Harrodsburg Tank Battalion in the Philippines: Survivors of the Bataan Death March

Interview with Maurice E. "Jack" Wilson

March 15, 1961

Conducted by William Joseph Dennis

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MAURICE (JACK) WILSON March 15, 1961

The following tape is the actual voices of the survivors of the 192nd Tank Battalion of Kentucky National Guard, Harrodsburg, Kentucky. These men lived in or around Harrodsburg, Kentucky when they were called into active federal service on November 25, 1940. These men served with the US Army in the Far East under General of the Army Douglas MacArthur in the gallant defense of the Philippine Islands, 1941-1942. This was during the early months of the war against the Empire of Japan. These tapes were recorded in the Mercer County Courthouse in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, the county seat. The tape recording commenced at 7:40 p.m.

Maurice (Jack) Wilson speaking:

My name is Maurice E. Wilson. I came out as a Tech Sergeant. Went in the Army on November 25, 1940 as a Staff Sergeant. We went into federal service – inducted—from the National Guard into the federal service. We went to Fort Knox on November 25, 1940 and stayed until August 27, 1941. Left there and went to Louisiana on maneuvers and went through the maneuvers at Camp Polk, Louisiana. We left there on October 18, 1941. We loaded our army tanks up on flat cars and drove in passenger coaches in about five different trains taking us on different routes. Each train took a different route into California from Louisiana so they wouldn't be no suspicion, too much army traveling the train.

We arrive in Fort McDowell, California, which was a little island near Alcatraz on October 24, 1941. We stayed there three days and left there on October 27, 1941. While we was there we were taking vaccination shots and different things getting ready to load on the ship and

we did pull out on October 27. We stopped at Honolulu for about five days on November 2 through November 7 in 1941. We arrived in Manila on November 20th, 1941. On that boat trip we was given instructions on 37milimeter guns, 30 caliber machine guns. We had blackouts on the boat all the way over and we went by the way of Guam. Stopped off there and we mailed some letters back home.

So we arrived in Manila on November 20, 1941. We went from there to Fort Stotsenburg which is around 80 or 95 kilometers and we got at Fort Stotsenburg and were kept quite busy because we'd got some new type tanks in Louisiana and got rid of the old tanks we had so we had to learn quite a bit of the new guns and things was on them. We loaded up ammunition and one thing and another like that. Then the war started on December 8 and from there why I didn't get back to my bed anymore. The day the war started we had our tanks back in by the side of the runway at Clark's Field, in the bushes, with the fronts of the tanks almost to the edge of the runway which was a bunch of bushes and trees and one thing and another. Long about 12:30 on the first day of the war we looked up and saw a 54 airplanes and they were pretty shiny ones and we made the remark that that is a bunch of nice planes we have. Just about that time why they was over the top of us and they commenced to kicking out their bombs. They was falling every place and set the gasoline dump on fire and there was quite a bit of smoke there. Half of the boys were under a tree waiting for a chow-truck to come out. The other half, two men stayed with each tank while the other two went to eat.

Well, the chow-truck didn't come so we was underneath this tree waiting for the truck to come out. So then after the bombing raid, why the Japanese fighters came down and they commenced to shooting bullets around us and they was falling out like hail was falling and they was shooting tracers into the airplanes which was parked on the runway. Just about thirty

minutes before the Japanese came, the American planes was in the air. Then at the time the Japanese planes got there well all the men had landed and gone to the mess hall or down to the headquarters building for a meeting which they caught practically all of them on the ground except maybe one was in the air. Then after that was over why we had lost a plane. As the bomb fell, the shrapnel cut the side of his face off and part of his shoulder. His name was Robert Brooks. They later on named the airfield at Fort Knox after this boy because he was the first boy that was killed in the Armed Forces in World War Two.

From that day, why I didn't get back to my camp bed – barracks – and I never did see my foot lockers anymore. We just kept going from one little village to another and kind of hiding out from the Japs. We didn't have too much there to fight with. Everything was all excited and didn't know what to do. We held out for quite a bit from one town to another. We even went down the other side of Manila and a field there and under some big mango trees.

We left there and came back through Manila just before the Japanese was aiming to come in there and then from there we had started back in Bataan. The road was very crowded. Everybody was trying to get down there at the same time – civilians and Army personnel and everybody. They was going bumper to bumper and caravels pulling the two-wheel carts. People was walking carrying a bundle of clothes on their backs and just anything they could get down through there; they was going away. We went down through there and they had several lines set up which at that time my captain in charge of the "D" company of Harrodsburg boys, men, had taken me out of the tank because I had a eye I lost the of it at Fort Knox on the firing range before I left.

So they'd taken me overseas with this eye disability. So the captain had taken me out the tank because he was afraid I'd get dust in my good eye and couldn't see how to command the

tank with just the one eye if I was to get dust in it, dust in the good eye. So he'd taken me into Sternberg Hospital which was the big hospital in Manila. They was bringing boys in there with arms off, legs off and everything and they told the captain to get me out of there because I wasn't hurt, they needed all the space for the injured guys.

So I went back and they put me in the rear echelon as mess sergeant. So I couldn't, wasn't up on the front line in any of the battles. I stayed on the rear echelon but it wasn't too much rear to it. Most all of it was front all together because the shells was going over top of my head, and I wasn't too many miles back from the front lines. We eat up everything they give us. Of course, they didn't ration food. They give us maybe four or five cans of salmon to feed fifty or sixty men out of. You couldn't give a man a very big spoonful of salmon. They give us four loves of bread. They was cooked round like a cake. You had to slice it very thin to let a man have one piece of bread. And we killed all the American horses over there and the Filipinos had and we took the meat and ground it up on food choppers and tried to cook it, flavor it up something like that, some way or another to use it. It was so tough you couldn't get a fork in it. That is, if you didn't grind it up.

We killed the caravels and skinned those and usually got the Filipinos to help us and we give them the bony pieces and we took what the best meat part and we fed the boys the best way we could. Everybody was hungry and everybody was trying to get what they could but the cooks and the mess sergeants really had a time because they was trying to let every man have the same amount of food.

And we went on down, farther on down in Bataan. We got on down in there and we was at Kilometer Post 185 for awhile and the planes was flying over the top of us everyday. We had a mighty hard time to even cook. We was afraid to make any fire underneath the homemade stove

we had made in the navy shipyard, afraid the smoke would give us away. So we was trying to use the regular army field range. And, of course, after you use those day after day, and week after week, and month after month, they don't give too good a service. So we had a quite a bit of time of it. From there we went on down to, farther on down in Bataan.

