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Interview with
JONATHAN BURNS
July 21, 1981

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved:

Jonathan H. Burns
(Signature)

Date:

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Oral History Collection

Jonathan Burns

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Jonathan Burns for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 21, 1981, in Denton, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Burns in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Among the highlights of Mr. Burns's tenure as a prisoner-of-war was his participation in the Bataan Death March.

Mr. Burns, to begin this interview, why don't you give me a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education-- things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Burns: I was born in Hereford, Texas, in 1915, on the 14th of February. My father was in the drug business there for about thirty years, as I understand. In 1923, January, my folks moved to Deming, New Mexico, and we had a farm there for about a year, south of Deming. After that we moved into

town, and at the time he didn't have anything to do, so to make a long story short, he bought a restaurant. From that time on, my father was in the restaurant business there for about seventeen years. Of course, being there that long, I was raised and went to school there in Deming, New Mexico. Along about 1940 or somewhere, they came out with this compulsory training. I think that the age limit was somewhere around...well, whatever it was, I don't know, but I was at the right age at that time--I was twenty-six--and we had to go in for a year's training. So I thought that it would be better for me to go ahead and go into the National Guard, New Mexico National Guard, and be with the guys that I knew and that I went to school with instead of going off into some strange unit where I didn't know anybody. Of course, at this time, the New Mexico National Guard and some of the other National Guard outfits were inducted into the federal service in January, 1941.

Marcello: In other words, when you went into the New Mexico National Guard, it was still a state unit, and very shortly thereafter it was federalized.

Burns: That's right. Like I said, we were inducted into the federal service in January of 1941, and, of course, we were sent to Fort Bliss, Texas, at Logan Heights. At that time Logan Heights was just getting started, and our unit, the New Mexico National Guard, went to the Philippines.

- Marcello: Let's back up must a minute. When you became federalized, what was your unit identification or designation? In other words, identify your unit.
- Burns: Well, it was the New Mexico National Guard, 200th Coast Artillery and Antiaircraft. I think that in 1940 the New Mexico National Guard had just transferred over, or changed over, from the 111th Cavalry to the 200th Coast Artillery and Antiaircraft.
- Marcello: What kind of training did you undergo while you were there at Fort Bliss?
- Burns: In my situation I really don't know what kind of training we really had, myself. I was in Regimental Headquarters, myself, and I was a cook in our unit. Then finally, to make a long story, I was a mess sergeant, and by doing this, you see, I wasn't on the outside very much. We had the medics and the band attached to Regimental Headquarters for rations, for their meals. Now the other unit, the gun batteries, like A Battery from Albuquerque and F Battery from Carlsbad, these were all gun batteries, and antiaircraft batteries, and how much training they did outside, getting ready, I don't know.
- Marcello: Let me ask a more specific question along these lines. Is this the first really basic training, however, that the unit had undergone, that is, after it had become federalized?
- Burns: Yes, I would think so.

Marcello: In other words, up until the time that you got to Fort Bliss, you normally would have attended the monthly or weekly meetings and go through close-order drill and things of that nature.

Burns: See, I never did do any of that because I wasn't in it long enough. That is what the guys used to do. They would have their monthly meetings or weekly meetings or whatever when they were the 111th Cavalry, and then they would usually come down to Fort Bliss for two weeks of training, which the Guards still do that.

Marcello: When did you receive word that the unit would be moving on to the Philippines?

Burns: We left Logan Heights at Fort Bliss there about the 30th of August--the last couple days of August--and then we went on a troop train to Angel Island in San Francisco, and that is where we were for--I don't know--five days maybe, until we got on the ship to go to the Philippines.

Marcello: Now at this time, did you know that you were going to the Philippines?

Burns: Oh, yes, we knew that we were going to the Philippines when we left Fort Bliss.

Marcello: What was their purpose in sending you to the Philippines?

Burns: This was supposed to be a year of extensive training on this training program, you know, between that age twenty-five or twenty-six. I forget the age limit, but, anyway,

I was right in that age where I was going to have to go, and this was the purpose--extensive training for a year.

Marcello: Did they send the entire division?

Burns: Yes, the whole 200th went. In the 200th we had somewhere around 1,800 to 2,000 men.

Marcello: At that time, that is, around the time that you received orders to go to the Philippines, how closely were you keeping abreast of current affairs and world events?

Burns: Well, as far as myself, individually, I really didn't pay a whole lot of attention to it. I don't know whether the officers in our unit were pretty much aware of what was going on, but I imagine that they would be, or otherwise they wouldn't be where they were.

Marcello: When you thought of the country getting into a possible war, were your eyes turned more toward Europe than toward the Far East?

Burns: No, being in the Philippines there, Clark Field, we were more concerned about events over there than what was going on in the European Theater. To go back just a minute, this might be a little story that might be interesting. Also, at Logan Heights there was another unit there from Arkansas. It has been so long I don't remember exactly...I think that it was the 106th or something like, National Guard unit. There were two places that we could go--Alaska and the Philippines--and so the New Mexico National Guard unit and the

Arkansas group couldn't decide who was going to go where. This was more or less between the officers in charge of it. Colonel Sage was our commanding officer, and I don't know who the other was. But as I understand it, the way that they decided who was going to go where, they got together and flipped a coin to see who was going to go where, and our unit, the 200th, wound up going to the Philippines, and the Arkansas unit wound up going to Alaska. I don't know if that means anything or not, but as I understand it, that is the way that the decision was made as to which unit was going to go where.

Marcello: So according to what you have heard, then, it was the luck of the draw that got you to the Philippines.

Burns: That's right.

Marcello: Describe the trip from the West Coast over to the Philippines.

Burns: Well, we had a real nice trip at that time. Our unit went over on the President Coolidge, which was the luxury liner of the South Pacific then, and this was the first trip that it had ever carried troops. It was more or less converted into a transport, not completely but to a certain extent, and there were several other units aboard. Our unit was on there, and we had all of our equipment, and also all our vehicles were loaded on there. The tank unit from Kentucky was on there, and I forget the unit...I used to remember it,

but I forget it now. But, anyway, it was the tank unit from Kentucky and two or three other units, but I don't remember what they were. As far as our trip going over, it was very pleasant.

We left, I believe, on the 13th of September, and we docked in Manila on the 26th of September. We got off the boat, disembarked, there at Manila, Philippines. We got off the boat there and onto vehicles, and we went into Clark Field. That is where we were supposed to be stationed-- Clark Field.

Marcello: Clark Field was, of course, an Army Air Corps base, but you were still basically an Army unit as such, were you not? I mean, the Air Corps was a part of the Army, of course.

Burns: Well, yes, they had Clark Field--the Air Force there--and since we were an anti-aircraft unit, that is why we were sent to Clark Field.

Marcello: Your function, then was to protect the base, in other words.

Burns: More or less, yes.

Marcello: What sort of activities or training did the unit undergo after you got to Clark Field? Again, speak of yourself personally because this is your story.

Burns: Well, as far as myself goes, I really wasn't in a whole lot of training because I was in food service. I had the Regimental Headquarters mess hall. In fact, before we left Fort Bliss, I was assigned to more or less the officers,

and I had the officers' mess in Stotsenburg there at Clark Field. That was my function. As far as the units go, as I understand from some of the officers, they would take flights with the Air Force there. They would go up, and I guess our batteries were out, and they would throw searchlights and things like this on them for their training, for practice. Like I say, as far as myself, I wasn't out too much in the field because I was more or less inside working, so actually I really didn't know a whole lot of what was going on as far as that part goes.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned Fort Stotsenburg. Now was Stotsenburg adjacent to Clark Field?

Burns: Yes,

Marcello: And is this where your unit stayed?

Burns: This is where our unit was at. In other words, they were more or less right together.

Marcello: What kind of an airfield was this at Clark Field? In other words, what kinds of planes did it have?

Burns: Well, they had some bombers there, B-17's, and had some fighters. I really don't remember if they were P-40's, but, anyway, these planes there at Clark Field would go out on reconnaissance or training flights most every day, and as far as I know, that's what their functions were.

Marcello: I know that for a long period of time prior to the war, during peacetime conditions, of course, the Army in the

Philippines had a tropical work schedule. Had that been abandoned by the time that you got there?

Burns: Let me see if I understand you correctly when you say tropical work schedule. I think that I know what you mean, but before I answer your question I want to be sure.

Marcello: Okay, in some cases, I know that work was finished at noon.

Burns: Okay, I think that I know what you are getting at. No, not exactly. We had our work to do. I don't remember whether it was from noon until 1:00, but they had what they called a "rest period" for a couple of hours or three hours or something like that because it was so hot. This is one reason why they did that, and after this they went ahead with their regular duties.

Marcello: Did this kind of schedule to which you are referring continue right on up until December 7, 1941, or did it change before that?

Burns: Well, as far as I know, it continued as the regular routine. I remember that before the Philippines were hit--I don't know how far ahead--my mess officer came in...of course, being in the mess hall, you have to get up pretty early to get things started for breakfast. He came in and cautioned me that we more or less couldn't turn the lights on because they had got word. How far ahead this was, like

I said, before the Philippines were hit, I don't know. At night we more or less had blackouts and got word that something was in the wind, but I don't know just exactly what.

Marcello: So you could detect changes in your routine as one gets closer to December 7th.

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Could you detect any other changes other than the blackout conditions? For example, how about liberty?

Burns: As far as I know, that wasn't restricted in any way.

Marcello: How about reconnaissance flights on the part of the airplanes? Now again, you were not directly associated with the airplanes, but did you notice that there seemed to be more reconnaissance flights and more activity over at the air base itself.

Burns: Well, as far as myself goes, like I said, I was inside most of the time, and I really didn't know a whole lot about these activities going on outside, so I really couldn't say on this point.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us up to December 7, 1941. Describe where you were and what you were doing and your reactions were when you heard about the attack at Pearl Harbor. Of course, this would have been December 8, 1941, your time.

Burns: This is correct. On the 8th of December, some of the fellows had a radio on, and we were listening to this

commentator from Manila. Now this was at eight o'clock in the morning.

Marcello: In your barracks?

Burns: Well, it was around the barracks, I guess, in the mess hall. After the broadcast was over, this commentator announced that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Now this was about eight o'clock in the morning on December 8th there at Clark Field or Stotsenburg, where our unit was.

Marcello: What seemed to be the reactions of you and your buddies when you heard this news?

Burns: Well, it was a surprise to us. As far as the reactions of the guys, they just couldn't believe it, and we didn't believe that the Philippines had been bombed or would be bombed. But they really hit there, and there was no question about that.

Usually, the planes that were out on reconnaissance would come in around 11:00 or 11:30 or something like that, and as I mentioned before, I had the officers' mess. It seemed like when they would come in to land at Clark Field, they would fly or come right over the officers' mess where I was at. Well, this particular day, the planes came in as usual, and I guess that there wasn't a whole lot thought about it. As far as I know, the guys were more or less going on to their routine. The officers came in--it was right at noontime, lunchtime--and most all of the officers, I guess,

had finished their meal or were about halfway over. I was inside the mess hall. Our barracks and the mess hall were mostly bamboo buildings. The floor and maybe, I would say, four feet up from the floor was bamboo, and then up to the roof, it was screened in. Of course, they had shutters--big shutters, not small shutters--and they would open these shutters with a pole underneath and stick it out, and, of course, that way I could look out over there.

Marcello: So you received this word of the Pearl Harbor attack at eight o'clock in the morning, and it is now somewhere around noon...

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: ...and and the base hasn't undertaken any preparations for what might occur?

Burns: As far as I know, no.

Marcello: It was basically business as usual?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Incredible!

Burns: This is how the planes there at Clark Field got hit, because they were all on the ground.

Anyway, getting back to the mess hall, just as I described it, it was open. Of course, it was pretty hot, and, of course, we had the shutters open. I could see out from the mess hall, and I could look over toward Clark Field. I glanced up, and I could see one of the mess halls there,

and I could see the guys coming out of the mess hall, the Air Force guys, and they were gathering all around. Just as they got outside, they would get in a group, and they were looking up,

Naturally, that kind of aroused my curiosity. They didn't know what was going on, and a few minutes after that--I don't know how many, but it wasn't too long--all of a sudden, the bombs starting hitting. What these boys were looking at was this flight coming in over, which was the Japanese that had bombed the Philippines. And I mean they just caught everything in the hangars, and the planes that had come in. Like I say, the reconnaissance hadn't come in and landed, and that is when the Japs caught all of the planes there on the ground at Clark Field.

Marcello: Approximately how long did this attack last? You would have to estimate this, of course?

Burns: Oh, I would say at least a couple of hours, anyway. How true this is, I don't know, but just for the record I hate to be the one to say this if it is a rumor, but as I understand it, there was another plane out, a lone plane. He was still on reconnaissance, and he spotted these planes coming in. This one plane had called the tower, telling the guy that was in the tower that these planes were coming, and as I understand it, he was a master sergeant, and he did not relay the message. That's as I understand it now. How true

this story is, I don't know. It was one of the stories that happened, and I would assume that this is one reason why we got caught the way we did there at Clark Field.

Marcello: What did you do when the attack commenced at Clark Field?

Burns: Well, I was in the mess hall, and I really didn't know what to do to a certain extent. Finally, the mess officer came in and told us what happened, and, of course, we found our helmets and more or less we got in somewhere where we had protection.

This is real funny incident...of course, all the mess halls over there had Filipino KP's. There in the mess hall, we didn't have any refrigeration boxes, but they were ice-boxes. I am just going to throw this in for a little humor because it actually happened. So when all this started, the Filipinos that we had working in the mess hall, they took off; and this one Filipino, the first thing that he did was he got inside of our icebox. So after it was all over with, I asked him, "Why did you get into the icebox?" I couldn't figure this out. Well, I didn't know it either, but these iceboxes are hand-made over there by the Filipinos for the mess halls, and the big doors, was oh, I would say, at least five or six inches thick. What they had put in there for insulation in the door was sand. I didn't know that, but this Filipino did, so he got inside this icebox for protection (chuckle). I guess that if I had known it, I would have

done the same thing. But that actually happened.

Marcello: During this period did Fort Stotsenburg itself come under any direct attack?

Burns: Oh, yes, for Fort Stotsenburg and everything there.

Marcello: In other words, they were not only hitting Clark Field at this time, but they also hit Fort Stotsenburg?

Burns: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. See, after the bombers hit there, then the fighters came down and did strafing.

Marcello: And basically is that what hit Fort Stotsenburg, that is, the strafers?

Burns: Well, Fort Stotsenburg and Clark Field is more or less all just one place, you see.

They had one lieutenant there, Lieutenant Walker... it was kind of funny in a way. This one strafers would come down and strafe at him, and he would get on one side of the tree there. The plane would come by and make a sweep (chuckle), and he would come back, and he would get on the other side. This actually happened. This is just one of the little incidents there. This is what he told us after it was all over with.

Marcello: Where did you personally go at this time? Now you mentioned that you all were heading for cover. Where did you personally go?

Burns: I stayed in the mess hall. I got down underneath there in the kitchen, We had some shelves underneath where we had our

plates, and there was a place in there that I got underneath in there for protection in case anything fell on me.

Marcello: In the meantime, what kind of resistance is either Clark Field or Fort Stotsenburg putting up? Can you hear any antiaircraft fire or anything of that nature?

Burns: Well, that I don't know. All I know about is just right there. I know some of the planes were trying to get off, but they didn't make it because they were all hit on the ground.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened in the aftermath of the attack?

In other words, where did you go or what did you do?

Burns: Well, I really don't remember a whole lot. I know that we got orders finally...I guess that we started to get things together, and I don't know if it was that day or the day after, but, anyway, our unit got together, and we started to pull out. This is when we went back into Bataan. I forget the kilometers. Anyway, I guess that probably it was a day or a day-and-a-half maybe when we got all of our vehicles and units together, and we pulled out of Stotsenburg there at Clark Field, and our convoy was moving in clear daylight.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, that is, between the time of the attack and the time that you moved out, I gather that you were organizing and getting all of your gear together for this move?

Burns: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Did you realize--at that time--the hopelessness of your situation?

Burns: I, myself, don't think that I really did. I don't know how the other boys felt, but, I, myself, don't think I really did.

Marcello: Did you feel you could defeat any Japanese invasion, or did you believe that you were going to be removed from the Philippines by the Navy?

Burns: No. There was no way...come to think about it, we were given rifles, and I do remember now that there was another boy with me--I think that he was one of my cooks--by the name of Tom Cisneros, and we were together. We were down in a kind of a trench. We were actually waiting for the Japs to come in there. We were waiting for the Japs to come in there, and we thought that this was it.

Marcello: But I assume that you really didn't know the extent of the damage at Pearl Harbor.

Burns: No, we did not.

Marcello: Okay, describe the move from Clark Field back into the Bataan Peninsula.

Burns: Naturally, I was with the kitchen truck and so forth. I forget how long our convoy was, but I do remember, as we were moving...then I guess that this was a reconnaissance plane flying over, and as I understand it, the Japanese couldn't

believe that one unit had this many vehicles moving. We thought, also, that this was it. We didn't know what this plane was going to do. We didn't know if it was a bomber or what it was, but I guess that it just turned out to be a reconnaissance plane.

