if they did anything at all. For example, Dr. Smith ran the dispensary, and the dentist who was on the trip with us was doing dental work in the sick bay. All the corpsmen who were with us--Peart and [Robert] Thompson, too--were working in the dispensary.

This was now getting into the summer of '45. Did you see any

air activity up there in Mukden?

Not a thing. Another thing. One morning I woke up and my jaw was all swelled up. It really hurt so I went down to see Dr. Claude Fraleigh, the dentist. Of course, we all knew each other. He had been in the hospital with us in Moji. He examined me and said that I had an infected tooth. He said it had to come out, and although it was impacted, he said getting it out would be just like rolling off a log.

Fraleigh got in there and was pushing and pulling, pulling and pushing and I said, "What the hell's the matter, doc?"

He said, "I can't get it out. Hold your head straight."

"I'm doing the best I can, doc"

Finally he got a corpsman, who stood behind me and pulled my head up against his chest. Fraleigh, meanwhile, had gone upstairs to surgery and got a great big bone chisel, not for use in the mouth. So with one guy holding my head against his chest, and another guy holding the chisel, Fraleigh banged away. Every time he hit that hammer, I thought my head was going to fall off. And he finally got it out.

Did you have any type of anesthesia?

No. It was horrible. It healed up, but when I got home, I went to a dentist at the hospital in Brooklyn and he looked at it and said, "What happened to you?" He was picking out pieces of bone and everything else.

I told him that I had had the wisdom tooth taken out in a prison camp. When I told him the circumstances, he was more sympathetic to his fellow dentist. I then told him I wanted him to take out the remaining three wisdom teeth. He said they didn't need to come out. I said that I wanted them all out immediately. I had decided that if I needed any medical work, I was going to have it done in a nice clean hospital with white sheets and good doctors with all the equipment. I was goddamn tired of this jungle medicine where everything they did to you was with something that was improvised like the mess kit knife they used to amputate the guy's arm.

I want to ask you about the end of the war and your liberation.

This is really something. It's almost a fairy tale. When I was in the prison camp, I finally broke down my captivity into three things: When you're losing the battle, you ask yourself whether the enemy is going to take you prisoner or are they going to have a "take no prisoners" philosophy. Frankly, I thought that with their reputation, that was the route they would take. The night on Corregidor, I thought about this. Here we were 8,000 miles from the States. To the north was Japan, to the West was China, which was occupied by the Japanese. To the south, the Japs were all over the Dutch East Indies and every place between the Philippines and Australia. When Bataan fell, we all wondered what was going to happen to us on Corregidor. And it was a matter of days before we ran out of food. One option was that they would kill us. So when

they took us prisoner and didn't kill us; that one obstacle we overcame.

Then we had to go through the 3 years in the prison camps. One thing that always bothered me was, "How is this going to end?" If the United States lost the war, then we would be slave laborers and they wouldn't give a shit about us and we'd just die as POWs.

Or the Japanese could have abandoned us. And that wouldn't have been too good if they didn't leave us any food. Just waiting for your own people to come and get you, you might starve, especially with all the sick and wounded.

The third option was the Japanese could take us away with them as hostages. Well this last option is the one they took. But what would actually happen to us then, was a mystery. So we waited for word from GEN Wainwright. He sent a notice that said: "This mighty fortress can and will be held." Now here we were on this little island 8,000 miles from home running out of food and ammunition and our general says this. This meant it was going to be an Alamo. We would just fight it out until the last man went. And I was mentally prepared to die. I figured I was going to get killed and it was just a question of how it was going to happen.

Once you make up your mind that you're going to die in battle, then your philosophy changes. And you begin to think of taking as many of the enemy with you before you go.

But then, I told you, they took my rifle away from me and gave it to another guy and all I had left was a .45 pistol. Then it became

obvious that I was more valuable to the cause by doing what I was doing.

But how did you feel in Mukden?