About two or three days before the surrender, it was pretty tough there. I saw a bunch of Filipino women that was in the bombing raid there that was lying on the side of the read dead, soldiers laying there with them. And there was about seven or eight Japanese fighters just flying over the top of us, dive-bombers, bombing and striking and they was doing all the damage they could do. We didn't lose a man from Harrodsburg fighting except the boy that got killed on the first day of the war and he wasn't a Harrodsburg boy but he was assigned to "D" company which our company from Harrodsburg.

We lost some men which was taken out of our company and made a headquarters company out of it. They filled in the vacant places with draftees. We had Kentucky guys in the camp but they was all over Kentucky that was assigned to our company. From there, we went on down from Marvales, Camp Cavin, and we hung around pretty close. We was bottled up there in that little neck down in Bataan and about all "D" company did there for a while is we did guard duty which parked the tanks along side the ocean in Manila Bay. We looked out across Manila Bay, toward Manila, to see if you could see any ships or small boats with Japanese coming across there. So that was our job, to try to keep that open because a lot places in Bataan you couldn't run a army tank in rice paddies.

It was just certain places you could get a tank off the highway. One place you couldn't run a tank is try to get it out in a place where they raised rice and get it in the mud and the water. So then the last day of the war – which we had to dig holes and put our machine guns,

ammunition, do away with all of our record and one thing and another before the Japanese got there because we tried to destroy the evidence that we had and part of the boys surrendered on down the Kilometer Post. I think it was named around 210.

From there a bunch of the boys had went down to where they had said they was going to fall in to surrender. And I had dinky fever at that time and I was pretty weak, had a little malaria fever, caused from the mosquitoes and one thing and another. And I didn't feel like that I was quite able to surrender with the bunch there. I didn't know how they was going to take things and things like that so there was about eighteen or twenty of us boys that went on down to Camp Cavin. That was right across the bay from Corregidor. We went over the bank there, right next to the ocean. You couldn't walk between this cliff and the waterfront because there wasn't room to walk. We had to walk the ledge like mountain-climbers and stick your little toe on little rocks and holding your fingers on to little rocks and taking sidesteps. We did that for I imagine around 75 to 100 feet and finally got around to where we could get down and walk.

I had a musette bag with the only clothes I had besides what I had on it was back over towards the ocean. I had taken that off and threw it in the water and these tow officers were swimming in the water down below me, and I told them if they wanted it they could have it, so I couldn't carry it and walk this bank. We went on around and walked around and found the cave back into the side of the hill there where the water come in and this man had a board that you walked across this board. It went back into a little rock where he was sitting. We all went in there and this fellow was a half-Spanish and half-Chinese. He had a boat in there which was about, I would say, maybe ten or twelve feet tall and it had a little motor down in the hold of the boat.

We all had a can of salmon, maybe different cans in our pockets – sardines or anything we could pick up and taken along with us for our next meal. We put it all in a bucket and in there

where the old man was and he said he had that boat and if had anybody to get it started that we would go to maybe Australia. So we went down and loaded on full barrels, 55 gallon steel drums of gasoline, laid them on the top of this ship and eighteen or twenty of us got down in the hold of the ship.

We had two Czechoslovakian guys with us that had been in Manila before the war started. They had volunteered to hop out during the war. They had come down through Bataan and on the way down they went into a bank and they had their shirts full of money – pesos. So he laid all that out and said that, "Whenever we get to where we're going this all belongs to us. We will travel at night time and lay over in the day time." Well, before we got the engine started good on the boat, there was an officer from the 200th Coast Artillery – had about eighteen men down the bay there on a float – so he waved his pistol at us and told us to come over and get him, him and his men.

So on the way to Corregidor this fellow said, 'You're not going to take me to Australia or no place. You're going to take me to Corregidor.' So we had to pull into Corregidor to take this man, this officer, and his men. ON the way to Corregidor, which is about five miles, four miles across from Cafcabin to Corregidor, the Japanese had already shooting at us. One shell would hit beside of the ship and one shell would hit on over on the other side. That boat was weaving back and forwards and all the boys were laughing at me, as my eyes were sticking out. And I said, 'You're eyes would be sticking out too if one of hose shells hit us for we not going to be here long.' Those boys had gasoline drums and stretchers on those gasoline drums anything that would float and they was swimming and holding on to them trying to get to Corregidor, to get off Bataan.

The Japanese tanks had done on top of the cliff shooting at us and we was on our way over there. So we got to Corregidor. The man wouldn't let us leave. He said, 'You can't leave here because the Japanese Navy has Manila Bay all blocked out there' and said, 'You haven't got a chance to get out of here.' So we went on up the bank and went in to one of the Corregidor tunnels. In this tunnel, I never saw as many people in there in my life. They was all sitting down on their rumps and they pulled their feet in and drawed their legs in so they had a little mining car that went back into the back end of the tunnel and kept digging this dirt out to make more room for more people. And they was bringing it outside and dumping it in this dirt and rock.

It was getting pretty tiresome because you couldn't go to sleep sitting up there on the rocks there and leaning your head back against the wall and afraid to put your foot out there, afraid somebody was going to run over it. So they hollered out for a detail, but before they hollered out for a detail, why they said, 'You boys that come from Bataan, if you want to eat, go down to the mess hall.' So we all went down to the mess hall and about that time we sat there at the table and went to eat, why the bombing raid hit us. And they hollered, 'Airplanes – bombing raid.' Of course, we was hungry and we just kept on eating and about that time there was a shell hit the end of the mess hall. And the concrete dust commenced to flying and I jumped to the floor, fell on the floor. But, of course, it was done over with then. Then we went on back up to the tunnel, stayed in there until nighttime.

They hollering for a volunteer bunch of men. And I says well I says, 'Anything will beat this place so I think I'll volunteer.' So quite a few of us went out and lined up and we went down to the waterfront, They had a little small boat there, loaded us and they said they was going to take us to Fort Drum. I said, 'What's that?' And they said, 'That's a concrete battleship on in Manila Bay.' So we went out and the Japanese was still shooting over towards Corregidor but

it'd already got dark so we weren't bothered much with the planes. And we went on to Fort Drum and we pulled up along beside of this concrete battleship and it was dark there. And of course, they had blackouts. And then they opened the door to it and we climbed up this ladder and went in this ship. And all these boys were all cleaned up – clean clothes on—looked might good in there. We was all dirty and come from Bataan and all. Course, it'd been several days since we'd gotten to wash up and I know I hadn't washed any clothes in about four or five days because hadn't had a chance to go down to the creek to wash them. And there was all the clothes I had, what I had on.