So we pulled in someplace. I can't remember the kilometer that we pulled into, but, anyway, we pulled in for lunch. I don't know if this is significant or not, but we had prepared the officers' mess, and our commanding officer at that time was Colonel Sage. So I do remember, when we were eating lunch there, Colonel Sage had his plate up on the front fender of the mess truck, and I was standing there right close to him. At this particular time there were some bombers going over us, and they were...well, they were very high. In other words, you couldn't hardly see them but you could hear the groan of their motors. Colonel Sage could tell that I was a little nervous, and...you could more or less barely see them, but we could spot them. He said, "John, don't worry about those planes." He said, "They are going someplace else. They can't see you, anyway. They are so high that if they could see you, you would only look like the size of a head of a pinpoint, a straight pin." So when he told me that, that gave me a little confidence, and from then on I wasn't too scared.

Usually, almost everyplace that we stopped, the first

thing that we did, naturally, was dig a foxhole. At one place that we stopped...I don't know how many days this was after going back to Bataan, but we stopped at some little village there...I forget the name of it... but a little humor. We were preparing a meal for the troops that had come in, and right by where we had set up the kitchen was a little stream, kind of behind us and on the side. Across this stream...it wasn't very deep... kind of like an irrigation ditch or something like that. The water was clear, and they had some little trees or plants where you walked across there...you walked down this road, and you hit this village. And there was a bridge not too far from there, and I guess that some of these dive-bombers came over, and they were trying to knock this bridge out. One of the shells hit right in this little stream (chuckle) where we had our kitchen, and, of course, we all headed for our foxhole. No one was hurt this particular time, but this was one incident that did happen.

Marcello: When you went back into the Bataan Peninsula, were you fairly well-stocked at that time so far as food is concerned?

Burns: Yes, we had quite a bit of food there.

Marcello: Was there normally a standard issue that the troops were given when they moved back into the Bataan Peninsula, at least in the early stages.

Burns: Yes, I think so.

Marcello: What do you recall that standard issue a being? What were you feeding these guys?

Burns: I really can't remember...well, yes, in one way we had a lot of sardines and tomato sauce, and, of course, we had beans and things like that. It was mostly canned stuff. It has been so long that, you know, some of this is gone. But we ate, I guess, fairly good as far as our own unit.

I know that at one time...well, I guess this is after we got back into...no, this would be before we made the move back into the Bataan Peninsula. I know that one of my colonels came up to me and told me...in fact, it was Colonel King. He said, "I don't want you to say anything about it, but we are going to get some meat issued, but it is going to be horse meat. I don't want you to say anything to the men about it because if they know that, they are not going to eat it." The stories that people have heard about us being issued horse meat over there, this actually happened.

Marcello: How early did the issue of horse meat begin?

Burns: This was after we had moved, I think, or just before we moved on the convoy.

Marcello: Describe what the terrain or the geography of the Bataan Peninsula was like.

Burns: Well, of course, naturally, we were back into the jungle, and you had the bamboo. It was very thick, and we had some

big trees. I don't know what kind of trees, but they were fairly tall. Of course, you had your bamboo and all of this type of vegetation, and in some places you had your banana trees. Guys would go out and get these bananas off of there. Then you had some mango trees. I guess that you know what a mango is. Some people don't. The guys would pick these.

This is something, too, that might be interesting. The guys in the motor pool were down...I think that this is right where I mentioned that the bomb hit in the stream by the kitchen. I don't remember how far, but the motor pool was from where the kitchen was, but I do remember some of the guys, when they were walking through the jungle there, coming up to the mess hall, and these monkeys...they had some pretty good-sized monkeys there in the jungle part, and these monkeys would attack you, and this actually happened. You kind of had to be careful because they were pretty big, and they were pretty rough.

Marcello: Now as I recall, the Bataan Peninsula was mountainous, also, was it not?

Burns: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Generally speaking, I guess it was a pretty good place to mount some sort of defensive stand.

Burns: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Am I to assume that being in the commissary and, more

specifically, in the officers mess, in most cases you were behind the lines when the fighting actually took place?

Burns: Yes, yes, I was more or less behind the lines most all of the time.

Marcello: Describe the situation, as you remember it, when things really began to get bad down in the peninsula. I guess what we need to start with is the food situation.

Burns: Do you mean just before we were captured?

Marcello: Before the surrender.

Burns: Actually, I don't think that our food situation was too bad. Of course, there were some rations that we didn't get, but I don't think at that particular time that anyone was hurting too much.

Marcello: Was this also true of the enlisted men?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: What kind of rations were you getting there near the end?

Burns: I really and truthfully can't say. My mind has gone blank. Like you say, it has been thirty-five or forty years.

Marcello: I have also heard and read that...maybe I need to rephrase my question because don't want to ask you a leading question. The overall commander at this time was General MacArthur. What was the general overall reaction of the troops on Bataan toward General MacArthur at that time?

Burns: Well, you see, I don't know just when it was before we got back on the peninsula. I don't know if it was before that

or after that, but as you know, they got MacArthur out. Of course, it would have been one of the Japanese heights and glory, I guess, to capture a five-star general, and regardless of whoever you are, the United States is not going to let a five-star general get captured. Of course, like I said, he was still on Corregidor with General Wainwright, and so...well, I don't know whether it was at this time or not, but I know later on...I hate to say this, but you want the truth, so I am going to give it to you the way that I see it and the way that I felt. The biggest majority of the POW's or the guys that was there on the Philippines...I hate to say it, but they had no use for General MacArthur, even though he might have been one of the best generals that we ever had. I guess that he did have something on the ball, or he wouldn't be where he was at. But I think that this is the feeling that most of the guys had--that they just couldn't see it--and, of course, after we were captured and Bataan fell, we heard stories and things that MacArthur was going to come back. And the guys still...even after they got back to the States, they had that same feeling.

Marcello: Is it not true that there is a certain amount of disgruntlement over the fact that he made very, very infrequent trips from Corregidor over to Bataan?

Burns: That I can't answer to be truthful because I don't know what

went on in the part of it. Really, I can't truthfully answer that question. I really don't know.

Marcello: Okay, describe the events leading up to your capture. Of course, we know that Bataan fell, or the surrender took place, on April 9, 1942. Describe the events leading up to that particular day.

Burns: Well, like I said, I don't remember what kilometer we were at, but I know that my unit there, my mess hall, had stopped...like I said, I can't remember the kilometers, but, anyway, our guys that weren't on the antiaircraft guns-- the other boys and the Air Force boys there--were given rifles, and we were supposed to form a line, which we did.

Marcello: So things are getting that desperate that they are putting service personnel up on the lines?

Burns: Yes, yes, this did happen. I remember that my kitchen and one other...the 2nd Battalion...a boy from the mess hall there. In fact, we had to send food up to these men on a jeep, which we did. It seems to me that right after this...now how many days we were there, I don't know. Anyway, on this particular day, right after the jeep pulled out with the food, why, this is when we surrendered.

Marcello: Describe how you got the word and what your reaction was when you heard it.

Burns: Well, I was with...oh, there were four or five of us together back in the jungle there, and of course, we were all

hiding in the jungle, and we heard some kind of noise. It was up on the road. I don't know how far we were off the road back in the jungle, but this noise that we heard...the guys that came in said that it was Jap tanks, which actually they were, and so we got word for us to come out. We walked out from our hiding places, and, of course, they told us to come out with our hands up with a white flag, and this is what we did.

Marcello: In other words, you really did not receive any official word that a surrender had occurred?

Burns: Well, somebody must have got the word down, I guess. I don't know, but, anyway, this is what we were told at that time. I didn't know where my commanding officer was, but one of the boys in the group knew where he was at, and so he took off; and this is how we got the word, and this is what he told us to do, and so this is what we did.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that you were supposed to surrender? What kind of thoughts were going through your mind?

Burns: Well, really, I guess there really weren't any (chuckle). We just did what we were told, you know. But I do remember... of course, this is isn't actually giving too much of an answer to your question, but I, myself, and the group that I was with...like I say, there were four, five or six of us, and we did what we were told. We walked out to the

road, and as we come out of the jungle onto the road there, the first thing that I saw was a Jap. He looked like he wasn't any taller than four or five feet tall or something like that. My impression, when we walked out...this Jap soldier didn't know what we were going to do, and he was standing there shaking just like a leaf. When we came out, this is what I saw--the first Jap that I saw--and, of course, the tanks were coming in, and so that is where I was this particular time when we got word to surrender.

Marcello: Okay what happens at that point then?

Burns: Well, we didn't know where to go, and this is when they started to...this is when all the guys started coming out, and this is when they started to get us grouped together. I wish that I could remember the kilometers and places.

There was one place where we were all herded in, and we are getting to the time...this is when the Japs officers and our officers got together, and the Japanese officers kept asking our officers that were in charge and talking to the Japanese,..of course, on Bataan, also, was the 31st Infantry, not the 31st Regiment. It was the 31st Infantry that was there. They had been stationed there before we got there, anyway. And the Japanese officer kept on insisting they wanted to know where the rest of the men were. As I mentioned before we started the interview, we gave the Japanese such a hard time, and the Japanese had

figured so many men to take the Aleutian Islands, Guam, and these different places over there. They had allotted so many men for these different places, and when they got to the Philippines...to go back to Corregidor a minute, they had to bring in their crack marine troops to come in there and take Corregidor. It took more Japanese men to come in there and take the Philippines than what they had anticipated on, and we gave them such a hard time when they came in there that this is why the Japanese officers were insisting that there were more men there. They kept insisting and wanting to know where the rest of the 31st Regiment was, Our officers kept telling them Japs that it was just the 31st Infantry, and that was all that was there. They couldn't believe it. Our officers had a very hard time convincing the Japanese that this was just the 31st Infantry and not the 31st Regiment. This will give you some idea--even though we were not infantrymen or combat men, especially our unit and the Air Force men was there--how hard a time that we did give the Japanese before they did come in there and take us.

Marcello: Okay, let's get back to the actual surrender again. Now you mentioned that you came out under a white flag, and you surrendered, and you saw this Japanese who appeared to be very small in appearance, so far as you were concerned. What happened at that point then?

- Burns: Well, as far as I know, we just went along with them, I guess. They just more or less motioned for us to go, and this is where they got all us up to this one area and got us grouped there. This is where the Japanese... I guess that they got some kind of count on us. I don't know how they did it, but, anyway, this is where our officers and the Japanese officers were having this conversation about the number of men that were there-- about the 31st Infantry and so forth.
- Marcello: At this point, did the Japanese harass you or loot you or anything of that nature?
- Burns: At this particular point, no. As I said, I wish I could remember the kilometer...anyway, I think that it was somewhere down around one kilometer or 1.64 or something like this. At this particular point, no. We stayed there the rest of that day and that night. I don't remember if it was the following day or the day after that we started out--certain groups--on what became the Death March.
- Marcello: While you were in this group during that period of the initial surrender, what do you talk about? What thoughts were going through your mind? You mentioned that you were there the rest of that day and then that night.
- Burns: Well, we just didn't know what was going to happen because we had no food issued to us, and what food the guys did

have was what maybe they had on them. No food or anything was issued to us because they hadn't made any arrangements for us. In a situation like that, it was (chuckle) no way of telling. As best that I can remember, it was something like that length of time that we were there, and this is where we started marching.

Marcello: What kind of equipment did you have at that particular time, that is, at the time of the initial surrender?

Burns: Well, if I remember right, when we surrendered when we came out, like I said, our commander officer told us to come out with a white flag. Of course, if we had any weapons, we left them. We didn't come out with any weapons, so when we were all gathered in this one group, we didn't have any weapons of any kind at all. Mostly, what we had was maybe a blanket or mess kit and a knife and fork and canteen and canteen belt that they had issued for our canteens and mess kit. That is about it.

Marcello: So you had more or less your basic field equipment with you.

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: And the Japanese, of course, did not take any of that gear at this point.

Burns: No, not at this point.

Marcello: In many cases, there would be rumors going around that the Japanese didn't take any prisoners. Did you hear anything of that sort that night? Perhaps even before the surrender

took place?

Burns: No, not that I can recall.

Marcello: I guess what I am saying in effect is, were you afraid for your life at that particular time?

Burns: Yes. I think that most everybody was because we didn't know what the Japanese were going to do. We had no idea of what they were going to do.

Marcello: Were there very many guards here with this group that night?

Burns: I really can't say. I guess that they did have some guards around there, but I don't think that they were too worried because I guess we were all too scared to do anything.

Marcello: I guess at this time the Japanese were probably more interested in mopping up and getting on with the business of ending resistance and so on in the island.

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Generally speaking, the Death March actually begins for some troops on April 9th, and then for others, I think, it begins on April 10th. In most cases it seems to have started at a place called Mariveles. Do you recall if that is where you started?

Burns: No, I didn't get down that far. I didn't get down that far, but that is probably correct.

Marcello: What happened the next morning? This would be April 10th in your particular case.

Burns: What happened the next morning? Well, we didn't know... we kept waiting and waiting to see what the Japs wanted to do. Like I say, I don't remember if we waited the whole next day and that night and the following day before they moved us out or whether it was the next day. To me it seemed like it wasn't the next day. It could have been maybe late in the afternoon or middle of the afternoon or something like that. I would say probably that it was the following day before they started to move us out.

Marcello: Okay, describe what happened at that point.

Burns: Well, actually, there wasn't a whole lot happened. They just started us marching down the road.

Marcello: Now did they start this entire group marching down the road?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Approximately how many men were there? Again, you will have to estimate this, obviously.

Burns: Oh, I couldn't say. Like I said, there were about 1,800 of the 200th. Now whether all the 200th was there, I really couldn't say. Of course, there were guys from the 31st Infantry; there were Air Force guys; there were guys from the tank unit from Kentucky; and, of course, there was the 200th. At this point, I really couldn't tell you.

Marcello: Now in this specific group that you were in, would you say

there were at least 500 men.

Burns: Oh, I would say that there was more than that. I would say there were at least 1,000 or 1,200 or something like that.

Marcello: And they all began the march at the same time?

Burns: This particular group, yes. Well, actually, this is where the march started. Now whether it was the Death March then or not...I think actually the Death March was part of the beginning of the march.

Marcello: Describe what happens to you at this point.

Burns: Well, myself, particularly, I remember that personal equipment or basic equipment...I know that after so long guys were carrying what they could. I had a few extra things, like, a bed roll and stuff like this and a blanket and pillow, but I will tell you one thing--it didn't take long until I had discarded it. The only thing that I wound up carrying was my mess kit and my two canteens (chuckle). That is what I wound up with.

Marcello: When you started the march, did you have the canteens filled with water? Did you have a pretty good water supply at the time you started?

Burns: As far as I can remember, I had my two canteens full of water.

Marcello: Okay, describe the march as it takes place.

Burns: Well, like I said, we started and after so long, the guys

tried to hold on to as much as they could, but it just got too heavy, and we had to discard it.

Marcello: Describe what the heat was like.

Burns: It was fairly hot. Really, I didn't pay a whole lot of attention to that. You know, the Philippines only have two seasons. There is your hot season and your rainy season, and I think that your rainy season starts along about September, and, of course, this being in April, this was the hot part of the season in the Philippines.

Marcello: Describe what it was like walking on this road, and there is a road that goes all the way round the peninsula. I guess that is the road that you were on.

Burns: Yes. At this particular point, I really can't remember, but at certain points down the march...we went from there... they marched us into a place called San Fernando.

Marcello: That is almost at the end of the march, though.

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: What was the road itself like? Was it a dirt road? Macadam?

Burns: It was more or less a dirt road. Well, in my particular situation, somewhere along the way I got with...actually, there wasn't any organized guards with us at this particular time because...there couldn't have been because in this particular time, I wound up with some of our medics that was in our unit, and there were a couple of doctors there,

Dr. Farley and Dr. Blair. They were dentists. As I mentioned before, at the beginning of the interview, the band and these different units were attached to Regimental Headquarters for rations. Dr. Farley told me, "John, you stick with us." And I guess there was probably about eight of us. At this particular time they gave me an armband of the medics that was a white background and a red cross. So I stayed with them, and we were more or less just following the marching on our own. There really weren't any guards with us at this particular time.

Like I said, I don't know which kilometer it was, but, anyway, it was getting toward late in the evening, and we passed this one particular place, and there was a schoolhouse. The Japs had already come in at this time, and they had taken over these schoolhouses and was more or less using them for shelter or a place to sleep. As we passed this one particular place, there was this one Japanese officer that had come out and stopped us, not to give us any trouble or anything like that. But we got to talking to him and come to find out that he spoke better English than most of us did. I think that he was a doctor, if I remember right, and he asked us questions. We were talking to him, so I think this particular doctor had been educated at the University of California or somewhere here

in the States. Well, anyway, he finally got around to asking us what we thought about President Roosevelt, and this one medic started to say something and was more or less running him down, and before he got too far away, I reached over and kicked him on the shins because this is exactly what the Japanese wanted to hear. So he shut up after that. I didn't go for that, so I just reached over...I was standing next to him, and when he started answering, especially (chuckle) when he started running the president down, he didn't know whether I liked him or not. I said, "Regardless of who it was, that is one thing that I don't think that a person should do in this particular situation," and I kicked him pretty hard. I guess then he realized what he was saying. I don't know if he realized what he had been saying up to that time or not.

Marcello: So during the first day, you were not being harassed at all by the guards or anything?

Burns: No, no. I guess that was probably about the first two days.

Marcello: By this time, has the line strung out quite a bit?

Burns: No, not at this particular time, as far as my situation goes, and I don't think that it was until...I don't know if it was later on that evening or whether it was the next day. It was getting pretty close to sundown--in fact, I guess that it was already sundown--and we passed a particular place there,

and some Japanese guards came out, and they herded us into this particular place where there were a lot of other guys. In fact, we couldn't even hardly find a spot to sit down because of all the other guys in there, and everything was all taken.