I had the same feeling in Mukden. We knew that the Russians had come into the war and they were coming down from the north. And we also heard that they gotten down as far as Harbin, the next big city to the north of Mukden. Mukden was going to be next. They told the galley to bake some little loaves of bread. These were to be traveling rations. That indicated that somebody was going to get transferred. But they weren't making enough bread for the people who were there. The question was, who was going to go?

About a week or 10 days after we got into Mukden, they brought a trainload of all the brass. These ranking officers had been taken away from us right after the surrender and we never saw them during the whole time we were in the camps. All of a sudden, all these guys come into the camp, including the senior naval officer, the Commandant of the Naval District in the Philippines.

I figured they were going to keep them as hostages and the loaves of bread were for them. But that would leave the rest of us in Mukden and what were they going to do with us? Massacre us or whatever. All of a sudden, an airplane flew over, near the camp and it dropped some parachutes out--all different colors--red, white, and several others. We knew it was an American airplane but we wondered what the hell was coming out of the planes. The Japs seemed agitated but

none of us prisoners knew what was going on. Later we found out that six guys came down. There were two line officers, two medics, a Japanese-American, who acted as an interpreter, and a Chinese, who would act as an interpreter for any Chinese.

Then the plane flew away and everything settled down. Later on in the afternoon, the front gates opened and in walks an American officer. He was a big guy and he had his .45 pistol on his hip. He was pretty cocky. We figured he was one of the parachutes that came out of the plane. But something was amiss because normally, the Japanese would beat the crap out of an aviator. By no means would they ever allow a prisoner to keep his .45 pistol. It was a big puzzle.

He went into the camp commandant's office. Some of the guys found a way to climb onto the roof and peek into the window. The officer was talking to the commandant, who was a small person, and it was obvious that the big guy was laying down the law to the Japanese commandant. And he was paying attention.

Then they called everyone in from work details and the Japanese guards began mixing up with us. Earlier many of the guards had gotten friendly and some had talked about a big boom, a big boom. We figured that meant big bomb. And maybe instead of a 500-pounder, it was a 1,000-pounder. Then they started talking about adam, adam, adam. What the hell did adam have anything to do with where we are? Of course, what they meant was atom, but none of us had ever heard of that. Of course, later on, we found out that it was a big bomb alright

and it was an atom bomb. Then we found out that the Japanese were going to surrender.

And the commandant of the camp got a call from Tokyo and they told him that he was in the Russian sphere of operations and that he had to surrender to the Russians. So we just settled down and the Japs just left us alone. They gave us some Red Cross food, and then our senior people went out in the city and made arrangements to get food from the Chinese. Between that food and the Red Cross boxes, we started to eat.

And I put on 30 pounds in the first month. And that's when my foot healed up all by itself. I went to Dr. Smith and I told him I thought I was constipated. He asked me why I thought I was constipated. Don't forget, I had been living on soybeans and running to the benjo all the time. I told him I was eating like a pig and not going to the benjo. So, he had me lay down and he punched my stomach and everything and he said, "There's nothing wrong with you."

I said, "What the hell's happened with all this stuff I'm eating?" And he said that my body was absorbing it and that's why I was putting on all those pounds.

This weight didn't come on very well. You had big cheeks and a big belly but skinny arms and legs. You didn't look too sharp.

When did the Russians show up?

They didn't show up for a couple of weeks. Then they came into the camp. There was a very young senior officer who got up on a

platform and gave a big speech about what a wonderful army the Russians had. I hereby proclaim you free men. And they lined all the Jap guards up and they took all their weapons away from them and gave them to us. Then they went away. But they were in downtown Mukden raising hell. The fence around the camp was a high-wall fence with barbed wire around the top with electricity. Of course, everyone wanted to get out and go to downtown Mukden but the brass was there, including a senior American general who said that no one was to leave the camp.

That was a good judgment because we could hear all the guns going off down in Mukden. No one liked the Japs so the Chinese were shooting Japs, the Japs were shooting back, and the Russians, who were half drunk all the time, were shooting everybody. So, it was a very dangerous thing to do to go downtown. And even after the Russians visited the camp, they wouldn't let us go out for a while.