And then we went on inside this ship and all these boys were lined up there and they were looking awful hard a us and we was looking at them too. So they commenced to picking out a guy that was the size which they were. One boy picked me out and says, 'You're about my size. You come and go with me.' And I went to his foot locker and he said, 'I got four pair of pants here – you take two of them and I'll take two of them.' Same way with the shirt; he said, 'Here's two shirts for you and two for me.' I thought they treated us just as good as a brother would. In a few minutes they said, 'Here's a towel and cake of soap. Go in the shower room and take a bath.' We went in there and took a bath and shaved. Few minutes, they said, 'Chow time.' We went down to the dining hall there on this concrete battleship and they set us down to a table there. And that's the first time I eat out of a dish since back at the first days of the war and that was on April 10th and the war started on December 8th. So I really enjoyed my supper there that night.

And next morning they assigned us to different details which I was on detail to help fire and clean the barrel of a 14 – inch gun which they had there on Fort Drum. This bullet weighed 1200 pounds and it took two bags of powder which was about the size of a sack of wheat, I imagine, about a 100 pound sack. It took two bags of powder to fire this gun. This shell went

about twenty-five miles and when this shell went off it had a detonator to it that when it went off it looked like where a bulldozer had made a pond. And we fired quite a bit of shots with that and we fought there from April 10 to May 6 which I had dinky fever quite a bit while I was there, but I kept on working and on May 6th our orders came to Fort Drum that Corregidor had to surrender.

So then we surrendered on Fort Drum at the same time that another little small fort that was on another island over there by the name of Fort Frank. Well, it surrendered all at the same time. And Fort Hughes, it was another one. So then we went that day and went up onto the top deck of the ship where the big guns were and the Japanese was up there and they pulled out two machine guns and set them down on their tripods and pulled in their belts of live ammunition and they jerked the bolt back. And I said, "Boys, I don't believe they're going to take any prisoners. I believe this is the end of it." So they laid right there and of course we was all in lines in front of the guns. And they commenced to coming up and searching us. I had a twenty-one jewel pocket watch on and I'd been breaking the chain on it quite a bit getting in and out of the turret of the tank so I put me a leather piece of wang on it and fastened it to the loop of my pants. That guy didn't even offer to untie that leather wang. He give it a jerk and like to have jerked me over on my face – but he got my watch. And he'd taken everything I had, my billfold, and everything.

And I'd seen people just before the Japanese come that was lighting cigarettes with one-hundred dollar bills and fifty dollar bills, and take a billfold maybe had 500 dollars or thousand dollars in it and just throw it into the ocean. Brand-new pistols they'd swing them over into the ocean and before the Japanese come, we'd taken the tops off of these cans of powder which fired this fourteen-inch gun. And we'd run water hose down in there to destroy all this powder. And we took bags of sand up there and put in the ends of the barrel of this fourteen-inch gun and we

drained the recoil oil out of the gun and put powder in there. And we pulled the trigger to it, it busted the barrels of the gun, just you could lay your hand down through the barrel of the gun where the cracks was in it. The Japanese didn't like that a bit. Boy, that's one reason they give us a pretty hard time because what they got there they didn't get to do much damage with. Everything was done by salvage, as I called it, something ready to throw away.

From there, they'd taken us all, after they'd searched us all, and put us on little small boats. I would call them fishing boats. They had kind of like a tug boat motor on the end and they would load in about twelve or fifteen of us, I'd say about twenty-five of us to a boat. We didn't know where they was taking us but they finally took us to a little place they called Nantabu up this ocean there and it was a sugar plantation. This sugar plantation had a dock; it run out into the deep part of the water where the ships come to load the sugar at this sugar plant. The engineers had taken dynamite and blowed about every ten or twelve feet and blowed a big hole in the concrete. And after blowing this hole in the concrete, they knew the Americans was going to surrender so they didn't want the Japanese to have this runway that run out to the heavy ships. So the Japanese had taken us there. They lined us up to pile this rock that was over on the land and made us pass them from man to man and fill up these holes on this dock.

They (the Japanese) even got mad at us because we'd done so much damage from Fort Drum over in Bataan and killed so many of their Japanese. And we'd killed on of their big officer's brother with them that they'd took our hats off of us. They'd taken all our hats away and throwed them away. Some of the boys had been inside the fighting all the time we was in Bataan. They was inside this concrete battleship and didn't have any sunshine on them. They was really white. They looked like a bunch of stick people, they was so pale. And the hot sun had come down and it made blisters on their face. They looked like people with burned places on

them with hot grease I had seen some of them as bag as chicken eggs or goose eggs on the side of their face – great big bags of blisters there. You'd punch it and water would run out of it.

They wouldn't give us any water. We had a colonel with us there from Fort Drum. He was from Oklahoma. He wanted to take up for the men and he'd went out there to see some of the Japanese officers in a little cabin on up on top of the hill. So he went up there and told them the American prisoners had to have some water. And he said they 'didn't really have any water for American prisoners.' And so finally there about three or four days, we'd took all their buttons off the shirts and put them in our mouth and sucked them Somebody had told us you'd get moisture in your mouth by sucking a button. So I don't think I had any buttons left on my shirt cause I was really trying it out anyhow.

So then from there, finally, the Japanese had told the American officer that he could have a wheelbarrow there and a fifty-five gallon steel drum and get some water. Well the American said, "Where's the well?" He said, "You don't get no well water," said, "you get it out of the creek down there." Well this creek run into the ocean that a lot of Filipino toilets was built right over the top of this water, over the top you know high on the bank where the toilet would be sitting. I have seen them dipping water there. They taken the thing and kind of knock the waste from the toilet away to dip the water up. And that was the only water they could get water so they filled up this barrel and brought it out there and put a lot of chlorine in it to purify the water, And it was pretty rough drinking but it was wet.

Finally in the fourth day they agreed to give us something to eat and they give us a can of our own "C" type rations. And it was the dry ration. Well, it was what they had they coffee in it and a little piece of candy and four or five hardtack – biscuits. It was old World War One "C" rationing that they'd saved or something. It wasn't the new type they had in the later part of

World War Two. Then I think the next day they give us a can for every two men. So finally they got to maybe later on cooking up some rice for us.

I know I had a carbuncle to come out on my back, on my shoulder blade and it got pretty large. I'd say it was about the size of a chicken egg and I'd tried to get the American doctor to lance it. And he said they didn't have anything to lance it with. So he wen to the Japanese and told them to loan him some kind of medical tools to lance that carbuncle on my back. They said no, they wasn't gonna let no prisoner have no tool, so I had to let that carbuncle rot out of my back. And it dropped out one day and left a big hole. I still have the scar on my back where it was.