So then I guess that it was the next day...I am kind of skipping over a little part because one spot that we had stopped...and we were there--I don't know--maybe that whole day, but I know that it was a long time. You asked me how hot it was. Well, at this particular time, it was very hot, and this was at the time that Dr. Farley told me to stay with his group. That was before this incident and I told you about where I kicked the Jap officer when the Jap officer had asked about President Roosevelt at this point. This was the day before when I went with the group and Dr. Farley told me to stay with him.

Then from the point where the Jap officer came out and talked to us, we went on down and was walking...I don't know whether it was whether that night or the next day, toward evening, when we were herded into this one place because the Japs wouldn't let us go. There were some Japs on the road, and they came out and guided us in there just like they were driving some cows home.

Marcello: Describe this place where they herded you that night.

Burns: All that I can tell you is that it was a big area there

where they had the prisoners to go in. I guess that during the day they had brought them all in there. So I think that we stayed there that night and all day the next day, and I think the next morning is when they started to march us out. I would say it was around 10:00 in the morning.

Marcello: Now up until this time, had you been fed yet?

Burns: No. They had not fed us or nothing. The food that we had, we either had it with us or we found it along the way or whatever. They had not yet given us any food. Even when we got into this area, they still didn't give us any food. We had just what you had or what had been snuck out by the Filipinos. But there were no food of any kind given along the march, as far as that goes.

Marcello: At this point, how is your water supply holding out?

Burns: Well, it wasn't too good. Of course, like I said, in my particular case, I was with this group, and, of course, along the way you had these flowing artesian wells, you know, just water flowing up. Of course, when we got in there, we made it a point to get water. But as far as I, myself, and the group that I was with, we were pretty well fixed on water.

Marcello: In other words, these artesian wells could be found down along the path of the march?

Burns: Yes,

Marcello: And at this point the Japanese had no objections to you filling your canteens?

Burns: Well, I was going to get into that a little later on the march.

Marcello: How about at this point?

Burns: At this point, no, the Japs didn't want us to get any water.

Marcello: Now up until this time, were they marching you at a rather rapid and hurried pace, or were proceeding at a rather...I don't want to call it a leisurely pace.

Burns: Well, at this point, when my group that I was with was stopped and herded in with the other prisoners, we didn't have any assigned guards. We just more or less were marching on our own. Like I say, I don't remember whether we were there that night and whether it was the following morning that we started out around 10:00 or whether it was the following day.

Marcello: Let's talk about this march when you started out at 10:00 in the morning.

Burns: This is where, in my situation, that I remember when the Japs got us into a group. Now I don't know whether the other men who had come in there had been marching in a group or not. I don't know. They started us with so many to a group, and the way that they did that, they had a hundred men to a group. You had a column of four across and

twenty-five deep--do you follow me--which made a hundred men. Okay, there was one Jap guard assigned to a hundred men. You might have four or five columns, see. You have the first Jap at the first column and another Jap guard at the second and another Jap guard at the third and so on.

Marcello: They just herded a hundred of you together. It didn't make any difference what your unit was or anything?

Burns: No, that didn't make any difference. Okay, I guess from this point, this guard was checked out with a hundred men, and we were supposed to march so far. At this next point, when we got in there, he was supposed to check in a hundred men. If they didn't check in with a hundred men, he had "had it." So naturally, if he didn't check in with a hundred men--something happened--the only thing that he could do was that the prisoner himself would be shot. That is the only thing he could do because if one had gotten away, he was held responsible, and so he would really "get it." They might take him out and shoot him. I don't know what their policy was on that. But, anyway, that is the way that it worked.

Well, I think that when we started, after they put a hundred men to a group, we marched up so far...I think it was...they were supposed to march us twenty-five miles. That night we were stopped, and we were herded into another

area. Of course when we got in there, as I mentioned, the Jap guard was supposed to check in a hundred men.

I think it was the next day that we started out again. Of course, we had a new guard.

Marcello: Now this first day, when you were marching these one hundred men, was it rather uneventful in terms of harassment by the Japanese guards?

Burns: As far as I know, yes, at this particular point.

Marcello: So far as you could tell everybody still stayed together in this group of a hundred?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Did you see any evidence along the road of atrocities or anything of that nature?

Burns: This is what I was coming to. This is what I am coming up to now. The next day, of course, the same thing happened. They changed guards because, I suppose, they were only supposed to march us so far. We got new guards, and I think it was on this particular day...let me see...I guess that it was the second time that we started out. I don't think that it was the first time. Anyway, it could have happened thie first time...or the second group. Anyway, I do remember this part. When we were herded into this area, I would say it is the second day out when we were marching in groups. That night we could barely find a place to get in there to lie down. I don't know if this is significant

or not, but, anyway, it was one of the things that happened. I remember that there was a path there back in the back to a latrine. They had trenches for latrines. During the night, this one boy--I don't know who he was--had dysentery pretty bad, and so he got up several times during the night and stumbled back to the latrines. It just so happened that he stumbled over my feet, and, of course, this woke me up.

I want to break here just a little bit and tell you this part. As we were laying down at night at these different places, you had to sleep with your shoes under your head, if you had any shoes or anything like that, because at night the Japanese would sneak through there, and they would steal your shoes or anything that they thought was of value. A lot of guys lost their shoes, and they would look through your mess kit and see whatever you had. If you had a watch or anything like that, they would take it and so forth.

But, anyway, to get back to the boy that stumbled over me, well, the next day when we started out, we starting marching. I think at this particular time they had changed guards, and it just so happened that we got a good guard that day. He was one of the biggest Japs that I had ever seen. So my group was pretty fortunate because at the head of the group we had...I forget his name. He

was a civilian, but he was there in the Philippines, and he spoke Japanese. The Japs...you know, it doesn't take them very long to find out about these people, so he interpreted. He did a lot of interpreting. This one guard that we had, he went up and told him that whenever we came up to one of these artesian wells and it might be off of the road a little ways, why, we could break rank and go get water.

Now this was just the one guard. Now this guard that was in charge with our group was in charge of that group, and whatever he wanted to do was his business. Now the other guards that were in charge, they didn't bother this guard; I mean, what they wanted to do was their business, see.

So he seemed like a pretty good "Joe." The one that did the Japanese interpreting went up and told him that the guys that wanted water could break ranks and go out. He said, "Not your canteen, because it is too small a hole and will take too long to fill it, but you can take your canteen cup and get water." So the word was passed back.

I do remember that at one time I was in about the fourth column from the front, and I do remember that this one Jap guard came over and pulled a couple of guys out by the shirt because they didn't go and get water. He pulled them by their shirts and pulled them out, and he

made them to get water. He saw that they didn't and he saw their canteen cup, so he actually made them go and get water. Okay, now just a little way before we get up to the water to where this well was, we would run out and run back again to the column, and by the time we got up to the well, you see, we were back in the column. Now this is one of the guards that we had.

Marcello: About how far behind you is the next column?

Burns: Oh, I would say it was...how long is this room here?

Marcello: About twenty feet, twenty-five feet.

Burns: Well, I would say it was probably maybe fifteen feet or something like that.

Marcello: So the columns are not very far apart then?

Burns: No, they weren't too far apart. I guess they were about fifteen or twenty feet apart or something like that. Sometimes the guard would be up in front of the column and then fall back to the back of the column.

Now then I think that it was this day...you asked me about the treatment or harassment that we got. Well, this particular day, if I remember right...I think this was the day, but, if not, this actually happened. This one guy that I mentioned the night before that was going out to the latrine and that stumbled over me...this was how I knew who it was. I didn't know the guy's name, but I knew who it was. He had to go to the bathroom, let's put it that way.

The Japanese word is benjo. He was in the second or third column, I guess, from the end up into the group. Well, he had to go to the benjo real quick, and he fell out on the right, which the guard marched on the right. At this particular time we were coming into a little village, and it was close to sundown. The guy tried to do what was right. He fell out and went over to the guard and tried to get permission to go to the benjo. I guess the guard didn't understand what he meant, or he didn't make himself clear. I don't know. Of course, none of us spoke Japanese except this one interpreter. Later on, some of the guys picked up some Japanese. I guess that this guy thought that he was trying to get away. He didn't know what he wanted to do. He was so weak that he could hardly stand up. They scuffled a little bit, and the guy got up almost to his knees, and the Jap scuffled with him again, and this went on about three times. He was trying to explain to the guard what he wanted to do, and, like I said, the guard didn't know or didn't want to know. About the third time, he got about halfway up on his knees, and the Jap shot him right through the heart.

Marcello: Now this is the guard that had started out the day as a pretty humane person, or is it a different guard?

Burns: No, no. In the group that I was in, this guard that I was telling you about was the one that would make us go get

water. I think I mentioned that it was the column up front of us, and this boy was on the tail end of the column in front of us. I would say he was up two or three columns from the rear toward the front, and, of course, this group had another guard. Like I mentioned, awhile ago, this guard in charge of this group had nothing to do with this guard back with this group. There were different types of dispositions, you see.

When this boy fell out on the right, he was trying to get permission to go to the benjo. Like I said, he didn't understand what he was trying to do.

Marcello: After the guard shot this boy, did the guard simply just go on?

Burns: He just went on. He didn't stop or nothing. Now if the guy had just fell out on the left and had not said anything, the guys in the column would have covered up for him. Like I say, the guards would sometimes march up toward the front, sometimes to the center, or sometimes to the rear of the column. He was up more or less far enough that he wouldn't be able to see...the guys would have covered up for him until he went to the benjo, and then he could have caught up and got back in the column, and the guard would never have missed him.

Marcello: What kind of reception did the prisoners get from the

Filipino civilians along the march?

Burns: There is no way that I think that you can describe it, as far as sympathy. Of course, they couldn't do very much because they were afraid for their lives when coming out and getting into contact with the prisoners. I will tell you a little more about that as we go on from San Fernando into O'Donnell.

So we got into San Fernando, and...we were herded into San Fernando. This was more or less one of the central points where...

Marcello: There is a railroad junction there.

Burns: That's right.

Marcello: Let me ask you this before we get you out of San Fernando. I do know that in many cases, as the prisoners were marching in one direction, Japanese troops were coming in the other direction in trucks and so on. From time to time, there would be harassment from those dudes in the trucks. Do you recall this?

Burns: I am glad that you mentioned the trucks because in some cases the trucks came along, and some of the prisoners were put in the trucks, and they got to ride. In other words, they would haul them in trucks, and this was the case. I am glad that you mentioned it because I had forgotten about that,

Marcello: But at the time, there were trucks going in the opposite

direction, and I understand that these Japanese would lean over and try and hit the prisoners in some cases with gun butts or whatever they had handy.

Burns: Oh, yes. In one instance on the march, they had picked up some American prisoners...of course, after the fall of Bataan, after they surrendered, of course, what vehicles were there the Japs confiscated. The biggest part of them, I guess--well, practically none of them--knew how to drive these trucks or anything about them. So what they did, they picked one of the prisoners, one of the American soldiers, for a driver, and this was a pretty good deal for the driver because they stayed right with the Japanese group and drove the truck.

Since you asked me this, it does bring back one instance there that we passed this truck. It was parked right in the middle of the road, and one of our boys there... of course, the truck was stopped, and I guess they were waiting for us to get by. I don't know why the truck was stopped there, but, anyway, this one boy was in front of the truck--he was one of our men--and he was just leaning up against the truck there and watching us go by. It just so happened that he was one of the 200th men. They had picked him for a truck driver, and his name was Melvin Waldrop. Later on, after we got into the prison camp, we ran into each other, and he told me he recognized

me as I went by. He told me that he didn't think that I was going to make it. But I did.

Marcello: What kind of condition were you in at this point? Describe what was happening to you personally.

Burns: What was the question?

Marcello: Describe what was happening to you personally on the march. You mentioned that this particular person observed that you might not make it, or at least he thought that you might not make it. So what kind of condition were you in?

Burns: Well, we were all weak and all because of what we had to eat; I mean, during the march, all of the time during the march, we had nothing provided. Whatever we got to eat, we had to scrounge for ourselves.

Marcello: Did you have anything to eat?

Burns: Yes, from time to time what stuff we could scrounge or maybe sneak over. Also, the Filipinos were on this march, too, but the Filipinos were kept separate from the Americans. When we would go into these places where we would stop, they would be off to a group by themselves. Sometimes the guys would sneak over to where they were, and they would get food sneaked into them from the Filipinos in the area. We would scrounge from them or sneak off and get whatever we could or steal whatever we could. But as far as along the march, the Japanese had no

provisions or no way of giving us any food at all. We were strictly on our own.

Marcello: Awhile ago I was talking about those truckloads of Japanese soldiers going in the opposite direction, and I gather than in those cases you simply had to get off the road for them.

Burns: Yes, to a certain extent. We more or less marched on one side of the road, but sometimes we had to get way over, farther.

Marcello: I am sure that they must have churned up a tremendous amount of dust and so on.

Burns: Oh, yes, that is very true.

Marcello: But did you ever see--you personally--these Japanese soldiers lean over and hit any of the prisoners?

Burns: Me, myself, no, I can't recall where any of this happened. I do remember one instance when one group in the first of the march...I will go back and say this for the record because it comes to my mind now. I guess that it was before or right after the march had started. In one place we had stopped, and this artillery officer had been brought into the area where we were on a stretcher, and he was pretty well shot up. I guess that he lost his leg. Anyway, the story goes that they had these big guns--I think that they were 105's--big artillery, and they were shelling...and, of course, as a lot of people know,

MacArthur himself owned about half of Manila. A lot of people don't know that, but so the story goes, he had quite a bit invested over there. And these artillery guns that were shelling in Manila weren't hitting anything more or less. This artillery officer...told him they didn't want to shell Manila. He told them, "To hell with it! I want those guns to shell Manila!" Then that is when they really started shelling Manila with this artillery, and this is one instance that happened. When they did, then our artillery really began to give Manila a lot of trouble.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get to San Fernando, which, as we mentioned, is a rail junction?

Burns: Well, the reason for that was that this is when we were loaded into the boxcars.

Marcello: Did you remain in San Fernando any period of time?

Burns: When we got into San Fernando...I don't remember what time we got in there, but I guess it was sometime during the day, probably the afternoon. This was a central point, and, of course, there were a lot of other prisoners in there. We were herded in there, and we stayed there that night and, I think, the next day and that night, and I guess it was the following day that we were probably moved out. That seems about right or something like that.

Marcello: And you still had received no food?

Burns: Well, when they got to San Fernando, they had a little rice ball for us. Some of the guys came up to Dr. Farley-- they found out that he was there--and they said, "Doctor, I haven't had a bowel movement for three days or four days." They wanted to know if he would give them something for a bowel movement. Dr. Farley said, "Don't worry about it. You haven't had anything to eat, and I haven't had a bowel movement for four days myself." Some of them were pretty hard to convince. At this particular time, when some of the guys did have a bowel movement, it was worse than a woman in labor having a baby--that's just hard it was--because we hadn't had any food. So when we did have a bowel movement, it was very, very hard.

We were given a little rice there, but I forget how much. Anyway, they started loading us onto boxcars.

Marcello: Describe conditions inside the boxcars. First of all, describe what kind of boxcars these were.

Burns: Well, they were similar to our boxcars--on the same order-- but not quite as big. I would say they were maybe a third smaller than our boxcars and maybe not quite as high. So what they did, they herded us into these boxcars, and they just packed us in there like sardines, and then on some of them they closed the doors. Well, you can imagine that with that many people in one of these boxcars with no air in there, some of them suffocated.

Marcello: These were metal boxcars?

Burns: I don't remember if they were metal boxcars. I guess that they were wood. They were more or less similar to ours, but, like I say, not quite as large. Of course, when they got us loaded in there, then this is when we were on our way to Camp O'Donnell, which was a first camp that we were in.

Marcello: Was there room to sit or lie down on the boxcar?

Burns: No, no way! You had to stand up all of the way.

Marcello: What did it smell like in there?

Burns: Well, I can't answer that because I don't remember.

Marcello: You didn't smell so good yourself, anyway, I guess (chuckle).

Burns: (Chuckle) Anyway, you mentioned awhile ago about how the Filipinos felt. At one point the train stopped, and they did let us get off and stretch. Of course, the Filipinos knew that this train was coming. They had a pretty good grapevine, and they knew that we were coming through this place. I guess that there is no way that I can explain the reception...well, I guess that is the only word I could use. Even though we were not allowed to stray off, they did open the doors, and we got out and stretched. Of course, we had a chance, you know, to contact the Filipinos because they were all along the train, and they had all kinds of food there, you know, rice and good dishes wrapped up in banana leaves. They brought it out there for us.

Of course, some of the guys were lucky enough to get some, but when the Japs found out--when they saw what was going on--then, of course, they made them get back and made us get back on the boxcars because they didn't want them to have any contact with us. They were crying and everything because they wanted to do what they could, see. So this is, like I say, the reception that we got. I guess they knew that we were coming in there. How they knew, I don't know. Of course, we didn't know this was going to happen.

Marcello: But you were not lucky enough to get anything?

Burns: No, no. But when the Japs saw what was going on...the Filipinos had all of this stuff out there for us to eat--their type of food--and a lot of it was wrapped in banana leaves and so forth.

Marcello: Describe what it was like for you personally to have gone this long without any food.