Of course, some of the guys were restless. One tried to climb over the wall, hit the electric wires, and came down. Fortunately, there wasn't enough current to kill him.

How long was it before the Americans showed up?

Sometime around September 15th. We were there for over a month because the Japs were running the railroads and they took off and abandoned them. There was no one there to run the railroads. And there was only one airplane allowed in a day. They took Wainwright out to the Philippines, got him some new clothes, and he was on the

Missouri for the surrender ceremony. Then the other brass got out. Then the hospital patients. But the rest of us had to wait for the trains to begin operating. So we waited a while. They let us write some letters and my mother got those.

Were they dropping food?

After we had been there for a little while, what I thought were B-29s made a low pass over the camp. Then they came in again real low and pushed out pallets loaded with food, clothes, and medicine. That food, in addition to what we already had, enabled us to put on weight.

What kind of food did they drop?

It was mostly corned beef and C-rations, powdered milk, and a whole bunch of stuff. They also dropped medicine and vitamin pills.

How long were you there before you left?

The parachutists came down on August 15th as I recall. It was all like a fairy tale. Here the Russians are coming down and you don't know whether there's going to be a big battle in the camp or not. And then you wonder what's going to happen to you. And then they start making rations for somebody to travel. I just thought to myself, "You can't handle another trip like the one you just finished. If they put me on another trip like that, there's a big question as to whether I will survive." And that was my frame of

mind at that time. Now instead of dodging American bombs and torpedoes, we'd be dodging Russian bombs and bullets. So, for that short period, our future was up in the air. But then we got the word about the atom bomb, and that we would be liberated.

How did you get out of Mukden?

They pulled the train up close to the camp, we marched out there, and we boarded. We went to Dairen and a hospital ship met us--the USS *Relief* (AH-1). By the time we got down there it was dark. The ship was moored at the dock with floodlights on. They had a gangway down and we thought that somebody would come out and hug and kiss us. But they all had masks and gloves on, and they sprayed us with DDT. We thought that was funny. We were imprisoned for 3 ½ years and then when you're people pick you up, instead of hugging and kissing you they spray us with DDT. They were afraid of us, that we had all kinds of diseases.

It was nice getting on the hospital ship and getting a nice clean bunk.

The hospital ship must have looked like the cleanest place you'd ever seen.

Yes. You know how hospital ships are. By the time we got there, we were ready for a meal. They had a serving line and when we went through they gave us just a dab of stuff. When we asked for more, the servers would say, "Eat that and then come back." So we ate our food, then got back in line several more times. Finally,

the guys who were serving became frightened. What they were doing was the smart thing to do. You're not supposed to load people up that haven't eaten very much.

Anyway, he consulted with the doctor and he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Give it to them." So we just sat there and ate our heads off.

Did any of the nurses or doctors ask you about any of your experiences.

No. We weren't able to sit down and talk like you and I are talking. Anyway, they were too busy taking care of us to spend too much time talking.

Really, a funny thing. There was a Navy nurse who went to Bataan with Dr. Smith. And you know her name.

Ann Bernatitus.

Ann Bernatitus. And guess who's on the *Relief*?

Bernatitus. She was the chief nurse on the *Relief*.

How'd you know that?

That was the job she got near the end of the war.

That's right. She didn't recognize all of us but we all knew who she was. I've got a photograph of her on the *Relief* somewhere.

They didn't have room for everybody on the ship so there was

another transport which some of the POWs got on. The two ships then when down to Okinawa. We pulled into the bay on the west side, and then rode around to Buckner Bay on the east side. That's where we were when the typhoon hit.

The Navy went all over Japan picking up prisoners and delivering them to hospital ships.

Did they then take you directly home?

No. No. They had all these prisoners. The first bunch they got home were the ones that had been liberated from Bilibid in February. They were such a mess that when they got to the States, the people were shocked. They were the worse cases on stretchers and everything else. The Navy brass then said, "Don't bring any more home that look like that; fatten them up." So they didn't seem in that much of a hurry to get us home.