I couldn't sleep at night and the Japanese would go to the door where they was standing guard and all the boys was sleeping laying on the concrete floor. Each man had about twelve or fourteen inches to lay in, in this big warehouse and we was all laying that concrete floor – didn't even have any blankets or nothing. From there we stayed there I imagine about fifteen days. In the meantime they'd called out a detail of men. They wanted about fifteen or twenty I forget the exact number – big fellows to go out on this detail and they picked them out. We had one boy from our company which he was from Louisville, Kentucky. His name was Funk. And this boy never did return back. Nobody never did see any of the boys that was in that detail no more. So we don't know what happened to them – whether they took them out and killed them all or whether they took them on into Japan and did away with them or what happened but we never could hear what happened to none of those boys on that detail.

In about fifteen to eighteen days we left there and went out and loaded on an old ship. And this old hold of this ship – some kind of mineral or coal and we got in the hold of this ship and went back to Manila Bay. And then we unloaded from that and they had made us unload on

Dewey Boulevard. They didn't drive right up to the waterfront where you could get off on the land. Made you jump out in the water. And we jumped out in the water way up to around our waist. And we marched right down through the prettiest part of Manila and of course it wasn't torn up too awful bad at that time. But the Americans would set out tubs of water in the middle of the street and put tin cups on it, so that when we passed we could grab hold of one. Well the Japanese guards that was on horses at that time was riding these horses and they wouldn't let you grab a cigarette or nothing and would keep the Filipinos away from you.

We marched from there across over down by the old stockade. I guess they call it the Walled City in Manila. They'd taken us from there on over to a prison. It was a prison in the early days where the Filipinos used for a prison – like a prison back in Kentucky or any other place. And they called that Bilibit. We stayed at Bilibit for a day and a night. Then they moved us on out of there into a railroad track. It was about 75 to 100 to a car and a boxcar in Japan is about half as big as one in Kentucky. They're small box-cars and I think they was pulling this engine, firing it, on wood, just like the early days.

But these metal railroad cars, they was about 100 to a car. You didn't have room to walk around. You just had to squeeze up next to the other guy. And so I had diarrhea at that time and I motioned for a Japanese guard at the door on one little stop that they stopped to take water on this engine that I had to go because I had the diarrhea. So I thought maybe that I didn't want to stand right there at the track at the door where a lot of women and all was and I started walking down to get in back behind some railway ties. And they hollered at me to come on back so I had sit right down beside of the railroad car where it was parked and a lot of Filipino women was there trying to sell rice hotcakes and things like that to the prisoners and the Japanese.

We went on there and got on up to Cabanatuan. One railroad station. They left us to stay at a schoolhouse there that night. And we had to stay out in the yard. It was raining. Part of us crawled underneath the building. I don't know who all was in there but it was the most filthiest place that I'd ever been. You could step unless where you'd step where somebody had already used it for a toilet. And we laid around there that night in the rain and trying to keep dry and all.

And from there well the next day we had to go twenty some odd kilometers over to Camp Three of Cabanatuan. That was on May 25th. And from May 25th to July 9th, 1942, that was the prison camp that was in Cabanatuan. And they had a wire fence built around this old Filipino Army camp which the barracks was made out of bamboo and bamboo slats and, of course, no beds and we had to sleep on this bamboo and bamboo is something like a large fishing pole. It's been cut with a bolo knife and clipped and they had cracks in between and you could look down through the cracks of the bamboo.

We had stayed there in that Camp Cabanatuan and four boys that was prisoners was with me that was stationed on Fort Drum. They had made up buddies with me and they had come and told me that they was going to escape. They wanted me to go with them. I told them, I says, 'Boys, listen, you can't escape from this stockade or prison camp here because when you get on the outside the fence, every white man is a Japanese enemy, a prisoner. The Filipinos are getting hungry and if they put a ten-peso reward, they will report you to get that reward.' So I told him, "Please don't try to escape because I don't think you'll get through."

Them boys went on and escaped that night which I didn't go with them. They was gone for about two days. They brought them back and they had tied them to fence posts, left them standing there in that hot sun without any water and kept them that way for about three days. And they wouldn't let nobody go up and talk to them, no water, no food and had their hands tied

behind them and made them stoop down and had put a piece of wood in-between their ankles and the upper part of their legs which this piece of wood was back just in behind their knees. And all their weight was cutting on that piece of wood. They had their hands tied behind them on a post. So then one day they had went over and dug a big hole right in the view of all of our barracks. And they'd taken these four boys and went over and they had a Japanese firing squad. And they had blindfolded these four boys and led them over there. Then they took the blindfolds off and asked them did they want a drink of water.

Some of the boys takes a little drink; some of them took a cup of water and throwed it in the Japanese face. Then they asked them did they want a cigarette. Some of them took a draw and some of them lit the cigarette and flipped it in their face because they'd been punished for three or four days without food or water and they were just two-thirds to the way dead. They had backed off these Japanese and shot them and they'd fell back in this hole and some of them squealed like a pig if you was killing hogs and didn't get a good shot on the hogs. They squealed and the Japanese run up to the hole and shot down in on them. That was the first time I'd seen four men shot, and some of the boys went back into the barracks and didn't want to see it. Well I wasn't curiosity or nothing like that but I said well, if it's gonna happen I just as well see it through cause I could have been with the boys if I'd let them talk me into it. But I told them I didn't think they had a chance.

From there they had taken us on the outside of this camp on a wood detail. We had to go and carry in wood to cook our own rice with. They cooked rice in the big large kettles something like lard kettles. And they fired it with wood and they would give you kind of a canteen cup full of rice. We was getting two meals a day and a very little soup. Some of the soups was made out of bean leaves. I went out in the cornfield and picked bean leaves off and they had cooked them

and it tasted like quinine—bitter. When we did go out maybe we'd run across some Filipinos and catch a Japanese guard away and we'd get hold of some pony sugar—was in old lumps of dirty sugar—anything to eat.

Whatever we brought in we'd bring it in our shirts so the Japanese couldn't see it in our pockets. And there was this other boy that was a buddy of mine on Fort Drum. His name was McCorkle from Mississippi. Whenever he went out and got anything he'd brought it in, he'd divide it with me. And whenever I went out, I'd divide it up with him. And I'd wash his mess kit one day and he'd wash mine the next day. He took the dysentery and died in five days time. So I have been lucky all the way through. Some few days I was sick but most of the time I was weak but I just kept on pulling through.

From there we had left Cabanatuan #3 July 9th, 1942. They had asked for a detail of men and I had hid off two or three times and tried not to get out on no details. I didn't know where they would take us to and I didn't volunteer. But the Japanese seen me going around the building and he hollered for me so I had to come back and fall into formation. Now I'm getting ahead of myself—about the last four or five words. This wasn't a detail—yes, it was. I did leave on July 9th, 1942, out on this detail. And I went to a place they called Pasy Schoolhouse.