Burns: Well, I don't know if I can do that or not. Sometimes in going back to part of the march, it comes to my mind that when we would go through a village, some of the Filipinos would get out close enough...and they had a brown sugar that was kind of like a cone--not like an ice cream cone but flatter at the bottom and comes up to a cone--and they would just give these to the guys, you know. I think that that is probably one reason, by eating this brown sugar and

stuff, why some of the guys got dysentery. A lot of the guys on the march would get water from the side--dirty, muddy water--which, you know, in the Philippines they have these carabaos, and it was the water that the carabaos had wallowed in. Of course, you know, it wasn't fit to drink, so this is how some of the guys got dysentery--very bad cases.

But getting back to San Fernando and getting onto the boxcars where the Filipinos were, then they put us back onto the boxcars, and we then went on into Camp O'Donnell.

Marcello: But didn't the train actually go from San Fernando to a place called Capas? And then didn't you walk again from Capas into Camp O'Donnell?

Burns: Yes, yes. I would have never remembered the name, but this is the place where we disembarked off the boxcars.

Marcello: How long were you on those boxcars? Again, this is something that you would have to estimate.

Burns: Well, by the time that we got on and got into Capas, that took one day, as well as I can remember; I mean, it wasn't overnight or anything like that. I guess that we got into Capas...I don't know what time we got into Capas. But we got off the boxcars, and then, like you mentioned, we were marched into O'Donnell. Now how far that was I don't know, but it wasn't too long a distance. But it seems to me that when we got into the camp there, it

seems like it was somewhere around the middle of the afternoon, probably about three or four o'clock or something like that.

Marcello: It must have been a real relief to get off of those boxcars there at Capas.

Burns: Oh, that is for sure! There is no question about that! I don't remember too much about the march from Capas into O'Donnell, but I do remember that after we got into O'Donnell, we were all stood up into a group, in formation, and I don't know whether this is after the Japanese camp commandant made his speech...whether it was after this or before.

Now some of the guys that was with me on the march... well, this could have happened before the march, before we were captured. Some of the guys had some Japanese souvenirs. They had got hold of some Japanese money and things like this. We got word along in the formation that the Japs were coming down and looking for this kind of stuff. I guess that they were searching us. And anybody that had any Jap money on them or anything Japanese, they were told to get rid of it. It don't take long for something like that to spread.

And there was one boy from Deming--his name was Jack Keeler--and I think that there were two other boys with him, and now what happened, I don't know. Anyway, I

do know that they were taken out over the hill somewhere, and that is the last we saw of them. Now whether they were shot there, I don't know. Now whether they were found with any Japanese money on them or not, I don't know.

Anyway, the guys that had it in this formation got rid of it because if the Japs found it, they figured that the only way that they could get it was off a dead Jap somewhere. That would be the only way that they could get it. And this, I guess, was the punishment they got when they found it. They figured that they got it off...that they had killed a Jap and took it off of him.

Marcello: At this point, Mr. Burns, why don't you describe what Camp O'Donnell looked like from a physical standpoint? In other words, suppose that we were going into the front gate to Camp O'Donnell. What do you remember about it from a physical standpoint, that is, the buildings, any kind of enclosure around the compound, and things of that nature?

Burns: Well, I really can't give too much of a physical description because I don't remember too much. My mind is kind of a blank right now.

Marcello: What were your barracks like? Your living quarters?

Burns: This is what I am trying to think of. Oh, my gosh, it seems like I never would forget that part.

Marcello: Now had Camp O'Donnell been an American Army camp, or had it been a Philippine Army camp?

Burns: This I don't know. I couldn't answer that question.

Marcello: Since it was called O'Donnell, I would assume that it was an American camp. Later on, I assume, we will talk about Cabanatuan, which had been set up for the Philippine Army.

Burns: Oh, I remember that a whole lot better than I do O'Donnell.

Marcello: Of what materials were the barracks made of there in O'Donnell.

Burns: (Chuckle) That is kind of a blank now, too. If it was anything like Cabanatuan, they were bamboo barracks.

Marcello: What were they like in the inside?

Burns: I am trying to think. Vaguely, I can remember the shape of some of the buildings. Getting back to your question, right now I just can't think of anything that would answer your question.

Marcello: After you got into O'Donnell, what kind of work routine did the Japanese have set up for you?

Burns: Really, as far as I know, they really didn't have any work routine, except they had some outside details. They would pull four or five men or something like that, and they would have to go into town with the Japanese from time to time to load the trucks and bring stuff out to the

camp.

Now of these other details, the main one was a detail of taking the prisoners that had died and taking them for burial. This might seem pretty brutal, but this is the way that it was. Speaking of the hospital, I remember now that over at the hospital the guys had no beds or anything. They were plain more or less, wood flooring, and they had nothing to lie on. They laid just a blanket on there, and that was about it. The guys that had died...they would just pick the guys up and take them outside to the end of the building. As I can remember, there was kind of a platform there that you could walk around, and they just stacked the bodies--we refer to them as "stiffs"--and these were the prisoners that had died. Of course, you got so many that they would have to have a burial detail. The guys were picked--they'd get so many men--for a burial detail each day, and we would have to carry these bodies out. They would take the bodies and throw them into this big hole, and it wouldn't make any difference on how they were in there. Then they would just start covering them up with dirt, and that was it.

Marcello: I am sure that this was a very distasteful detail to be on.

Burns: Oh, yes, it was it was very distasteful! Also at O'Donnell,

up a little ways, was where they had the Filipinos. They separated the Filipinos from the Americans because they didn't want us to be close to them or have any connection to them in any way. There were three to five hundred of the prisoners dying every day.

Marcello: Approximately, how many Americans were dying per day here at O'Donnell in the early stages?

Burns: I would say at least 300 per day, and I would say that there were at least 500 Filipinos dying per day.

Marcello: What was the most common cause of death among the Americans?

Burns: It was mostly a bad case of dysentery, and, of course, a lot of the guys had malaria, and there was some cerebral malaria there. Usually, when you got cerebral malaria, you very seldom got over it. This goes into your spine.

Marcello: What kinds of medicinal supplies were available in the so-called hospital?

Burns: Well, not a whole lot, but if you were fortunate enough, maybe you could get a little quinine, and that was about it.

Marcello: But there was nothing for the dysentery?

Burns: No, you just had to more or less sweat it out.

Marcello: Who would dig the graves for the dead?

Burns: Well, that was the prisoners. They did this. It was the

prisoners. I wasn't there on this particular detail, but you have heard the expression of a person that has been buried alive. Now this almost happened there because...at least there is one instance...this guy was taken out by the burial detail, and he was thrown in the hole. They started covering him up. They threw a shovel of dirt in there, and it just happened to hit him...I guess that maybe it was the temperature of the dirt, if it was cold or not, but whatever it was, this dirt hit him, and one of the other guys on the detail saw this one body raise his arm a little bit. They pulled him out. As far as I know, he survived it, but that just goes to show you that he was almost buried alive (chuckle).

Marcello: We are talking about mass graves here. How deep would the typical mass grave be?

Burns: That, I don't remember. I really couldn't say. I really don't know. But I guess they would have twenty-five or thirty bodies to one of these holes where the bodies were put into.

Marcello: I have read that there were times when the graves were dug so shallow that when the rains would come along, they would actually uncover them the bodies and so on. I also heard that from time to time there were trouble with dogs and things like that messing around those graves.

- Burns: This is probably true.
- Marcello: Would there be any kind of a service or anything for the dead at the burial site?
- Burns: No, I don't think so. I don't remember. Like I said, I just caught this one burial detail. Of course, every day there was a burial detail going on. I don't remember or recall any services at the graveside place there--them having any services.
- Marcello: What would happen to the clothing and the belongings of the deceased?
- Burns: Well, that was usually...actually, they didn't have any clothing, maybe just a pair of shorts and no T-shirt, and that was it...and no shoes or anything like that. As far as any other belongings that I can remember, these people that were supposed to have been patients in the hospital and had passed away just didn't have anything.
- Marcello: Were records being kept of those who did die and so on?
- Burns: I don't know whether the Japanese kept any records or if our officers kept any.

Can I go back just for a minute while I think about it? When we got into Camp O'Donnell, I mentioned that we had to make a formation, and, of course, as we made this formation...as I mentioned, if the prisoners had

any Jap money or anything, why, we were told to get rid of it--down through the line. The reason that I came back to this--I left it out--is that the Japanese camp commander spoke to us in Japanese, and his interpreter said that their children would be more or less be in control or that our children would have to bow down to them in a certain way, and the only time that this camp commander was interested in any Americans was when he was dead. In other words, that would be the only other time that he would be interested in them. I just thought that I would go back and put that in for the record.

Marcello: What kind of rules and regulations did the Japanese lay down for the prisoners here at O'Donnell? What could you do, and what could you not do? What did you have to do, and what could you not do?

Burns: We really didn't have any during the day. We could pretty freely move within the grounds of the camp. Of course, they had a curfew, and then we weren't supposed to be too close to the fence.

Marcello: Was there some kind of warning line before you actually got too close to the fence?

Burns: Not too much there in O'Donnell, as I remember. But later on, after we got to Cabanatuan, why, we will go into that a little later.

Marcello: How about bowing and saluting? Did that have to be done here at O'Donnell?

Burns: Yes, this is what I wanted to bring out. I thought about it when you asked me about things that we had to do. Yes, they insisted on this. When you saw a guard go by on the outside of the fence, and especially in camp, you had to salute them. This was, I think, more or less standard. As I understood it, you were supposed to salute regardless of what rank he was, and sometimes, if you didn't salute, why, then you would stand up in front of him, and he might knock the heck out of you.

Marcello: I understand that they were always having the prisoners count off, too.

Burns: Yes, that is correct.

Marcello: Does that get a little irritating after awhile?

Burns: You counted off more or less when you were in formation.

Marcello: Did you count off in English or Japanese?

Burns: Well, it was Japanese.

Marcello: Describe what the conduct of the guards was like here at O'Donnell.

Burns: Well, of course, they had it driven into them that they were superior, and naturally we were the underdogs, and this was brought out, and we just had to do what they said all of the time.

Marcello: What kinds of punishment would the guard deal out?

Describe the punishment that the guards would use here.

Burns: Well, a lot of it would depend on what you did. I know that they would take you and tie you up against a post with your hands stretched out in the hot sun, and they wouldn't give you no water or anything like that for hours and hours. Some of the guys would take you and lie you down underneath the spigot and tie your hands down, and your forehead would be positioned so you would be under the spigot, and they would turn the water on, and just a little drop of water would drop on your forehead. You couldn't move or anything. You would be surprised that a little drop of water like that, after so long of a period of time, how heavy that gets. So things like this happened.

Marcello: How about beatings?

Burns: My mind is kind of a blank right now of the beatings at Camp O'Donnell, but later on, we will get into Cabanatuan.

Marcello: But beatings and corporal punishment were also a way of life in the Japanese Army, weren't they?

Burns: Yes. We found out that if a Jap soldier was training... and they did have someone training in the Philippines. Especially in the area of Cabanatuan. I understand that if the Japanese soldier would mess up the corporal or whatever rank he was, they would stand him up and just beat the heck out of him because he didn't do something

right. This is very true. This was their way of discipline or system that they had.

Marcello: Did you see a lot of pushing and shoving and hitting with gun butts and slapping and that sort of thing?

Burns: Well, I guess more of that was going on on the Death March than I saw there at O'Donnell. Camp O'Donnell was...we had so many men dying there that finally the Japanese moved us out of there, and that is when we moved to Cabanatuan.

Marcello: Approximately how long were you at O'Donnell?

Burns: I can't give you any dates because I don't remember.

Marcello: Was it less than six months?

Burns: Well, let's see...April, May, June, July, August...I would venture to say that sometime in August or September, they moved us out of there to Cabanatuan.

Marcello: What kind of food were you receiving here at O'Donnell? Describe the rations.

Burns: Well, we had very poor rations. For breakfast we got what they called lugao. This is nothing but rice cooked with a lot of water and cooked down to where it's kind of a thick soup. Of course, most of the guys that were there weren't used to this kind of diet. They just couldn't eat it. But finally, you just had to make yourself eat it. As I mentioned before, on the Death March there, they had these cones of brown sugar, and

sometimes the guys would get some of this brown sugar. It would be brought in the camp, and if you got hold of this brown sugar, you could put it on the rice that we had, and it made it taste a little better. You could kind of get it down, but it took me a little while to get used to it. Sometimes the guys would get what we referred to as a sweet potato,

Marcello: A camote?

Burns: Yes, a camote. It is similar a lot to what we refer to as a sweet potato. Of course, this was an individual; this wasn't everybody. I, myself, was fortunate enough to be working in the more or less the kitchen, where the cooks would cook this lugao stuff, and I had access to the fire that we had there. The fire would get down to the hot coals, and we would stick this in there and roast this camote or sweet potato, and it all helped out a lot.

Marcello: Where would they ususally be obtained? Did they grow wild, or were they grown commercially?

Burns: The Filipinos grew them. They grew them there in the Philippines.

Marcello: Of what would lunch consist?

Burns: I was running through that in my mind when you asked me about the...I can't remember.

Marcello: I assume that it was rice again?

- Burns: Yes, it was rice again.
- Marcello: And probably some kind of vegetable stew or something like that?
- Burns: No, that was it. That was it.
- Marcello: And dinner, I assume, would be the same?
- Burns: Yes.
- Marcello: What sanitary precautions were set up in order to guard against dysentery? For example, when you went through the chow line, was there any procedure that you had to follow relative to your mess gear?
- Burns: As I remember, we didn't really have a chow line there at O'Donnell. If I remember right, it was brought to the barracks, and it was dished out there.
- As far as sanitation goes, the Japanese really didn't take any precautions, and the camp got so bad--the sanitation problems--that, as I mentioned, we moved into Cabanatuan. This is one reason that they moved us out. I think that it was due to the fact that our own men--officers that were in charge of the camp--just weren't cautious enough as we should.
- Marcello: What steps did you take to keep your mess gear clean? Obviously, that was one of the quickest ways you could pick up dysentery.
- Burns: This is very true. Well, really, I don't remember this too much there. Of course, we wiped and cleaned them the

best that we could. We didn't have too much water.

Marcello: You mentioned that you didn't have too much water. Can you expand on that?

Burns: No, I can't. This was in O'Donnell. Like I say, some of this is kind of vague to me now.

Marcello: What was the source of your water there at O'Donnell?

Burns: I couldn't say; I don't know.

Marcello: Describe what the latrines were like there at O'Donnell.

Burns: Well, it was just the regular Army latrine. It was out in the back and just a trench, a latrine trench, and that was it. We didn't take too much precaution to be sanitary about it, and this is another reason why we moved out from there to Cabanatuan.

Marcello: What did you do with your spare time here at O'Donnell?

Burns: Really, there wasn't much to do in your spare time. We more or less just sat around, and as far as any activities or anything like that, why, whatever details that we went out on were mostly like the burial details, and that was about it. There were a few other details around inside of the camp. There really wasn't a whole lot to do.

Marcello: What did you talk about in your spare time?

Burns: Again, I can't remember too much, but when we get to Cabanatuan, then I can remember more about that than I do at O'Donnell.

Marcello: As you look back at your stay at O'Donnell, do you think that perhaps there weren't too many work details here because the Japanese realized that most of you weren't healthy enough to do any work? In other words, you were still recovering from that march.

Burns: No, I don't think that that was it. I just don't think that they used that reason for not having any details at all.

Marcello: Do you think that it was simply because they were not organized at that point yet and didn't know what to do with all of these prisoners?

Burns: I think that that had a lot to do with it.

Marcello: Again, from everything that I have read, there seems to be a general consensus that the Japanese had not expected to take that many prisoners. The good Japanese soldier would have died and would not have surrendered.

Burns: Yes, yes.

Marcello: And all of a sudden, they had thousands of prisoners, and they really don't know what to do with them.

Burns: Yes, this is true.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you don't do too much while you are at O'Donnell.

Burns: This is speaking for me because...

Marcello: That is all that I am interested in, is your personal experiences.

Burns: Now like I said, I was fortunate enough to more or less kind of get into the kitchen. Of course, the guys that was trying to get more or less on the detail in the kitchen instead of what was referred to as the hospital had a little better chance at getting something to eat or a little more. Here again, I am working inside, so I really didn't know too much about some of the details that was going on. But as I mentioned awhile ago, sometimes they would have a detail that would go into town or go out someplace, and once in a while they would get contact with some of the Filipinos, but it was kind of "on the side." That was a pretty good detail because sometimes the guys that went out would have a chance to steal something and bring it in. We will get more into that a little later on with a little different situation in Cabanatuan.

Marcello: Now you did mentioned that you did work in the kitchen here at O'Donnell.

Burns: Yes, I did work there. I had a job working there in the kitchen. Here again, it gave me a little better access or the chance to get additional food. Of course, that was true of all the guys that worked in the kitchen anywhere. That was done in O'Donnell, and more so in Cabanatuan after we got there.

Marcello: How did you get selected for the kitchen job?

Burns: If you knew someone and knew someone in charge of it, you could talk him into it--situations like that.

Marcello: Is that the way that you got into the kitchen?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Who did you know?

Burns: Well, right offhand I really don't remember at that particular time.

Marcello: What sort of jobs did you have in the kitchen?

Burns: Well, it was mostly cooking the rice, and that is about all that they had, and that is just about it.

Marcello: What did you use to cook the rice in?

Burns: Oh, they had a big cast iron pot. It came down into kind of a "V" shape at the bottom and kind of flaired out at the top.

Marcello: I guess that it was almost like a giant wok or something, is that correct? The same type of shape?

Burns: A what?