There was a Navy hospital on Guam, which was practically empty because the troops had moved from Guam to Okinawa to Japan. We rode to Guam on the *Rixey* (APH-3). They let the officers eat in the wardroom. It seems that everybody was eating in the wardroom. The guy would come along and give us some hotcakes and we'd scarf them down, and then we would say we wanted some more. After about three platefuls, they looked at us in wonderment.

We got to Guam and ended up in Fleet Hospital 103, where they did all kinds of tests on us. While I was there, I went to an outdoor movie. It was dark and the movie was already going. I sat down next

to a guy on a bench, who was not a POW. Then I turned around and looked up at the screen and my teeth almost dropped out. I nudged the guy next to me and said, "Who's that guy? I think I know him."

And he says, "That's Bob Mitchum."

I said, "Holy Jesus. This Mitchum kid is from my hometown, Bridgeport, CT. He was in my class in grammar school. He lived on the next street and I knew him pretty well. It had a real big effect on me. First place, when the Japs came in, most of the time I was worried about my family. I had three brothers and I knew they were in the service. I thought that with four of us in, the odds were that not everyone would get home. When I saw Mitchum up there on the screen, it was just that touch of home. It made me more optimistic. It really was a shot in the arm to see somebody I knew.

Anyway, they finally got us another transport. And it was the slowest goddamn ship in the Navy. We didn't get home till the end of November. Despite that, they still had a welcome for us.

By this time, we got clean khakis, got some flesh on us, and were looking like human beings. We got close to San Francisco when the word came out that we were gonna anchor and get liberty to go ashore. Three other guys and I were all dolled up and waiting to go to the pier, walk off, and go to liberty in San Francisco. But instead of docking, they anchored out in the harbor. They then announced that we were not going into the dock and that we would not be able to get off that night. I told the other guys, "The hell with this; I'm going ashore."

They said, "How are you going to do it?"

I said, "Just follow me."

The quarantine people came aboard the ship and, when they got ready to go off, we just got in line behind them. We hadn't been on the ship long enough for anybody in the ship's company to know one person from another. The quarantine people got off into a small boat and we followed and went ashore with them. The quarantine people felt that we were legitimate passengers from the ship and the ship's company figured we were part of the quarantine party.

How long before you got home to Connecticut?

They took us to Oak Knoll Hospital and we got our bunks. We checked in and figured we would be there just overnight. Then they told us that there would be no liberty for us. By this time, all the other prisoners there were pretty pissed off. We finally told the hospital people that we were going to San Francisco that night and if they thought they were going to keep us there, they'd better call out the Marines. So they finally told us we could go and we had a night on the town.

Then I decided to call my mother. We got a free telephone call. I said, "How's everything at home?"

She said, "You're not going to find things the way you left them."

I said, "What happened?"

She said, "You're dad just died." He had cancer. They found

it and didn't even operate to take it out. They said he was so bad off, he only had a limited time to live--a few weeks. In those days they didn't put people in hospitals to die; they'd bring them home. My mother was nursing him. My brothers were still in the service and hadn't gotten home yet. My mother told me that my father woke up every morning and the first words out of his mouth were: "Have you heard anything from our . . ." I was liberated in August and he died in June. So he never found out that I made it alive.

Did your other brothers come back?

Yes, they all got back.

That's a miracle.

Yes. It's a miracle. Imagine that. My mother was there all by herself--four sons in the service; one's a prisoner of war. Her husband's dying of cancer. She's living on food stamps and whatever. And she never complained. They don't make women like that anymore.

Did you stay in the Navy after the war?

Yes. I stayed for 20 years.

After all these years, do you ever think about that time?

Well, we have our POW organizations. We have the American Ex-Prisoners of War and we have the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. I've been active in both of them. I was the National

Commander of the American Defenders. When I first came back I couldn't even go to a parade because when the flag went by, I'd just start bawling. I still get emotional about it. I'm one helluva patriotic citizen. Our bunch is in their '70s and '80s but if Uncle Sam said, "We need you," we'd get up and go.