The schoolhouses in the Philippines are built square and one room all the way around. In the center part of the building hadn't got any roof on it and there's grass growing out in the middle. It's very odd building but it's just one room, a square and they got a porch inside that you can walk all the way around. They had about twenty-five rooms there. And they put in about twenty-five men per room. Each man had just about 18 inches or 2 feet to lay in. The mosquitoes was awful bad there. You couldn't hardly sleep at night for the whizzing around and keeping you awake.

And we'd stay there at the schoolhouse and worked out on Nichols Field, a airport, and they'd taken these airfields and trying to make longer runways, wider runways but they was hilly piece of ground. And they had these little mining cars which they remind me of a coal mine car up in Kentucky with narrow tracks. We had made wooden boxes to fit up on top of this platform and four men would dig down a load of dirt. Two men would push this dirt down on the upper end of the runway and they would level it off. And that's the way we got the runway built. I stayed there on this detail from July 13, 1942 to March 18, 1943. I saw several men die and saw several men killed. The Japanese would shoot them. Sometimes they would want to go to the toilet and they wouldn't let them so they'd step off the runway to keep from using the place we was working at. Soon as they'd step off to pull their pants down to go to the toiled, why the Japanese would pull up a gun and shoot him.

So I'd got dust in my bad eye which I got injured at Fort Knox back before I went overseas and the Japanese had told me I could go into Bilibit Prison which they was using for a hospital. I left on March 18, 1943 and went to Bilibit Prison. In the meantime I seen several boys come in and bring the dead ones. They'd died and got killed and they was burying them there in a little piece of ground in the Bilibit Prison. I'd always want to go down and see where some of my buddies that I'd worked with from July 1942 to March 1943 but I was afraid to, afraid they'd see me, afraid my eye had got better and they'd want to take me back on the detail. So I just stayed away.

But anyhow, I stayed there in this prison hospital. They didn't have very little medicine things to use. If a Red Cross box come in, it wasn't enough to last a week or two and they'd have to wait several months to get more in. So I had washed clothes—anything to get a little extra chow. And I was doing washing out thee for the boys that was sick so I could get their little mess

kit of rice. I even washed Captain Warmuth, which was known as One Man's Army—his mess kit because I though he might know some Japanese to get some information or food. So I left Bilibit Prison July 1, 1943, which I was there from March to July.

And I went back to Cabanatuan but they had closed up Camp #3 and brought them all down to Camp #1. The camp was made of bamboo shacks just exactly #3 was except that they had a large farm there. They had a farm there that they was raising corn on and they had some of these Brahma bulls on it with the big humps on the back. And they had maybe fifteen acres of ground broke up ready to put corn in it. They didn't have no tractors, no plows. All they had was picks and shovels. They was then 15- men out there and line them up in a straight line and tell you to go to digging. They had big ant hills on there looks like hay shocks back here, maybe three or four feet tall and I would say three or four feet through. We'd have to did those down and those big red ants would come out of there about 3/4" long. And if they caught any two boys standing talking, they would tie them and put them right in them ant hills where those ants was crawling and they would really suck the blood out of you.

But I stayed there at that camp and I run into quite a few Harrodsburg boys there because I'd been on these details down to Nichols Field and I never saw a Harrodsburg boy. I was always away from them, but back in camp, I'd always run around and try to locate all the boys I knew from Harrodsburg. Well, I stayed there from July 2, 1943 at Cabanatuan #1 and I left on September 18, 1943 for Japan. They called my number out and name to go to Japan. Well, I didn't know where we was going to.

In the meantime, I didn't have any shoes. My shoes had wore out. My clothes was gone. I took all my sleeves off of my shirt, and I patched up my shirt. I took my pants leg and patched up the seat of my pants. And I had a pair of khaki pants but they would like they was swimming

trunks when I left. Well, before I went into Japan they told us that they'd give us a pair of pants and another jacket and that was a Japanese outfit. I was wearing Japanese soldier clothes. And they give me a old pair of shoes—Japanese shoes—they was rough on the outside and pretty rough clothes. But anyhow that was on September 18, 1943 that I left for Japan.

Well I arrived in Japan on October 4th. That ride on that ship was the roughest ride I think anybody could ever take. We was down in the hold of the ship, and they had bins built off like you see these cattle trucks running up and down the highway, with the double decks. Each man had about three foot tall space and you couldn't stand up in there after you got in this hold and you had about 12" and 14" to lay down in. They didn't have any toilets on there. They had lard cans that you use for toilets. Whenever they got full they would sometimes make some boys swing them up and dump them. Sometimes they wouldn't. Then later on we got about half way over there they decided to go on and make a toilet on top. They made a toilet up on top and we got rid of the can.

But they had our meat laying up on the top deck and it had green, looked like it was done poisoned, gangrene or something but it had green skim on it and that was what they was cutting our soup out of. You wouldn't get much soup with meat. You might get a floater floating to the top, one little piece of meat floating in a canteen cup of water. Then this rice that they give us wasn't first-class rice. It was always sweepings out of a warehouse—real dirty rice. Sometimes it wasn't even rice; it'd be red rice. I think they name they call it codene or something like that.

So this water was awful rough. It reminded me of the mountains of Kentucky that you look over the side of the ship and there would be a big hole in the water. And up there over in another place there'd be about twice higher than the ship. It was that rough. Water would come up on top deck and knock the boys' mess kits off over in the ocean and it was really rough. One

time the Japanese Nay ship, it had took off. They thought they'd seen an enemy, which an American. And they started out and couldn't locate nothing so they came back. And we had one Japanese Navy ship along with four or five transports. These transports, they was old freighters. They'd been hauling coal, fertilizer, junk iron and everything else on them. They was dirty and filthy. We got over to a place they called Formosa Strait there was a little path there, just looks like a road that goes in between two pieces of ground. We went in there and we laid over at Formosa I would say for five days.

And in the meantime there was a Spanish boy that took the appendicitis. Well this British doctor we had on the ship had told the Japanese, "We got to take this boy to the land; the land's right 400 or 500 feet from the ship and I'll operate on him." (They) says, "No, no prisoner goes over there." So he told them he had to go ahead and have the operation. Well, the Japanese had two cans of ether. They didn't have any tools to do this operation with so they borrowed two silver officer's GI spoons which you know officers' spoons are a little better grade than the enlisted man. And they used these silver spoons and they bent the stem of the spoon back in a double almost, and they cut this boy's stomach with a razor blade. Then they stuck these two spoons in there—one each way to hold this open. That left a wide space enough to get down and get the appendix.