Marcello: A giant wok--one of those deals that you cook Oriental food in.

Burns: Yes, yes, that is what it was. It was made out of cast iron, and this is what we cooked our rice in.

Marcello: And I guess that it had a lid in order to steam the rice.

Burns: Yes, it had a wooden lid that went on it. This was in O'Donnell.

Marcello: Describe the move from O'Donnell over to Cabanatuan.

How did it take place?

Burns: Well, we got a rumor that we were going to be moved out, and how long it was before we got the rumor, I don't remember. Now I can't remember just how we got started or how we got from O'Donnell to Cabanatuan. I don't know whether we rode in trucks or whether we marched all the way, but I do know that we did march into Cabanatuan, and this was all a new area of camp. It was all new to us. When we left O'Donnell, I don't know if we rode part of way or whether we marched all the way, but I do know that we got off at a certain point, and we did do some marching to Cabanatuan.

Marcello: Were there any hardships involved in this move?

Burns: No, not really. No, not that I can recall.

Marcello: Describe what Cabanatuan looked like from a physical standpoint. Again, you are approaching Cabanatuan, and you are outside the gate, and when you go inside, what do you find?

Burns: Of course, they had a main gate to go in, and the road ran up through the camp. Then the barbed wire started there and went around the camp. There in the camp, the barracks were bamboo barracks, and, like I said, there was a mess hall similar to the one at Clark Field. Up so far you would have your bamboo, and from there

on you had your opening, but you didn't have no screen enclosed up to about four feet, up to where the bamboo was, and from there to the roof, this was all mostly screened in. But you did have your big bamboo shutters that you opened up and used a pole. The bed part inside the barracks, I would say, was three feet off the floor, and they were nothing but bamboo slats. You had a lower berth and a top berth, double-deck. Some of the guys would sleep on a blanket, and some would have a little mattress of some kind, some kind of padding, but usually you just had bamboo slats, and that is all it was.

Marcello: About how many men would it be in one of these barracks?

Burns: I would say from thirty to fifty men.

Marcello: And did they have the usual atap roof?

Burns: Yes, a gabled roof, Inside the camp...

Marcello: I want to talk a little bit more about the barracks before we move on. When you say that there was a lower deck and an upper deck in terms of beds, was there simply one long platform that went the length of the barracks, or were there individual bunks.

Burns: No, there were just slats.

Marcello: In other words, there was a lower platform for so many men and an upper platform for so many men.

Burns: And bamboo slats were running across just like this table top here. Instead of this being a table top or something, this would be bamboo slats.

Marcello: Would these platforms be on each side of the aisle down the center?

Burns: Yes, that's right, on both sides.

Marcello: So approximately how much room would you have on one of these platforms now?

Burns: Oh, I would say maybe three feet.

Marcello: Three feet wide?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: And about how long,

Burns: Well, it was long enough for you to lie down.

Marcello: I guess that you wouldn't have had as much trouble as a taller man under those circumstances.

Burns: Yes. I would say it was about the length of an Army cot or something like that--about that wide. But as you say, it wasn't individual. It was all one flat... stretched out. As you say, it was on both sides. You had the bottom bunk and the upper bunk. Do you want to go on now to how the barracks were set up as far as the camp was set up and so forth?

Marcello: Let's talk some more about some of the other structures that might be in this camp.

Burns: Well, they had a building there...it was, I would say,

in the center of the camp. It was more or less kind of a wood-type building, and that was our headquarters building. Now all of this is inside, within the fence, where the American prisoners were. Okay, now the camp was broke down into four groups--Group One, Group Two, Group Three, and Group Four. Like I said, this one building was more or less in the center of the camp, and this was the headquarters building.

We had a main gate coming into the camp. The road came in the main gate, and you came into the camp. About halfway down, when you turned in, there was another main gate to the left. It came into the camp. Across the road from there was the Japanese headquarters, and over on the other side of the fence is where the Japanese soldiers were. They had their barracks over there, and, of course, they had more or less the same type of barracks that were inside the camp.

I guess that the easiest way to give you an idea of how our camp was set up, where you can get a picture of it...we had what we called the camp commander. The Japanese had their camp commander. All right, your camp commander of the Americans was more or less like your commanding officer on some post, and from there he would have his staff, his sergeant major and right on down from there. You had so many men to the barracks, so many

barracks to a company, and then, of course, you had your company officer--a higher ranking officer--in charge of the company. You would have so many men. Down the line you would have another company, and I think there was about four or five or six barracks to a company. And in each company, you had a man that was first sergeant. He was more or less in charge of all the barracks. He was the first sergeant. In each barracks you would have what you called the barracks leader. He could be a lieutenant, second lieutenant, or a major or a captain, and sometimes you would have just one officer, and sometimes you had two barracks leaders. You had your barracks and your assistant barracks leader. Maybe your barracks leader would be a major or a second lieutenant or something like this. This was the way that the camp was set up--more or less on the basis of your regular Army post.

Marcello: So the orders would probably go from the Japanese, to that central headquarters that you talked about, then down to the company, and then down to the barracks.

Burns: That is exactly the way it worked, yes. I guess that you want to know a little bit...when we first got into there...you spoke of the sanitation part in O'Donnell. Well, our officers, especially our medical officers, seemed, I guess, a little more interested in the development of the camp. So they had an awful hard time getting the

men there to really help to develop the camp. Every once in awhile these officers would bring up the idea of, "We don't want another O'Donnell." They didn't want this camp to become another O'Donnell, and I think that this kept the guys "on the ball" a little bit to have better sanitation and things of this order. After a period of time, it developed into a good camp.

Marcello: You mentioned that there were some difficulties in the beginning in getting cooperation from the men. Are you implying that there was a certain period there when discipline had broken down?

Burns: It wasn't discipline. It was the aspect of the guys, I guess, just didn't care, and each individual didn't try and make the camp better. In other words, to get the guys to more or less take more care of themselves, to have better sanitation whenever they went to the latrine-- it was this type of thing. In this respect, they mentioned this because they knew what had happened at O'Donnell, and they were trying to get a better camp started, and they didn't want it to develop into that type of camp that they had at O'Donnell.

Marcello: What were the bathing facilities like here at Cabanatuan?

Burns: Actually, back down behind the camp there in certain areas, they had a pipe run out and come up, and they just had a spigot of water there, and that was about it. Guys

would go down there, and, of course, it was cold water (chuckle), and this was the bathing facility that we had, and that was about it.

Marcello: Now by the time you get to Cabanatuan, had the death toll dropped considerably?

Burns: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Almost like the laws of evolution having worked, I guess. The weak have been weeded out by this time, in a sense, have they not? I should say the sick and the weak.

Burns: Yes, that's right. And, of course, we had a few deaths there in Cabanatuan, but not like it was in O'Donnell with 200 or 300 guys dying everyday.

Marcello: Describe what the food was like here at Cabanatuan.

Burns: Well, we had a little better rations there. We got rice issued to us, and, here again, if a guy could get to work in the mess hall, he had a little better advantage of getting a little more rice or maybe a little extra rice or something like that. We still had our lugao for breakfast and then, of course, our regular issue of rice for noon and for the night meal. That's all that it was, was just rice and nothing else.

Marcello: When you say a regular issue of rice, in terms of quantity, how much are we talking about?

Burns: Sometimes maybe you would be lucky if you got a third of a mess kit full, an old Army mess kit. That is about the

best way...I don't know if that would be a cup or half a cup or what, but that would give you some idea.

Marcello: And I am sure that when the rice was being distributed by the cooks, everybody was watching like a hawk to make sure that one person didn't get more than another.

Burns: They had a officer there, and he was in charge of the mess hall. He was the mess officer, and he was there to watch. Everybody got the same amount when they went through the lines.

Marcello: What chances were there for seconds?

Burns: Well, that all depends. Sometimes they did get seconds. After everybody went through, if they had any left over, they would give it out. Sometimes they would have enough to go around, and other times maybe just a few guys would get some (chuckle). That is just the way that it was.

Marcello: What was the quality of the rice like?

Burns: Some of it was white rice, and at other times we would have red rice. We called it red rice, the Filipino rice. It wasn't washed or polished, and it had a husk on it. Actually, this rice was better for you because it had more vitamins. People don't know this, but rice is actually, if I remember right, about 20 percent protein, and a lot of people don't know that. They stay away from rice and don't eat it because they think that it is

fattening. This is more or less off the record from what we are talking about, but this is what we referred to as red rice or Filipino rice--unpolished. Naturally, when you eat this, you get some of these husks, and you have to spit them out, but we didn't mind that too much because we knew that, as far as food value goes, it was better for you.

Marcello: I have often heard it said that the men would like to get that crust that would build up on the bottom of the rice pots.

Burns: This is right. Now we get back to the old cast iron container used to cook the rice in. Our firebox or stove, if you want to call it that...all it was was just a build-up side with bricks, and on top you had a cast iron cover on there, and then at the end of it, you had a big hole where this "V"-shaped kettle or container would fit down over this hole underneath the fire. Then at this end, we would build our fire and put so much water in there and get your fire built up and get your water boiling, and then you would put your rice in there and cook it. You used so much water to so much rice. In order to get your rice to come out where it would be fluffy and wouldn't be gummy or anything like that, you would get this crust on the bottom that would crust over. Of course, then the rice is dumped into a big container. The stuff was made out

of a wood liner or tin or something like that, but sometimes it wasn't lined with tin. Of course, it was clean, and the rice was dumped into it. It would take three or four guys to lift this big pot that the rice was put in. They would have to carry it over and dump it over into the container. You would have to cook four or five of those for the whole company or for whatever mess hall you were in.

Marcello: In other words, there were several mess halls in this camp?

Burns: Oh, yes.

Marcello: You would probably get the rice from a central area?

Burns: Yes. Like I said, you were broke down in so many areas and so many barracks to this company. They would have a mess hall, and they would have a mess hall. Maybe one mess hall would serve two or three of what they broke down into companies, you see. They had a mess hall in each area. They had one mess hall, I believe, for each area--Group one, Group two, Group Three, and Group Four.

As far as the food goes, after we were there in Cabanatuan awhile, some of the guys started to go on sick call. Of course, we had our regular setup like you do in the Army. We had our doctors there, and they had sick call. I hate to say this, but it is true. The guys didn't have anything to do so, they'd think, "Well, I

think that I will go down for sick call." It wasn't anything wrong with them. So they would go on sick call, and the doctor would give them some medicine that we had there--aspirin or a little quinine. So they would give them a couple of aspirins, and they would go back, and the next day they would go on sick call. There wasn't anything wrong with them. Pretty soon they got to thinking that they were sick and that there was something wrong with them. And, sure enough, some of those guys didn't come back, and this actually happened over there.

Well, a little later on, they had a few details around there, outside details. They would come in and maybe want five or six men to work over at headquarters, or they needed ten men to go to town on a truck or something like this and this sort of detail. Then I don't know just how long we were there, but one of the guys came up... I think that his name was Jones--he was a lieutenant--and the guys referred to him as "Farmer Jones," and they hated his guts because he came up with the idea of making the guys on the work detail go out and work these plots and farms that they had around Cabanatuan, which they did.

Marcello: Now were these plots and farms for the benefit of the prisoners, or were they for benefit of the Japanese?

Burns: They were a benefit for the Japanese. Once in awhile, we

would get some of the stuff that was grown there, They would issue a little stuff, Maybe we would get some eggplant or something like this.

Sometimes we got a little meat. They had a butchering detail. This is after the camp was there for a while. They would bring in some young carabao, and they had a butchering detail, This was across the road from the camp, where they had this. There was a detail for that, but there wasn't a while lot of meat. One day one mess hall would get it, and the next day...they would alternate it to where it would be divided up.

Later on, they had the Filipinos come in there, and you could order stuff through your barracks leaders. We were supposed to get paid so much for our work, but we didn't get a whole lot. This is after the camp had developed a little more, We would get a few pesos...of course, it was Japanese money.

Marcello: Occupation currency?

Burns: Yes, Japanese. We would get paid a little bit for our work, and if you had some money, you could go up to your barracks leader, and he would take your order for bananas or papayas or something like that. They let the Filipinos come in there with this, and you would tell your barracks leader what you wanted, and you would pay him. He would write down what you wanted, and when this detail came in...

this stuff was brought into the barracks. Sometimes you would get it, and sometimes you wouldn't.

Also, some of the Jap guards there would take a detail into Cabanatuan to get supplies and stuff for the Japanese. If you had a little money...the guys that were working on the detail, you would give them the money. Of course, it all depended on who the guard was that was with you. If you had the money, you would give it to him, and he would buy you some sugar, a sack of sugar. Sugar came in 180 kilos, which is approximately 220 pounds. Of course, the Japs, after he got back to camp, you had to get it back into the camp. You had to get it off without getting caught because he didn't know anything about it.

Marcello: Did he take a certain cut out of what he bought?

Burns: Well, I imagine the guys would pay him so much, you know, because this would be money on the side. Like I said, it all depended on who the guard was. There was a lot of sugar and stuff like that was sneaked into camp.

Marcello: Were you allowed to build fires and have meals of your own in the camp, too?

Burns: No. Let me finish my sugar deal here. Then at times... see, these guys would get this sugar into camp. They would sell this sugar for so much for a canteen cup. Sometimes they got pretty high.

So, like I said, if you had a little money at this particular point in the camp, you could more or less get extra stuff. Anything to go on the rice was better than nothing. At times sugar got pretty expensive, and at other times it wasn't--just like we have inflation here. Of course, if you got caught, why, it was your...it was up to the guy that brought sugar into...some of the details that was working on the opposite side of the road from where our camp. These details would get it in. It was up to them to get it across the fence and get it into the camp. Now there weren't too many guards along this road in front of the camp because, like I said, across the street was the Japanese headquarters. Around on the side and in back of the camp is where you would have your Japanese guards and the towers. So if you could get a sack of sugar or something like that in the camp, the guys could make money from it, and they could get other stuff, you know, through the grapevine.

Marcello: In other words, you would smuggle that food in not through the main gate, but it would come through the fence or whatever?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: You would have somebody on the inside to grab it.

Burns: Oh, yes, they would be there to grab it, and they would take it down to the barracks or whatever. It might be

two or three guys that brought it in, or a couple of guys. They would have a friend over there, and he was working over on the Jap side on this detail that got to go into town, which, you know, the Japs had to have truck drivers, so they used prisoners for truck drivers. They had one guy over there, a prisoner, that was in charge of this detail that went in. Of course, he knew the guard that would usually go in all the time, but he usually stayed on that side.

Also, the guys that work in the Japanese mess hall on that side...they had maybe three or four guys to work in the Japs' mess to do the KP work, actually, is what it would be. You slept right over there in the mess hall with them. You stayed there; you didn't go back each day and come over. You stayed right over there.

I was fortunate enough to get a job over there in one of the mess halls on that side. If you kept your nose pretty clean, you could keep your job. The Japanese that was in charge of the Jap mess hall or the Japanese cook... if you did you work, these guys didn't bother you very much. Of course, you know, you had to be on your toes all of the time, and as far as actually getting beat by them... it was the guards that took the details out who beat up on the guys.

Marcello: Are you finding that it's best to stay away from the guards

as much as you can, or any of the Japanese, for that matter?

Burns: Oh, yes, yes. Some of the guys had a detail that was... see, some of the Japanese officers and the higher-ranking NCO's on down had a little shack of their own that was private. That was their privilege in the Japanese Army. These guys would have a prisoner over there as their orderly, and so whenever it come to meal-time, he left and come to the Japanese mess hall and picked up his rations and go up there and serve it. He was their orderly. These were pretty good jobs because the Japanese got to know the guys and...anyway, they could get around the Japanese pretty good. If there was something they wanted, they would get you to get it for them if they liked you.

Marcello: Did the men resent the guys that had these jobs as Japanese orderlies?

Burns: No...maybe some, but, really, I don't think so. Most of these boys that got over there picked up Japanese, and they could speak pretty good Japanese. They learned to speak it, and this is why they had these jobs, because the Japanese couldn't speak any English. So I can truthfully say that there wasn't any jealousy or resentment.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the plots of land outside by the camp that were used for agricultural purposes?

Burns: Yes, we get back to this part where the guys were going on sick call. Actually, they didn't have a whole lot to do, so they would just line up there on those bamboo slats and feel sorry for themselves. As I mentioned, pretty soon they thought that they were sick, and they would go on sick call each day, and pretty soon it got into their minds, and a lot of them thought that they were sick. So this second lieutenant started this detail, so the story goes, but, anyway, it did the guys good because it got them off their fanny and got them to do something, exercise and stuff like this.

Marcello: Now when you say that the second lieutenant got this detail started, obviously, he would have had to been working through the Japanese.

Burns: Well, I think that somehow he mentioned it to some of the Japanese, but, anyway, that is the rumor that started in camp. A lot of the guys resented it and didn't like it, so they called him "Farmer Jones."

Marcello: From what I heard, those details were not exactly the best in the world because a lot of it involved working in rice paddies and so on, did it not?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: There was a lot of stoop labor.

Burns: I'm talking about in Cabanatuan. They had other details outside the camp where the guys...in other words, Cabanatuan

was the number one camp in the Philippines after it got developed, and they would come in there, and they would want so many men for an outside detail, and they would go down to Mindanao or someplace like that, or they would be taken off to someplace to be working on an airfield building and airstrip and stuff like this. Some of those details were pretty rough; I mean, they were rough.

Marcello: Where were these garden plots that you were referring to? Were these inside the camp?

Burns: They were inside the camp, but they were outside the fence around the camp, on the outside. Of course, they had guards to go on the detail. The guys that would go out there had to do a little work to show a little progress because anybody with any common sense, even those people that were guards, would come by, and they could see whether you are doing anything or not. Of course, some of them just went out there and wouldn't do anything while the guard was off, but as soon as the guard came back or they saw him coming, why, they would start working a little bit. But they could tell if you had done anything or not.

Marcello: But I gather that there were also other jobs in agriculture that were carried out even around Cabanatuan in the rice paddies so on and so forth. And these, evidently, were pretty tough jobs--a lot of stoop labor.

- Burns: Yes, That's right. That's right. Well, all of this labor out in these work details, especially the farming part there in Cabanatuan, was all stoop labor. Ordinarily, they would have other details, like, you know, they would have to go out and go over and cut the grass in front of the Japanese headquarters or water the grass. In certain areas around the camp or outside or even inside the fence, you would have to go out and cut the weeds and grass and stuff like that.
- Marcello: Are you saying that, in general, none of the work here was that taxing or difficult?
- Burns: Do you mean hard work?
- Marcello: Yes.
- Burns: Not on the farm details, no. You would just go out and work in these different plots. It was something to do--to make the guys go out and get a little exercise--and personally I believe that this is what kept a lot of the guys from dying over there. They made it back okay.
- Marcello: How was your health holding out this time?
- Burns: Well, at this time I seemed to be getting along pretty good.
- Marcello: Did you perhaps find that those that were bigger and heavier had more problems of adjusting than the smaller people?
- Burns: No, not really.

Marcello: What did you talk about in your bull sessions?

Burns: In our bull sessions, well, we would sit around and talk about things that happened around there, and mostly we talked about when we would get out and get back to the States. The biggest part of it, I guess, was food-- what we were going to eat--and things like this when we got back. I think that that was more or less the general conversation that went on.

Marcello: Food took precedence over sex in your sessions?

Burns: Yes, I think so. Oh, yes, definitely so.

Marcello: How long are you going to be a prisoner-of-war?

Burns: Well, that I can't answer. You mean how long did we think that we were going to be prisoners-of-war?

Marcello: Yes.

Burns: I don't think that anybody knew, but I will say this, that I guess that from some of the battles that were going on, when the Americans started coming back in...after Pearl Harbor, they kind of reorganized, and we knew the battles that was going on down in the Aleutian Islands and all down through there. We knew what was happening.

Marcello: How did you know?

Burns: Through the grapevine, radio communications. We had a radio there in camp that the Japs didn't...I guess they couldn't figure it out, but the Japanese NCO would have a radio, and when something would go wrong with it, they

would take it down...they had some guys working over there that could work on them. This was over on the Japanese side. They would take it to them and get them to fix it, and they would get different parts for it. They would fix it so that the radio would play a little bit, and then it would have to be brought back. Of course, the guys had a radio over there, too, you see, and they would get all this stuff on the radio of what was happening, and this is the way that we would get our communications in. The Japs didn't even know anything about it.

Marcello: What was the Japanese policy toward escape attempts?

Burns: Oh, yes, I thought about that awhile ago, and I was going to bring it up, but I forgot it. When we first got into Cabanatuan, you were broke down into a group of ten men. You were put into a group of ten men. Of course, this doesn't mean that you were separate in the barracks like I explained to you awhile ago, but these men that were in the barracks...there were ten men appointed to your group, and if one of these guys tried to escape, the other nine would be taken out and shot. The reason that they did this was so this group of ten men would always keep an eye on the other guys, see, because they were not going to let him escape. Even though some of the guys did try and escape...there was one instance there where...I don't remember if it was three officers or two officers and one

enlisted man. They tried to make a break for it through the back fence, and they got caught. In this particular instance, the guys dug their own grave, and we were brought out, and they were shot right there.

Marcello: Describe how this execution took place.

Burns: Well, after they dug the grave, they just shot them. Of course, they brought the camp out to see it done to just remind us of what would happen, and those guys just happened to get caught.

Sometimes we would get some mango beans issued to the mess hall. To get back to the food part of it, on the side of the mess hall, they set up what they called a quan kitchen. Now as far as Filipinos go, that could mean anything. If you had a coffee can with a piece of baling wire tied to it for a pail...if you had a little coffee with your money, you could get some coffee or some tea, and then you could put your coffee and your water in your can, and you would take it down to the mess hall, and you could hold it over a big long pole and hold it underneath the fire. When the water starts to boiling, you would have your coffee or tea. I mentioned what we called the quan kitchen. This was set up by the mess hall, and if you wanted to go down early to the mess hall to draw you a ration of rice, they would let you get your ration of rice, but when the regular time for chow came through, you wouldn't

get any rice.

This was more or less after we got some Red Cross packages, you got a can of Spam and about a one-or-two pound can of milk, some concentrated stuff that they had in the Red Cross packages, chocolate bars, cheese, cigarettes, and stuff like this. So when the guys got this, why, you could take a can of Spam or something and go down. Maybe three guys would go in together, or four guys. We had about four guys to go in together, and we just took all of our Red Cross packages and pooled them. Maybe we'd pick out a can of Spam for tonight. Well, the guys would go down and get their ration of rice, and we would concoct something up and take it down to the quan kitchen. They had a cook in there, and that is all that he did. He would come in, and he would cook this or heat it. We had an improved or home-built oven where you could put stuff in there and bake. It was made out of a fifty-five-gallon drum or something like this. You could go down there, or you could leave it there--of course, you had your pan--and mark it, and he would take it up for you. You would go down and pick that up about chow time and take it back. If they had anything else, any eggplant or anything like that which was issued to the mess hall, you could go through the line and get that, but you couldn't get no rice.

You would go back to your barracks. Usually, on the

side of the barracks, guys would have some tables and benches that they sat out there--like a picnic bench and a table like that beside the barracks. You would sit out there, and you would have your quan dish that you had taken down, and you would sit there and have a fairly decent something to eat as far as being a prison camp goes.

Now then another time, I guess that the Japanese got so low that we didn't even have any rations--no rice or anything. We were lucky if we got even one camote or even half a camote,

Marcello: Did this occur as the war continued to go on?

Burns: Yes, at different times, you know. This part here that I am talking about, where we had the quan kitchen and all of this, this was more or less the better part of the camp. Things were pretty good as far as a prison camp goes. This was when you had a little bit of money where you could buy stuff through your barracks leader when the Japanese let these Filipino details come in. Then some of the guys decided...they went down behind the barracks out there, and they got hold of some stuff, and they started them a little plot. Maybe they would have some corn or something growing out there, something like that. It paid off. Of course, it took a little time, but there was a little something extra there.

Marcello: You mentioned the Red Cross packages awhile ago, and my records indicate that the first ones came in November of 1942. How important were those Red Cross packages? What did they mean to you?

Burns: Well, they meant a whole lot to us. When they came in, we knew that the Red Cross packages were there, and, of course, they had them stored in a certain building there in the camp. Why the Japanese didn't give them to us right off the bat, I don't know. Anyway, they kept them stored for quite a while.

Our first issue of the Red Cross packages was a little bit larger than the size of a shoe box. Like I said, it contained a one-or two-pound can of powdered milk, some chocolate bars, some concentrated food, two or five packs of cigarettes--I forget which--and this type of item. Our first issue...they issued one box to two men, and as time went on, they got enough Red Cross packages in that when they did issue it, we got a full box per man.

Now at this time, just a little while after we got our Red Cross package, to go back to a little more of the sad part of it, one guy...I didn't know him personally, but I did know that this one person opened up his Red Cross box, and he sat down and ate everything in it. Pardon this expression--I hate to say it--but he is pushing up daisies in the Philippines right now because he ate every-

thing in that one box. All the food in these Red Cross boxes was all concentrated food, and naturally, having gone that long without that rich of a diet, it just killed him. This actually happened over there.

In this regard...again, I hate to say it, but it's a fact. Some of the people that later on listen to this tape might take this into consideration. When it comes to smoking...now this is true. The biggest part of all POW's smoked. Also over from the fence across the road, there was a hospital, and they had the guys that was the worse off over there in the hospital. The hospital did get so much canned milk issued to them for the patients. What these patients would do, they would take this milk and trade it for cigarettes when they should have had their milk. At this particular time, I was working in one of the Japanese mess halls over there, and the sergeant, Sergeant Jolly...I don't know how come I remembered his name. He was a medic over there. He would come over to us, the guys who was working in the mess hall, and tell us that these guys would trade their milk for cigarettes. But if you didn't do it, they would get them regardless from someplace else. So, okay, he would bring over so much milk, and we would trade cigarettes for it, and he would take them back and give them to these patients.

Marcello: This was an American sergeant that would do this?

- Burns: Yes. What the heck! The guys wanted their cigarettes. It is a shame, but these are things that actually happened there in Cabanatuan.
- Marcello: A while ago you were talking about the four people going together and sharing parts of Red Cross packages and so on. How important was it for three or four men to get together and look out for one another?
- Burns: Well, in this respect, instead of one guy just having his one Red Cross package that would have these certain items, it wouldn't last as long. If three or four guys went in together and pooled it, you see, instead of one guy having one can of Spam, between the four of you, you had four cans. So you could go down and take your rice and take one can and doctor this one up. From time to time, you could stretch this. Maybe within a week's time or three week's time or whatever, you know, why, you would have something to eat later on by doing it this way instead of just one man using his stuff from his own box.
- Marcello: Are there any other reasons why it was important for three or four men to go together and look out for one another?
- Burns: Well, the only thing that I could say was just to stretch your Red Cross packages out farther. To get back to this point, too, to your cigarettes again, at certain times your cigarettes were of more value, as far as trade value goes or currency, than if you had money. When the Red

Cross packages came in, the guys would want the cigarettes, and they would sell their can of milk maybe for one pack of cigarettes. Later on, when they got a little scarce or something like that, maybe it would cost you three packs of cigarettes. I was fortunate enough that I didn't smoke, so I saved my cigarettes, and I traded a lot of guys for their milk or something, you know, or whatever at the going on rate at that particular time--different things that were in the Red Cross package.

Marcello: While you were in Cabanatuan, did people start resorting to eating cats, dogs, and things of that nature?

Burns: Yes, this happened. This actually happened. I, myself, never did, but people did do it. The guys did do it.

There's a little incident that did happen one time. I was working over in this Jap mess hall, and the Japanese had to go down and draw their rations. They got some fresh meat, and it was for so many days. They didn't have any refrigeration or anything like that. In the mess hall, they didn't have a built-in floor. It was just the ground floor, is what it was, and then your barracks, like I explained a while ago. Your side would come up, and usually there wasn't a door. You just had an opening on each side of the building where they had their mess hall.

A couple of us had to go down with this Japanese cook and help him bring this stuff back. So they hung this stuff up from the rafters and braces that went across the building, and the next morning when we got up, all of this meat was gone. It was just fortunate enough that it had rained that night. Of course, these Japanese guys that were in the kitchen, they knew that the Americans would take stuff across the road on the other side of the fence,

These cooks discovered the next morning that this meat was gone, and they accused us of stealing the meat and taking it across the fence. We had a very, very hard time convincing them that we did not take it. You see, around the camp they had wild dogs, and what had happened during the night was that these dogs would come in there. Now how they got that high, I just don't know, but they got up there and got this meat. Like I said, it is very fortunate that it rained that night, and we traced the tracks of these dogs out and showed the Japanese where this meat...you could see the path that they had left, where they had dragged it. But at first, boy, we were sweating. We didn't know what was going to happen, but we finally convinced them that we did not take it, that the dogs had got in there and dragged it off.

Marcello: What Japanese guards stand out in your mind? I am sure

that you had nicknames for all of them.

Burns: Yes, we had nicknames. Well, we had one guard there that was a pretty good guard. He was one of the more higher ranking guards. As far as he goes, most all of the guys in the camp seemed to think that he was pro-American from his actions and things that he did toward the prisoners. I understand that he used to be an ex-policemen--I don't know whereabouts, but he was a Japanese policeman. I don't remember his real name, but our nickname for his is "Speedo." The reason that he got this nickname was because when you went out on details with him or whatever, he would want you to speed it up. He would either go through the motions like he was running, and he would say "Speedo! Speedo! Speedo!" In other words, he wanted you to work a little faster and get it done a little faster.

Then we had another guard there that the guys nicknamed or referred to him as "Donald Duck." Now how they gave him this name, I don't know, but I guess that it had to do with something that reminded them of Donald Duck. The Japanese guards that were there knew a lot of the noted movie stars, I guess because they had seen the picture, and with what little English they could talk, they would ask us about certain movie stars. They were pretty well up on the American movie stars, and so this

one guard was asking this one guy out on detail, "Well, who is Donald Duck?" Well, Donald Duck was a big movie star, and, you see, they were just feeding him a line, see, working reference to Donald Duck cartoons. So this made him feel real big.

Well, not too long after that...once in awhile they would bring in a movie, and they would show us a movie. Of course, we would go down, and this would all be in the open air, and we would sit on the ground. Of course the Japanese guards would more or less sit down off from the prisoners. They would watch the movie, whether it was Japanese or whether it was an American movie. So this particular night, they were supposed to show this movie, and it was one of Donald Duck. Well, I don't think that the guys knew what it was going to be, but it turned out to be a Donald Duck cartoon.

What happened is that we got rained out on our side, so they took it over to the Japanese side under a little patio or something where the Japanese could go to their PX and they could get some stuff over there. Like mango beans...the Filipino detail would come in there about three days out of the week and bring certain stuff in like bananas...and then they would cook up a dish of mango beans and put sugar in, and it was so sweet that it would make me sick. This was a delicacy

for them. They would come in there, and the Jap soldiers would have to pay so much, and they would go out and sit down under this patio that was covered up.

So they took this movie, these cartoons, over there and showed it to the Japanese, and you can imagine what these guys who told this Japanese that Donald Duck was a big movie star...you see, he didn't know who he was (chuckle) until he saw this cartoon. So the guys that had told him that, they were sweating it out the next day. They didn't know what this guy was going to do, see, when they went out on detail. But it just so happened the guy got a kick out of it (chuckle). That was "Donald Duck."

Marcello: Do you remember one that was called "Liver Lips?"

Burns: No.

Marcello: Another one they called a "Mortimer Snerd."

Burns: Yes, I remember that name, but I can't tell you anything about him.

Marcello: I would assume that the Japanese didn't exactly select the cream of their army to be prison guards.

Burns: No. There was one incident that happened. A lot of these guys going out on these work details, especially around the camp there and in the farm part of it that we referred to, were getting beaten up pretty bad, some-

times more or less for no reason at all.

So the report got back to, I think, Colonel Bleecher, who at that time was our camp commander at that time. He was a Marine colonel. We had an Army colonel in there that had been camp commander, but when Colonel Bleecher came in there...they both were colonels, but being a Marine, the Japanese thought that he outranked him. So he was made the camp commander, and I think it was him that sent a runner over to the Japanese commandant if he could have permission to come over and see him. So he sent back and told him, yes, he could come over.

That evening, why, he went over, and, as the story goes, he had supper or dinner with the Japanese commandant, and they sat down, and they said that they had a pretty good meal. After it was over with...I don't know all that took place, but, anyway, the meat of the thing was that when they got down to it, the Japanese commandant asked him why he wanted to come over and see him or requested to come over and see him. And, of course, he told him about these beatings going on on the details and wanted to know if there was something that could be done to stop them.

As the story goes, the Japanese commandant had Colonel Bleecher stand up at attention, and, pardon the

expression, he just slapped the hell out of him. Now you wonder why he slapped the hell out of him. Okay, as we mentioned awhile ago when you asked about the beatings of the Japanese soldiers themselves, well, this was more or less their policy. The logic of it, I don't know. But the reason that he slapped the heck out of Colonel Bleecher was that our camp commander had to come over and reported this to the Japanese commandant, and the reason that he got the heck slapped out of him was because he had to come over and tell him what was going on among the Japanese guards that was going out. Now I can't see any logic to it, but this is why he was stood up and was slapped.

Marcello: Did you ever receive any beatings here at Cabanatuan?

Burns: No, no. I got knocked around a little bit one time after I got to Japan, but as far as being beaten at Cabanatuan, no. I kept my nose pretty clean. It was very fortunate that nothing like that happened to me at Cabanatuan.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were mentioning the movies that you would get occasionally. What other kinds of recreation were available here at Cabanatuan?

Burns: Well, the Japanese let us...we had a little group there... a guy got it up, and it was among the prisoners that had a little talent. They put on a little show once a week for us, and it was entertaining, and it was pretty good.

They got up a little orchestra, a little dance band. Of course, we didn't have dances, but that is the kind of orchestra that we had. This was some of the entertainment. Sometimes the guys would get up, and they would work out a little play of some kind, a little sketch or something, and they would rehearse on this through the week, and then one night a week they could put this on. Then, of course, the Japanese officers and Japanese commandant and some of the guards took it in. This relieved a lot of the pressure, too, and the guys looked forward to this.

Marcello: Were there any sports or athletic activities?

Burns: No, not that I recall. No, we didn't have anything like that.

Marcello: When did you leave Cabanatuan?