Well that was happening down in the hold of the ship and they had go a plank two and laid that boy up on it. I went up on the top deck and looked right down straight over it and I watched it. A Japanese was right next to me and he had his watch in his hand timing it. It took about two hours and ten minutes to operate on him. This boy come to just as they was sewing him up and they had to hold to him cause he was trying to kick around, squirm around and fight. Of course it was hurting him I guess because they didn't have anything more to put him to sleep.

And that boy was in my prison camp and that boy was lived fine and did fine all during the prison camp in Japan.

We went on from Formosa. One time we heard the American planes was out there, American ships, so they run us down in the hold of the ship and left us down there for four or five hours without any air getting to us whatsoever. I think there was around 1200 men in the hold of that ship. We was all sweating. We couldn't see nothing; it was dark in there. We didn't know whether they was going to leave us that way from now on or not. But finally they took the top off of it and told us we could come out. Course, I guess maybe they found out the Americans wasn't out there. We went on then and went from Formosa to Moja City and we unloaded there at Moja City and got on a train we road on over to some town in Japan. I forget what the name of it was.

There was two boys on this ship with me from Harrodsburg. That was Kenneth Hourigan and Lyle Harlow and Charles Reed—there was three boys with me. So they had divided us up and they had taken Lyle Harlow and Kenneth Hourigan and sent them to another camp and sent Charles Reed from Harrodsburg with me. And we got on the train and riding on this train they kept the blinds of the windows pulled down tight. You couldn't peep out of the train. They didn't want us to see none of the buildings that had been bombed and burnt by the Americans. They didn't want us to know that the Americans had ever bombed Japan but we peeped out as we was passing through some of the towns and seen that it wasn't nothing there except a pile of tin or maybe a chimney from a chimney where the air raids had done already hit Japan before we got there. That was in September of 1943.

We went on to a place the call Nagata, Japan, and it was mighty cold. It was snowing and cold weather, so then they'd taken us on up and they put us in a building—no fire whatsoever—

had straw laying there on the floor like a hog pen or something. And they had put us into a detail down on the docks where the ships come in and most of the job that the boys had in this barracks they had unloaded coal from the hold of the ship into nets and swung that net over into a barge. And then we shoveled that coal into a kind of conveyor that had cups on it, kind of like an old-time rock crusher. Then that taken the coal up on the railroad trestle and dumped it over into a hopper there. Then they had little small cars that would hold a ton and a half or two tons of coal and they made us prisoners get in behind them cars and push them around on this railroad trestle.

This railroad trestle was about thirty feet high and we had to dump this coal over in them railroad cars when there was a car there. Other times when the car wasn't there, we had to dump it on the ground. Then as you know, the Japanese people would use what they called yaho poles with a basket swinging in the front and a basket swinging on the back, and this pole would be on your shoulder. Well, we would put four or five scoops of coal over in these baskets on this pole and we'd walk this plank and dump it over into this railroad car. That is one way we had to filling up the cars.

We was all so weak we was falling down practically every day because they didn't give us enough food to keep any strength by. They was just giving us a small amount of rice, about a level mess kit full. You couldn't pile it up because if you did some of the boys wouldn't get any food. And they give you a bucket of rice and some of the boys would have seconds but if there was seconds left out of the rice buckets, we went by numbers and maybe get seconds about once a month—about four or five seconds each week—and we went by numbers so one man wouldn't get all or seconds and some not get any.

From this camp I worked down everyday and on January 28, 1944—one afternoon about 4:00—I had wanted to go to the toilet. The Japanese said, "No—right here." So I stepped over on the edge of the railroad tie and was stretched out there and of course I was acting as if I had been in a toilet. This boy was in back behind me pushing this car of coal. He didn't see me so he hit me and I was so weak I couldn't grip this railroad tie in my hand. I slipped and as I was gripping this tie I fell from this railroad trestle which was around thirty-five feet high. And by this tie slipping out of my hand, I fell right straight down and landed on my feet and mashed the joint in my back which the boys made a stretcher and carried my to my camp which was about three miles away.

And I was paralyzed for three months and I couldn't work a toe or a leg or nothing. Boys dying on either side of me every night. And the Japanese would come in and tell me there wasn't nothing wrong with me—get up and go to work. Of course, like I was paralyzed, and these boys that looked like that they was dying, they was gritting their teeth, grunting, groaning and going on and it was almost running a man nuts. So I had a boy to take my old web army belt and hook it over a 2' by 4' over where I was laying on the floor. In this prison hospital was in the same place where the camp was—one of the buildings used for a hospital, with no beds whatsoever. We all slept on the floor. And I had had the boys to lift me up and hold to this web belt and everyday I'd get up and work my legs just like I was riding a bicycle to get the strength in them, learn to bend them again.

Then one day I told the boys to open the doors, that I was going back to the barracks. I says, "I may have to learn to walk all over again but if I don't get out of here I'll die right in here like the rest of the boys are dying." So from then on I couldn't never walk back as far as to work so they had left me in camp on a sick detail but they made us work everyday. We'd taken old

twigs of limbs and put a stick in it with some old string around it like a witch broom and swept the yards everyday. There was just about as hard a work there as there would have been out of camp but I couldn't walk without falling down because my foot hung down. The nerves running down my legs caused me to have dropped feet.

We stayed there until—well, we arrived October 4, 1943 which I was a prisoner of war a year and five months in the Philippines and two years in Japan. But on October 4, 1943, I arrived in Japan and September 5th, 1945, I left. But I would say about ten days before I left Japan, the Americans had dropped the atomic bomb. They come in our camp and had us get up and take a old rice straw ropes and tie around our belongings. Of course, we didn't have much—three or four blankets apiece. And it did down below zero—maybe ten or twelve degrees below zero—snow five or six feet deep in this camp I was in several times. We didn't have any coal. E had to steal it down on the job and carry it in our pockets like we was carrying a apple home; we was carrying a lump of coal to warm up by. And we made our own stoves out of oil drums. The Japanese didn't like it too much but they finally agreed that these stoves was all right but they wouldn't give us no coal; we had to steal it, pick up pieces of limbs and things like that.

In this camp that I was in there was about four hundred or something close to five hundred. One hundred ten of them boys died. I would say on the average during the prison camp that it was one lived out of every four; three died out of every four. It might have been a little more percentage than that. It might have been four died out of every five. But in the Philippines, they died as high as forty and fifty a day over there. They didn't dig any graves for the boys. The sick boys had to go down and dig the graves. They couldn't dig that many graves so they'd did one grave and just put all the bodies in it. And that's the reason they had the mass buryings when they came back—shipped back and they would maybe have 25, 35, 40 coffins lined up at the

cemetery with flags over them because they had a marker up there but they didn't know whose body was who and the couldn't be sent back to the boys' hometowns. They had to be buried in St. Louis, Washington DC, and different towns like that in a mass burying.

But going back over in Japan—in Nagata, Japan—well, they had dropped this atomic bomb and they got us up. We had to stand in formation for about three or four hours way up in the night and in the morning. They had told us the Americans was unfair—that they'd dropped this bomb, and they'd lost 240,000 Japanese. They had to quit. They said, " " in Japanese meant "finish". " " meant "thank you." And " " was "good morning." We had to learn to count in Japanese and line up in a column of four and they'd say, " " and all this stuff. My number was " ." The next day after they dropped this bomb the interpreter came out and told us the war was over. They hadn't issued soap or shoes or anything like that I would say for the last thirty days. So they give us a piece of soap and a bunch of toilet paper and they had a few pairs of shoes there.

So, of course they had a mail call. That's the first time we'd had mail call for a year. I don't know how long they'd had these letters laying back in their office but they had a mail call and I know I got two or three letters that day. Of course the war was done over. They might have had them there for three or four months. But after they said the war was over I slipped into the Japanese office and stole a picture of my own self which they had their pictures taken with their Japanese number on it and mine had "431" on it. And I went in there and took a chance on stealing it so I could bring it back. I weighed 105 pounds at that time. I weighed 200 when the war started so I'd lost 95 pounds. They told us all the guards had left camp. We didn't have no chance whatsoever to sock one of them between the eyes or nothing that the war was over or steal his gun or bringing his bayonet back or saber or anything because when they found out the

war was over, they got away from there. They knew that maybe we had a enemy or two there and we'd get even and they wouldn't stick around.

So planes got to circling around us so we decided to get some yellow paint and got up on top of the barracks and put "P.O.W." on there—"PRISONER OF WAR, CAMP NO. 5B"—that was in Nagata, Japan. The American planes saw those letters on there and they come over on those little planes and they would drop out their barracks bags—navy overseas bags. And they had took all their stuff out of their ship store and they'd sent us razor blades, cigarettes – just everything that was in their ship's store and they'd put it in those barracks bags. One old boy put his little old zippered bag they go shore duty in and says, "I give you everything I got." They went and picked up all these cigarettes in it and gave each man the same amount so one man wouldn't have a bunch of them and some of the other men wouldn't have anything.

REEL NO. 2

First of all I'd like to backtrack to a little experience in my prison camp while I was located at Nichols Field, being at Pasy Schoolhouse. I run out of my shoes. I didn't exactly run out of them but I was digging that dirt, mulky mud. One day I took a step and one sole come completely off and my feet was in the mud. The other step I took, the other shoe sole come off. They'd gotten all rotten. And I had to go barefoot for about three months, walking up and down the highway on the hot blacktop in the Philippines. And out on this runway where we dug this rock and old hard dirt, I got so I could kick this rock around pretty good with my feet but it was rough going. I had used up my shirt and my pants and I had to go, had a big split place in my pants. Some old lady, she was half-Spanish and some other kind of nationality, had went around the homes in the Philippines, in Manila, and brought in all the old clothes that they had, anybody had, that they

had left over, that they could possibly give up to, she wanted them to take to this prison camp that I was in at Pasy Schoolhouse, working on Nichols Field. They had picked me out my pants had done been cut off, looked like swimming trunks, and had holes in them and no more patches to put on. I'd done used up all I had, even had to make my own thread by taking a needle and taking a piece of material and working the threads out to make thread to sew with. They had lined me up for a pair of pants. The pair of pants that got some lady in the Philippines had sewed up underwear trunks. And these underwear trunks was what I wore and they didn't even have a button, had a little drawstring—had a drawstring that they had drawed to keep them on.

Then later on they had picked me out of a crowd. They Japanese had one day hollered for chow-time and I didn't know it. And they was pushing this car of dirt down the runway at Nichols Field and I didn't hear them. They could pick me out and tell who I was because I had on these pink shorts like you use for underwear, summer underwear. When I got down there, this Japanese guard had took a bamboo pole and he had whipped me until the blood run out of my rump, hind-end as you call it. I couldn't sleep on account of him beating me up. So we had walked backwards and forwards to work. I'd say it was three or four miles each way to work. The Filipinos had throwed cigarettes out in the highway for us to walk over to pick up. They had caught some of those Filipinos and tied them up to fence posts in the hot sun because they was trying to help the Americans out. I know a lot of times I'd picked up cigar butts, those old dobie cigars, and dried them that had been in horse manure and tried to smoke the cigarettes. We had issued about five cigarettes a month out of Filipino tobacco or Japanese cigarettes. Those five cigarettes a month didn't last very long because they burnt up mighty fast.

In this camp, this school, that I was at I had got a plank and made me a table to eat off of, me and another boy. And we'd drove a stick down in the ground and put a board on it like a

milking stool. And we had had quite a bit of fish heads. The Japanese eat the fish and give us the fish heads. And we cooked it in water and we'd eaten those, trying to get some meat off the fish heads. Sometimes them fish eyes would jump around in you mouth and you didn't know if it was a grain of corn or what. But anyhow, there was an old cat, rubbed up against my legs several days there and I asked some of the boys, "Reckon where my cat is?" (They) said, " couple of sailor boys had got that cat and killed it and they was cooking it over there." Well, this doctor in our camp had found out about it and he had went out to stop them from cooking it. These boys had saved some butter that had come in a Red Cross box. We got Red Cross box about every six months. And they had about two or three cans or butter in it would hold about one big GI spoonful of butter per can. They were frying that cat in butter. The doctor stayed out there and got a piece of it.

I remember a young boy, that he must have lied about his age to get in the Army, he was in this camp. And he run out there and says, "Boys, give me some of that cat so that when I go home I can tell the folks I had a piece of cat." (They said), "Listen, you just go home and tell the folks you seen some guys eating some cat. You're not getting none of this cat." So that was quite an experience. And I got mighty hungry but I don't think I ever eat any cat. But we did have horsemeat and bones. We got bones about once every two weeks. We boiled those a day or two days, trying to get the marrow out of the inside of the bones to make soup out of. And they give us bean leaves, sweet potato tops and they would look like weeds after you chop a sweet potato vine in two. They'd eat the sweet potatoes and give us the tops and things like that. And I have eaten soup made out of carrot tops and it tastes like some kind of perfume.

It was pretty rough long about that time. I know one boy got his Red Cross box one night and he sat there and eat the whole thing up and there he laid dead the next morning. His stomach

was small and he just wasn't used to eating. And he had overdone himself eating that ten or twelve pounds of food that was in that Red Cross box and he was laying there dead the next morning.