Burns: I would like to make this...before we get into that... I told this story several times before, especially to my Sunday school class, at different places. I don't remember, but I think that it was the first time that we got our Red Cross packages that Christmas, Christmas of 1943. Even though it was in summertime and no snow, no Christmas trees, no decorations or anything like that, the Japanese did allow us to have a church service at night. Some of the guys got together, and they went all through the camp singing Christmas carols. For some

reason or another, as far as I was concerned, I never felt--I don't think--the spirit of Christmas any more in my whole lifetime as I did that Christmas-time that I spent there in 1943. You could feel the spirit of Christmas. It was just everywhere, all over that camp, and in the air. The Japs let us have our Christmas service at night, and to me it was one of the most fulfilling experiences as far as Christmastime goes. Now I don't know whether the other guys felt that way, but to me, although there wasn't anything like Christmas presents or any Christmas trees or any decorations or anything like that at this particular time, you could feel the spirit of Christmas all in that camp. Now what was your question there?

Marcello: When did you leave Cabanatuan?

Burns: Well, I think that it was...I think that it was either July or August of 1944.

Marcello: Before we leave Cabanatuan, are there any other things that stand out that you think should be part of the record?

Burns: There was one detail there...I don't know whether you'd call it a good detail or not. I don't think so. The guys there in Cabanatuan hated it. It was what we called the "honey detail." For people that wasn't over there, I guess they wonder what we mean by the

"honey detail." This had to do with the human waste, which the Japanese used for fertilizer, to put on their vegetables and things, and this is the reason that they called it the "honey detail" (chuckle). So the way this was done, so many men every day would go out for this "honey detail," and they would have two men, one in front and one in the back, a pole, and they would have a big bucket on this pole, in which they carried this human waste to put on the vegetables. This was known as the "honey detail." So every day we had so many men for this "honey detail."

Marcello: Would the excrement be taken out of various latrines around the camp and so on?

Burns: I don't know where they got this from. I don't know whether it was from the Japanese or what, but, anyway, this was...how far they went to get this or brought in from, I don't know. I was very fortunate that I didn't catch the "honey detail."

Before we go on, let's get back to the barracks and how the camp was set up and so forth. Each morning we would have reveille and our count, and the guys would have to report to the first sergeant. We were lined up just like reveille, and they would report. Also, this was done in the evening at a certain time. The head count was taken and reported to the sergeant that

was in charge of these barracks. This count was taken to our headquarters, and this is a way that they kept count each day of the men that were there. I forgot to mention that awhile ago while we were on that part of it.

Marcello: Incidentally, there is a question that I should have asked earlier. Up until this time, had you been processed at all by the Japanese? In other words, did they take name, rank, serial numbers, and things of that nature?

Burns: They must have somewhere down the line, but I can't remember. It vaguely seems like they did sometime or the other, but I can't recall. I guess that this will come later, but after we got to Japan, well, then they did.

Marcello: In what shape were your clothing by this time, that is, by the time you left Cabanatuan?

Burns: Well, actually, you didn't have very much clothing. If you had one pair of pants...you had no shoes, and you were mostly barefooted, or you wore these wooden shoes, you know, with a strap to hold it on. Some of the guys had shoes, fortunately enough. As far as clothing, you didn't have too much clothing. Actually, you really didn't need it there in the Philippines.

Marcello: How about you personally?

Burns: I had a couple pairs of pants, as far as I remember, and maybe a couple of pairs of shorts. Your khaki pants that were worn out along the knees or someplace like that...you would cut them off and make shorts out of them. This is about all that I had there in the Philippines.

Marcello: How about your shoes?

Burns: At times I was fortunate enough to get hold of a pair of shoes, and, of course, when they would wear out, of course, I'd have to wear the wooden shoes with a strap on them.

Marcello: Up until this time, what mail were you able to receive or send out?

Burns: We couldn't say very much, and I think at one time I got one letter from home, but I don't remember the date of it. We were given a card by the Japanese, and you could only say about three or four words, and maybe you could check what camp you were in. About all you could say was, "I am fine. Don't worry" or "I am in good health," something on this order.

Marcello: Weren't these things already written out, and you had to check one?

Burns: Yes. It worked something on that order.

Marcello: And I guess that you had better check the right one, or it wouldn't get through?

Burns: Well, there was about only one that you could check, so it would be the right one, like, "I am well. Don't worry," or something like this, and it was only about three or four words, was about all you could say. This was a printed card.

Marcello: Did you ever receive any mail?

Burns: Like I mention, I think that I got one letter, but I think that when I got it, it was a year old or either a year-and-a-half old by the time that I received it.

Marcello: What did that do for your morale?

Burns: Of course, naturally, anything like that would pep you up even though it was that old.

Marcello: Describe the process by which you left Cabanatuan.

Burns: As well as I remember, I did get on several details that were going on outside of Cabanatuan. I don't exactly know what I did, but, anyway, I finagled my way off of them and got off of them. There were about three different details that came up from time to time that my name was on, and I worked it out...I don't know now exactly what happened, but, anyway, to make a long story short, I got off of them.

Marcello: Why did you not want to leave Cabanatuan?

Burns: Well, because I didn't know what I was getting into. I didn't know what detail you were going on. You didn't know if you were going to Japan or down to Mindanao.

Some of the details down there, according to the stories that we got, was pretty rough, and they were treated pretty bad. So I knew what I had at Cabanatuan. Like I said, after so long a time, as far as being a POW and the situation, why, we had a pretty good camp. You knew what you had there, where if you went out on a detail, you didn't know what you were going to get into.

But after I got out of about three details that I was on, a little while after the last one that I got off of, there was another detail that came up, and I happened to be on it. It just so happened that a lot of guys from my outfit, the 200th...and a lot of the officers that were in the 200th were more or less going to kind of be in charge of the POW's. Well, the point is that actually the Japanese were in charge. So I got to figuring, "Well, sooner or later I am going to have to go. I may as well go ahead on this one with a bunch of guys that I know." So I didn't make any attempt to get off of this detail.

For myself I guess that it worked out to be fortunate. They had some Jap ships in Manila Bay there that had prisoners on them, and they were getting ready to come out. Along about this time, the Americans had kind of started to come back in there, and the American planes

came over, and they bombed these ships that were in the bay that had American prisoners on them. These Japs' ships had American prisoners on them.

Marcello: You actually didn't see this. You heard this.

Burns: I didn't see it, but this is actually what happened.

Marcello: But I want to get it into the record that you heard this, that you didn't actually see it.

Burns: I didn't see it, but the point is...I think that I was about the third detail ahead of this when it happened. In other words, there were two or three other details that left after I did, and I was out about three details before this happened, when I went to Japan, so I considered myself very fortunate that this happened. Of course, when these American planes came over and bombed this Jap ship that was in the bay there with prisoners on there getting ready to pull out, why, a lot of the guys were killed. Just for the record, they say that our...I don't know if they called it precision bombing or just luck--I don't know--but one of the ships that they bombed...one shell came in that was so accurate that it went right down through the smokestack of the ship.

Marcello: Meanwhile, getting back to your story...

Burns: I can't remember just what day it was that we pulled out, but, anyway, we left Cabanatuan, and we went to

Bilibid, a place called Bilibid.

Marcello: Now that is down in Manila. In fact, it is an old Spanish prison.

Burns: Yes, that is right. Also, now I think that they had a hospital area, and a lot of guys in Bilibid worked out of there on the docks, on details in Manila.

Marcello: How did you get from Cabanatuan down to Bilibid?

Burns: We were taken by trucks.

Marcello: Was this a very long trip?

Burns: Well, Manila, I think, is about sixty miles from Cabanatuan. I believe that Cabanatuan is north of Manila, about sixty miles from Manila.

Marcello: How long did you remain in Bilibid?

Burns: I think that we were there for about three days, as I recall.

Marcello: Describe what Bilibid looked like.

Burns: I couldn't do that because I wasn't around enough, and all I know is that we were at this certain area, and we just had to wait, I guess, until they got a group together and brought it on the ship.

If I recall, we got on the ship, and I think that we were on the ship five or seven days before the ship could leave because they had submarines coming in there, and so they had to wait until this was all cleared

before they could pull out.

Marcello: Getting back to Bilibid, what did you think about the idea of being put into a prison, regardless of how long it was?

Burns: Well, actually, I guess I didn't think too much about it because they used that as, I guess, a central port of debarkation for details going out.

Marcello: Where were you kept while you were in Bilibid?

Burns: It was right in the prison, I guess.

Marcello: In other words, were you in cells?

Burns: No, we were out in the open. At night we just had to sleep right out in the open. They didn't give us any place inside or anything like that--just wherever we could find a place to sit down or squat.

Marcello: Okay, so you are only there for a couple of days, and then they put you aboard this ship. Describe the ship.

Burns: Maybe we were there longer than a couple of days, but, anyway, this I can't really do too much because we didn't see much of the ship. We were put on the ship, and then we were put down in the hold of the ship.

Marcello: Describe what it was like down in the hold of the ship.

Burns: In the hold of the ship, they had platforms built from the bottom floor up, and I would say that these platforms

weren't any higher than maybe a foot-and-a-half in height; and how far they went back, I don't know, but we had to crawl up on these platforms. They had about three or four of these, and we had to crawl in there and get back as far as we could go. Those Japs would take a stick or something and poke you and make you get back down in there so that they could get everybody loaded on there.

Marcello: They were only about a foot-and-a-half high?

Burns: They were only about a foot-and-a-half high, so you can just imagine how...you couldn't move very good in any way or whatever. It was crowded in there, and we were packed in just like sardines. If I remember right, eventually they had to get some of the guys out because they were suffocating. We were real crowded.

They had a front hold and a rear hold, and I was put into the rear hold. We didn't have very much room to move around. I would say that the center part of the hold where we could walk around was, I would say, about 25' x 30' or 30' x 30' or something like that. It wasn't a very large area, and how many of us were in there, in this particular hold, I don't know. I don't know how many men were on that detail, but they broke us down, I guess, when we left Bilibid to go on the ship. They broke us down into what we referred to

as Company One and Company Two with 150 men to a company. I was later on fortunate enough to be number forty-eight. I will explain this later when I get to Japan, I was in the first company. We had a pretty rough trip over.

Marcello: Before we get you on your way, you mentioned that you were in the harbor for seven days.

Burns: Yes, on the ship.

Marcello: Describe what the heat was like down in that hold.

Burns: Well, it was pretty hot, especially when you were pushed back on these platforms. Two or three of the guys suffocated. They died. This was one reason why we finally got the Japs to take us out, and then we just had this small area there on the ship to move around--no latrine or anything like that.

Marcello: What did they do for food?

Burns: They had rice, and this was cooked up on the deck. I don't remember if any of our guys worked on that or if it was strictly the Japanese, but there wasn't very much. There was hardly any water at all, and the facilities and the sanitation part of it...there was none. It was a continuous, big line of the guys to get up on the deck to go up to the latrine. Sometimes they didn't make it, and, of course, you can imagine the mess and filth that we had to work in. You have to

wallow in it and almost trip over it.

Marcello: That hold must have stuck to high heaven.

Burns: Oh, it did. There is no question about it. And if you were lucky enough to get up on deck (chuckle) just for a few minutes to get some fresh air, I mean...

Marcello: Even if you didn't have to go to the benjo, you still said that you had to just to get out of that hold.

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Did conditions get any better once the ship got underway?

Burns: No, it was no better. I don't remember how long it took us to get to Japan, but evidently we must have pulled into Moji in Japan during the night sometime. I think that most all of the details came into Moji and then were taken off of there and taken to different places in Japan for work details and so forth.

Marcello: If you had to guess, how long do you think that you were on that ship from the time that you got on it until the time you got off at Moji?

Burns: Oh, I would say probably five to ten days. See, the ship couldn't travel very fast. I think that if a ship is traveling by itself, they make 100 or 125 miles a day or something like that, and if they are a convoy, I think they only make about seventy or fifty miles

a day. If you're in a convoy, you travel a lot slower. I don't know if we were in a convoy or by itself because we were not up on deck, so we couldn't see.

Anyway, we pulled into Moji, and it was night as well as I can remember. Of course, the first thing that I saw when we got there to Moji, it looked like there in front of us was a big mountain--right there in front of us--which it was. So, of course, we got off of the ship, and, as I said, in one way we were very fortunate because they took fifty men on the work detail there in Moji, and it just so happened that they took fifty men out of the first company that I mentioned awhile ago. I said that I was number forty eight, and the reason that I said that I was fortunate in this respect...after I was there in Moji for a while, we found out that that was the best detail that you could get in Japan.

Marcello: So you stayed right there at Moji for a while.

Burns: I stayed right there in Moji until the war ended.

Marcello: What was the climate like when you got off the ship there at Moji?

Burns: Well, it was in August. It was fairly warm. It wasn't too cold. It was the latter part of July or early August, I guess.

Marcello: Now by the time that you landed there at Moji, had the bombing started yet, that is, the bombing of Japan?

Burns: No.

Marcello: Moji was relatively untouched?

Burns: They had not touched Moji at all. Now to give you an idea of where Moji is located, as you know, the mainland of Japan, which Tokyo and Yokohama is on is...what is the name of it?

Marcello: Honshu.

Burns: Honshu. I don't know why I had to ask you because I know it as well as I know my own name (chuckle). Right on the very southern tip of Honshu, there is a place called Shimonoseki, and right across from Shimonoseki, on the northern tip of the island of Kyushu, Moji is on the northern tip of that, and it sticks out just like the head of a pin on the northern tip. From Shimonoseki, which is on the southern end of the main island of Honshu, it takes you about twenty or thirty minutes to ride the ferry from Shimonoseki to Moji. And in this northern tip or northern part of Kyushu, it is a very heavy in coal. There is a lot of coal, and some of the guys were sent to different details in the Fukuoka area. That is what they called this part of it. Guys would

work in the mines, and then it was transported into Moji. Some of the ships that came into Moji...the details that worked there at Moji would go out and coal these ships that came in. They could be transport ships, Japanese military ships with soldiers on them, and things like that.

Marcello: So you would be loading coal on these ships?

Burns: We would be coaling them so that they could go out.

Marcello: Incidentally, when you get off the ship there at Moji, what kind of shape were you in personally?

Burns: Well, none of us was too good, really. None of us was too good at all because we didn't get too much rice on the trip over, you know. We were in pretty bad shape.

Marcello: What did you talk about on that trip to Japan, when you were down there in the hold?

Burns: Well, not a whole lot. We were just wondering where we were going to go and what it was going to be like and when we would get there. I think we were more or less concerned about how soon were we going to get off of this thing, and, of course, another thing that worried us, too, was that we didn't know if we were going to get hit or sunk or what, see. This was another thing that we worried about. We just didn't know. But after I was at Moji for a while,

I come to find out that, I mentioned before, it turned out to be, I guess, one of the better places for details than some of the other places in Japan.

Marcello: When you first heard that you were going to Japan, what was your reaction? I guess, to be more specific, if you had had a choice, would you have rather stayed in the Philippines or have gone to Japan.

Burns: Oh, yes, I had much rather stayed in the Philippines, but, as I say, the guys going out from Cabanatuan in the Philippines on these different details never knew what they were going to get into. They didn't know what kind of details that they were going to get onto or how rough it was.

We didn't know where we were going to go in Japan, and, like I said, I was very fortunate that I got to stay there at Moji. Later on, we had other details that came in there--ships that came in there--that really got shot out from under them on the way over. In fact, there was one ship that came in there--I can't give you the date, but it was after I was there for a while--on the way over it got shot out from under them three different times in that particular detail. I forget how many men that we got off there for detail in Moji.

Marcello: When you got into Moji, where were you housed?

Burns: They had one building there that we stayed in.
It was in Moji itself.

Marcello: Was it a warehouse or a barracks?

Burns: I don't know whether you'd call it a barracks, or I don't know if you call it a building, but, anyway, it was just one big building where we stayed. They had a ground floor and an upstairs floor, and it wasn't in too big of an area. It wasn't an area where you had a lot of room because it was houses on each side of it and across the street. It wasn't anything like a camp in O'Donnell or Cabanatuan. It was just this one building.

Marcello: What was it like on the inside? What were your quarters like on the inside?

Burns: Well, on the ground floor, it was the same thing, only on the top floor or second floor you had kind of a little platform that you stepped up. There was no individual beds or anything like this, just the space that you had for your blanket for your bed, and above you you had a shelf there for your mess kit and stuff like that, maybe your shaving gear, and that was about it. You just had so much space for yourself and then the next man. I guess that it wasn't over two-and-a-half or three feet.

Marcello: Now since you were going to go into a temperate climate, what provisions did the Japanese make in terms of clothing? Did you get another issue?

Burns: Yes, they gave us another issue there. We got issued some other clothing.

Marcello: How did it fit?

Burns: It wasn't too bad. They had some stuff stored up in one of the other buildings. They got out blankets and stuff that they gave, and some of it was American stuff (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you get shoes here?

Burns: Yes.

Marcello: Describe the food here in Moji while you were in this building.

Burns: Well, sometimes we would get rice, and then the rice was mixed in with...it wasn't exactly rice. I have been trying to think of the name of that for... I shouldn't forget it. But actually, I think it was more filling than rice, and that would be about two-thirds of this...well, something like barley, a type of barley, but it was red, kind of a reddish color. They have a name for it, I can't think of it right now. We'd get maybe one-third rice and maybe a third or a fourth of a mess kit of that for rations. They would make some kind of soup, and the soup would have

maggots in it. Of course, what could you do but just to pick them out and just go ahead (chuckle)? Of course, after we were there and after we kind of learned the ropes a little bit, we got so that during the different work details that we went out on in different places, why, we had the opportunity to sneak a little stuff back in.

Marcello: So actually, in terms of the basic rations, your food had been better at Cabanatuan than it was here at Moji.

Burns: Yes, I would say so.

Marcello: Describe what a typical workday was like for you here at Moji from the time that you got up each morning until you came in in the evening.