I'll go back now to the time in Nagata that the war was over. They had issued this stuff to us, as I was mentioning a few minutes ago, and the airplanes had come over and dropped this. And then the next day, the B-29s came over. They was the big planes; we hadn't saw any of the B-29s, they was all new to us. And they was so large up there that I was out in the yard of the prison camp and I couldn't run because I'd fall down. My foot was dropped and hanging down and flopping like a duck. They all called me "paddle-feet" in prison camp, because I paddled my foot like a duck. And so one day, one of the B-29s came over and there was a case of peaches broke loose from this net swinging down and it fell and hit a Japanese woman in the head outside the camp and killed her. So I was kind of afraid of it and these drums was spot-welded together, two fifty-five gallon steel drums spot-welded and sometimes when they came out of the plane, by the time the parachute would open they would be so much weight that it would snap the rope in two. And these barrels would have bacon, pineapple, and practically and good thing to eat. We took all that in the mess hall and had several good meals. We even made up enough to pay a Japanese yen in our camp and went down in town and bought an old cow and brought that cow up in the camp and we killed it. And we had two or three pretty good meals for the men. That was before the Americans started dropping this stuff.

I know the boys had taken these parachutes in Japan and traded them off for some saki to drink. I didn't care any too much about saki because I wasn't too very much . . . to even try to drink any and I didn't taste it while I was there. But anyhow, I went down into town and got a haircut. We'd been clipping each other's head with clippers. We'd been clipping our face with

clippers trying to get the beard off. And I was down in town when they hollered and told me, says, “Paddle-feet, the boys are leaving, bunch of us leaving tonight for Tokyo,” and says, “your name is on the list.” Well, there I was way down in Nagata, about three or four miles, and I couldn’t walk back. I had to flop my foot and I had gave this woman who cut my hair five yen. She had a baby swinging on her back, had a piece of material or goods or something that fastened around her and that little old baby was flopping his head back there and she was cutting my hair. And then I got through, I give her five yen and she got mad, said it was too much, and I told her, “ ,” that meant “tomorrow,” and “America” and of course, “ ,” that meant “money.” And I said “ ,” was “ “ “no good.” In other words, that old yen money was no good to me because I was going to America so I was giving it away.

We got five cents a day for working and the only thing you could buy in camp was a quarter pound box of tea and they charge you about five yen for a fourth. Well, five yen would take a lot of five cents to make it so, in other words, you’d work three or four months to get a quarter pound box of tea. So we couldn’t get much with what the Japanese paid us for our work. We could get a package of Japanese hair tobacco once in a while and they charged us five-yen for that. We’d smoke these little pipes had a hole, one little pinch of tobacco and you’d take two draws and that was gone. We didn’t have any matches. We had the end out of a flashlight or something that would hold up to the sun and the sun come down and get that tobacco on fire and we’d go to puffing. We’d have a light that a way or night times we’d have a little old shoe polish box, a little tin box, and we’d take a piece of steel and hit that against a rock and that’d make a spark fly and that spark would fly down in this little tin box with rags and get that on fire and we’d light our pipe out of that. So that was a hard way going but the boys would always get together and figure some way to get by.

So we had left and I got back to camp that night. I tried to run; I tried to walk fast. Two boys picked me up and carried me on their backs and I even got between two of the boys. One of them was a little taller than the other and I had one side of my hip over on one of their shoulders and the one side of my hip on the other one's shoulder. And they wasn't the same size so I couldn't hardly ride that a way so they put me on their back and carry me a while cause trying to get back to camp before they left. When I got back they had a bunch of Japanese buses there and there was about three hundred of us got on those buses. And we went down into town and stopped that passenger train and got on that thing that night. We rode that thing all night long and the other three hundred got on there the next morning and they come in and we went to Yokohama.

And Yokohama, we went to Tokyo and Tokyo had give us, we had already had new clothes. American khaki shirts, khaki pants and new shoes that was dropped out of the airplanes, the B-29s, in our camps. But anyhow, you know in prison camp, we had lice; we had bed bugs. You might clean your clothes good but when you was laying over next to the other guy if he didn't clean his, they'd crawl right over on you the next time you laid down. So in other words, every man had lice and bed bugs. And you couldn't hardly sleep at night. You'd have to get up and under the light and try to catch the lice running down your face or down on your stomach.

And so, when we got into Yokohama, they had taken us and give us some of this DDT. And they sprayed us, just like they was spraying a bunch of lousy chickens or something. And we took a shower bath and put on some more clothes. Then they asked us, "Is anybody sick that wants to go on the hospital ship back to Manila?" And they said if anybody was sick, to stand out. And they asked me, "What about you? Are you sick?" And I said, "No, I'm not sick. I'm just crippled up, but I can ride the airplane all right." So we went out and got on this plane, out at

Yokohama, out at the airfield. We rode those bombers out of there into a place called Okina. And Okina, we landed there on September 6. I left Japan on September 5 at Nagata and got over into Yokohama on September 6 and I arrived at Okina on September 6 and stayed there until the 9th. And we stayed there for about seven or eight days at Manila. And FBI wanted to know the war crimes, did any of us know any of these Japanese's names so that they could have a trial for mistreatments, beating them up, and killing the boys. But I never did learn the names; all that I had learned was their nicknames. I have a copy of the pictures at home that the Japanese guards that guarded me in Japan . . .how many years they got in prison—some of them got life, some of them got eight or ten years.

I landed, rode back on the ship from Manila to San Francisco, California an I was in Letterman's Hospital for about seven or eight days. And I rode a hospital railroad car out of there to St. Louis. From there, I caught a train and come to Nichols General Hospital and I was stationed there for about eight or nine months. And then I was transferred there to Battle Creek, Michigan Hospital and discharged in 1947, February 5, 1947 at Fort Custer, Michigan. I thank you.

I might mention a few words back in, over in Japan, the Japanese raised grasshoppers. They cure them in some kind of a salty sauce. They give us rice to eat, but no salt or sugar and sometimes it's pretty rough to eat something without any sweet or any salt on it either one. They issued these grasshoppers to us, about two teaspoons per meal, and the first one they give me, I couldn't eat them in daylight. I waited til they turned the lights off and then I tried to eat them. And they was popping, cracking cause they was dried and had a right salty taste. But that little fuzz on that grasshopper's legs, after it was dried, it was just like steel wool. It would tear your throat all up. And then I know that one time, in prison camp, they give us a lot of snails to eat,

just like you go down to the river and look on the ripple and you find these snails. It's a certain way you can open a snail and it pulls the mud out from the meat. But I never could find out how you separate it and I, by the time you eat five or six of them, your mouth would be all full of mud and taste muddy.

I was a prisoner of war 1219 days, 1219 days a prisoner of war. I went in as a grade of staff sergeant and I was discharged a tech sergeant because all the boys that was in prison camp was promoted up one grade after they came out of prison camp. Thank you.