Burns: Well, they had two places what they called Moji. Moji was where the ships came in and docked, and they would have different ships to come in, like I mentioned awhile ago. Some of the guys were sent to areas where they mined the coal, and the coal was transported into Moji, and we would coal these ships. Now some of them were military ships going out with soldiers on them and other different types of ships from different companies. Then there would be ships that would come in that down in the hold would have

pig iron on them, ships that had cement bags or cement which would be unloaded, ships with salt, and then some ships with fifty-five-gallon drums of different stuff, just any cargo of whatever it was. Now this was called the Moji detail.

Then we had another place that we went that was called the station detail. Now when the details left, when we went out on a detail there, the work would be...this is where they had the railroad tracks and warehouses, and the tracks up by the warehouses. And you would be working maybe from a warehouse onto a boxcar or from a warehouse onto a...I forget the Japanese name for it; I don't know why I did. Anyway, it was a wagon. You couldn't actually say it was a wagon, but it was a wagon, anyway, with a flat-bed on it. It didn't have no sideboards or anything like a regular wagon. It had four wagon wheels and a flat-bed that would be pulled maybe by an horse or two horses. We would have to load these from a warehouse into the boxcar on this type of wagon. The Japs have a name for it, but I forget it. Then the wagon would take it over to another warehouse, where it would be loaded, or it might be loaded onto a barge, or maybe it would be loaded from a barge, or maybe you'd load from a

barge onto one of these wagons to be transported to a warehouse or something of this type. Some of the things that we worked on there was a sugar detail, soybeans, mango beans, and different things like this.

Marcello: Before I ran the remaining part of that tape through and put on a new tape, you were describing the work details upon which you were engaged there in Moji. Now awhile ago you were talking about coaling these ships, and I gather that was perhaps the more common or frequent thing that you did.

Burns: Yes, to a certain extent. I think that that would be the main thing there at Moji.

Marcello: Exactly how were these ships coaled? You might explain that process.

Burns: They had several different types of coal that these ships took on. Usually, for the biggest part of them, and especially with the Japanese transports or whatever--I always refer to them as military ships--it was a fine coal. The coal was brought up to and right beside the ship in a barge. Oh, I would say it was roughly,..I would say that the barges was about thirty feet deep. Would you say this room is about twenty-five feet long?

Marcello: I would say about that long.

Burns: I would say it was about twenty-five feet long, and, of course, naturally, the barge has got the curve in front and then off a little bit in the back. When these ships would come in, they would be loaded down with so much coal in it that there would only be about three or four inches above the waterline. I couldn't tell you how many tons or pounds the ship would hold, but this gives you some idea.

Of course, barges of coal was towed in up to the side of the ship. On these coal barges, they would have three big heavy-duty baskets. Oh, I guess that they were at least maybe fifteen feet or twelve feet in diameter, and they had three of these baskets in there. And they would come down, and they'd say they needed so many men for Moji. There would be maybe, I would say, a fifteen-man detail going out on these barges. Of course, they would have more details at Moji, too. Maybe they would be over here working on another ship unloading pig iron or cement or salt or whatever it might be. But these big baskets...they had one in both ends of the barge and one in the middle, so there would be about five men to a basket. These were the prisoners. Of course, they were civilians, and some of them would be women, Japanese women.

What we would have to do, we would have to shovel these baskets full of coal. Then up on the deck of the ship, they would have the signal-man that would signal to the man that was operating the winch. When there'd be a basketful, then they would take these ropes that was under the bottom and came up above the basket, and the guy on the deck would motion for the winchman to let the hook drop down. And so these ropes and baskets were hooked on. They had one man to do this. Usually, a Japanese did it. He would hook the ropes around the baskets onto the winch, and then this guy on the deck would signal for the winchman to pull it up. He would pull it up, and then it would be slung over and dumped into the hold of the ship.

Marcello: So this is all shovel work, in other words?

Burns: This is all shovel work, and I mean big coal shovels. I tell you, by the time you got through with one of those, you knew that you had done a day's work, too. As I said, you had three baskets, one on each end of the barge and the one in the middle.

Well, usually, when the guys went out, they were taken out to the ship on a launch. They would take you out. Of course, as soon as they would get close enough, the guys would jump off of the launch

that took us out and onto the barge, and they would head for the head basket. Now you wonder why we did that. As I mentioned they had a winchman up there, and the baskets were drawn up by the winch to be unloaded on the deck of the ship. You can imagine... the two end baskets, when they were pulled up...see, of course, the middle basket wasn't there. You would pull it over to one side when one of the end baskets... of course, naturally, that would have to...and finally, you would get over to the center where the winch was. So if you were working that middle basket there while that thing is going up, you didn't know if that thing was going to hold when carrying that basket of coal up there, and sometimes coal would fall on you, anyway, because it would come up and hit the side of the ship and knock some of the coal out. Of course, we didn't have any shirts or anything like that. We were bare-chested. We didn't have no T-shirts or anything like that, just bare skin from the waist up, and so you can imagine what would happen if you were under that metal basket...and the two end baskets always had to swing over to the middle to be drawn up, and so you can see it would be quite dangerous at times. That was one type of coal.

They had another type of coal that we would call

egg coal. It was shaped like an egg. It wasn't white. Naturally, it was black, and it looked something like a mixture of charcoal that you would use for barbecue. But it was in the shape of an egg, and it was five times as big in size as an egg. Now usually, when this type of coal was loaded onto the ship or wherever we loaded, this was done by hand.

Now you wonder how we would do this by hand. Of course, besides the prisoners, they had a bunch of Japanese on the barge, and you had a little basket. I would say that it was maybe three times as big as what we refer to as a breadbasket that you would serve bread to the table--about three or four times as big as that. You had a little rake with about three or four prongs on it, kind of curled under, that you would rake this coal with. Then you had a line coming from more or less the end of the barge like this (gesture) going up to the human line, mostly Japanese and some of the POW's, going up to the little hold on the side of the ship. What you would do, the guy down at the end of this line that was lined up to the side of the ship...the guy at the end of the line in the barge would have to fill this basket up--stoop over and rake this coal into this basket--and

then he would lift it up and pitch it up to the next guy, and then the next guy would lift it up and pitch it up to the next one until they got to the hold of the ship, and then they would throw the coal into the hold of the ship and then throw the basket back down into the barge. And (chuckle) there was two lines of this going at once--one from one end of the barge and one from the other end--and this is the way that you would coal these ships. Why they ever picked this particular type of coal, I don't know, but, anyway, if you didn't think that was hard work stooping over...

Marcello: How many hours a day would you be on this?

Burns: We would be out there until maybe...would be out there at 8:00 in the morning, or maybe at 9:00 we would go out, and sometimes it would be after dark before you would get in.

Marcello: So would you stay out until the ship was loaded with coal?

Burns: Yes, we would stay out there until it was loaded.

Marcello: What kind of supervision did you have while you were on these work details in Moji.

Burns: Well, okay, the night before we would go out...this is what I wanted to say awhile ago. When the Americans got off the ship in Moji, there was only one American

there in this camp in Moji, and he was a Navy guy. The others were British and Dutch prisoners from Holland. The British were probably from Singapore and over there, and the Dutchman...there were three Australians, and this one American was there until our detail that I was on got there. They took fifty men off the detail that I was on, and up until that time, there was only this one American there, and he was a Navy man, and his name was Doyle. I think that he was a Navy chief. He and one of the British officers were kind of in charge of the Americans.

This British officer kind of had a job over at headquarters there, and at night they would make out a detail to know how many men they wanted: "Okay, we need 150 men from Moji, and we need thirty men for the station detail," or "We need seventy-five men for Moji and 125 men for the station. Then at night we would have to stand up by our bunks and then they would come in...this one British officer worked with the Japanese at their headquarters building. It was all more or less in one building, but a certain part of it was headquarters. He would come out, and he would call out the details--who would be on what details and where: "I need fifty men for detail."

Then he would call out who would go.

When we got to Moji, we did not go by names. Of course, they had our names in headquarters building, I guess. They must have. When he would call out...all the guys had a number...and you had three shirts. I believe that it was on the left side that they had big numbers. They were about an inch-and-a-half or maybe two inches high and maybe three-fourths of an inch wide or something like that and printed on a white background. They were sewn on. You would have to take this and sew this on the left side of your shirt, and each guy had a number. And so instead of calling the guy's name out, he would call out your number, so you would have to listen to your number to see whether you went to the station the next morning or whether you went to Moji. My number was 347. So this is the way that the details were made up or called out to where you would know what detail and where you were going.

Of course, we didn't know what detail or what work we were going to get into when we got to Moji. He just said he wanted 125 or 100 or whatever men for Moji, and then he would call out the numbers, and you knew what detail you were supposed

to go on. It was the same thing for the station detail. Maybe sometimes they only want fifteen men for the station detail and maybe the same thing with Moji. So like I said, you never knew what...when you got down to Moji, well, maybe they would have a hanchō or whatever you call it. Now they were more or less...well, they were Japanese civilians, and they were hired by these Japanese companies that owned the coal and different companies at the station, and they would pick their men. Say that they need fifteen men to coal the ship. He took fifteen men out of this 125 or however many he needed. Maybe this hanchō needed ten men for this detail, and maybe this hanchō would only need five men. It was the same thing when we went to the station.

Usually, at the station, most everyday they would have what they called a sugar detail, and that usually took ten men. Of course, everybody liked to get on the sugar detail for the simple reason that they had a chance to steal some sugar and bring it back into camp and so forth. Naturally, while you were working the detail, a lot of the guys would "accidentally on purpose" cut or split a sugar sack where it would leak. The reason that they did

this was because when they worked the detail they would come into the warehouse to get the sugar loaded. See, you had to carry this on your back. They had maybe two Japanese guys in there that were lifters, and they had a hook, a hook with a handle through it, and they would reach down. They would have two in each hand, and one would be at each end, and they would reach down and pick this up. As you came by, they would swing it up, and you were supposed to get under it and catch it on your shoulder, and then you carried it out from the warehouse into the boxcar. You had a board that you had to walk up into the boxcar, and with 220 pounds and going up an incline, it gets to be pretty heavy when you haven't had a whole lot to eat. So as the guys would be by... of course, they would start at the top, and they would have steps where you stepped up to to get to the top. Well, they cut one of these--break it on purpose--where they could get their hand in there, and they could get a handful of sugar and eat it. You know, sugar gives you fast energy.

So you wonder how we got this stuff into camp. Well, usually, on the sugar detail, when most of the guys went to the station, they wore long pants,

and the reason that they did this...on these pants they would cut the pocket out and sew it on a long, narrow cloth and make a pocket out of it where it would go down maybe below your knee. This was in the pocket of the pants, and when they went up to get their sack of sugar to carry out, they would reach up and get a handful of sugar and put it in their pocket, and it would fall down into this long leg (chuckle), the pocket inside of their pants leg. Of course, they had a strap so that they could strap this to their leg or to their ankle, you know. Sometimes the guys would get caught, and sometimes the guys would take sugar back into the camp in their canteens--any way that they thought that they could get it in.

Of course, we were having to make formation in front of the building whether we went to the station or Moji. There were so many guards that went with us. It all depended on how many men went where. Sometimes you would have five guards to go with us to the station. We had a meeting point where the detail met. It was just this little shack there where we went in and left our mess gear and our ball of rice that we got that morning at the mess hall before we left.

These hanchos would come out, and the guards would tell us to line up. The hanchos might want ten men for the sugar detail. Of course, everyone wanted to rush to get that sugar detail. Some of them made it, and some of them didn't. So he would get ten men there. After working on these details, you had the same hanchos all the time, and, of course, they got to know who the guys were and what they could do and what they couldn't. Sometimes he would pull a guy out. He would go over there and look for a certain guy, and he would pull him out and put on the detail.

Then there at the station we would unload fifty-five-gallon drums off the barge into the warehouse or from the warehouse into a barge, or maybe soybeans, rice, and sometimes we would work unloading a boxcar into the warehouse. This is something else that the guys "accidentally" dropped one of those big wooden buckets where they could get into it and steal some mizu paste and sneak it back in to camp. Anyway, of course, not everybody got it. The individuals that did get it had that stuff hid up there, and when they got their rice, they had a little something extra to go on it.

Marcello:

So you were essentially doing stevedore or long-

shoreman work here?

Burns: That's right. That is actually what it amounted to.

Marcello: For the most part, you were under civilians or military personnel?

Burns: Well, the guards that took us out from Moji there were referred to as "old soldiers," in other words, soldiers that had been in combat duty and got banged up and were disabled. They really weren't able to do combat duty, and they put them, I would say, in the same category of what we should say civil guards. You know, sometimes you would have these civil guards in the States. But they still were dressed in the Japanese Army uniforms. These were the type of guys that would take us out on details.

Now they would march us from our building down to the station area. When we would get there, like I said, we would have to make a formation, and this hancho would say, "I would want ten men for the sugar detail. I need five men for soybeans," so on and so forth. So you would go with this hancho, and he would be the one that would work you. He would be in charge actually of the detail, and he would tell us what to do.

As far as the guards, they wouldn't stay right at the detail all of the time. They would mosey around and then take off, and they would come back maybe every hour or hour-and-a-half or two hours, and they would check on the men. They would make their rounds of the different details. Of course, sometimes, if you had a ten-man detail, and they came back and there was only nine men... he would count.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what was the disposition of these civilian hanchos?

Burns: In what way do you mean? Do you mean were they hostile?

Marcello: How did they treat the prisoners?

Burns: Well, we had one guy there that was pretty hostile. He was a pro-Japanese...he was Korean, and he was a mean son-of-a-gun even though he was a civilian. You had not better use any certain words like, say, S.O.B., because he knew what it meant. He knew exactly what it meant. He knew enough English and had enough background that he knew what it meant. You had better not say anything like that around him or call him that because he would take that cane that he had in his hands, the hook, you know, with a handle on it, and he would just as soon come at

you with that as not. He was a Korean. You could say he was pro-Jap.

But the other guys...it didn't really make any difference to them. They worked you, and they were paid by the Japanese companies that we did the work for. Of course, if any of the guys gave him any trouble, all he had to do was...when the guard came around, he would just have to tell them. They didn't report us because they were pretty good. They really didn't give us any hard time.

But the guards is the ones that gave you the hard time. We had one guard there that went out on detail with you, and when he went out on detail, maybe there were three other guards with him, or he could just be by himself. We called him "Peg Leg" because he had lost a leg in some battle, and he had a peg leg. He was a mean son-of-a-gun. When you went out on a detail with him, and if he was with any other guards, we knew that he was out to get you. He was going to try to nail you one way or the other. It didn't make any difference--he was going to try and catch you doing something. I guess maybe this was so he would have the privilege to beat the heck out of you.

Some of the other guards weren't too bad. Some you couldn't tell. You didn't know which way they were going to go. There was one or two like that.

We had one guard there that we called the "Old Sailor." He was in the Japanese Navy, and he had seen combat. Like I say, he was either too old or wasn't able to be in combat anymore. He was a good guard. More or less, he didn't care whether school kept or not, but you had to put out so much. Of course, when he was more or less by himself in charge of the detail, if you wanted to wander in the warehouse and put some sugar in your pocket, he would look the other way. He didn't care. But when he was with two or three or four of the other guards--four of them together or five of them together--and a guy got caught doing something, we all more or less got punished because they would...maybe they'd...catch you they knew that someone had stolen something, and they would line us up and wanted to know who did it. Say, like, this guy, "Peg Leg," well, he would probably catch you, and he knew. So they would line the guy up in front of us, and they would get hold of an iron pipe or something and come by and hit you across the

small of your back with this iron pipe. Now when the "Old Sailor" came by, he had to follow suit to save face, but when he swung, see, and, of course, the guys in the group knew what was going on. But he had to do it. He had to follow suit because of the other guards would have reported him, and then he would be in trouble. But when he was by himself and would have five men or ten men over here on a detail, he would check by, but you could do almost anything that you wanted to in front of him. He didn't care. He was just that type of guy.

Marcello:

Now the Japanese in the home islands are a very clean people in terms of taking hot baths and all of this sort of thing. Were any of these kinds of facilities ever made available to the prisoners here at Moji?

Burns:

Usually, when we came off of details, you would go ahead and take a bath. They didn't have showers. It was one big tub. I would say it was three or four, maybe five, feet deep, and this would have hot water in it. When you were ready for your bath, you would get in there, and this was their way of bathing, so this is what they had for us there at that particular place.

Marcello: How often would you take a bath?

Burns: Every day after you came in after detail.

Marcello: Would you have to prepare your own water and so on and so forth?

Burns: It was already filled up. It was entirely up to you; you didn't have to go.

Marcello: Would the prisoners and so on have to prepare the water and boil it and all of that sort of thing?

Burns: Well, that I don't know because when I came in, it was already ready, so I don't know if the guys working in the building there did it or what. I don't know.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were mentioning that you were lucky to have been assigned to Moji. Why did you say that?

Burns: After we were there, we found out that, even though it wasn't as good as Cabanatuan in the Philippines, this was a better detail than the other details that were outside of there. We got reports from these other camps, and that is just the way that it turned out. Even though it was a lot rougher than in the Philippines, it just turned out that it was a better work detail than some of the other places-- even though it was pretty rough at times because

of the treatment of the guards.

Marcello: While you were at Moji, did the city or the area ever come under any air attacks? Any bombing raids?

Burns: Toward the end of the war, yes, and then it was at night.

Marcello: Describe this.

Burns: Well, let me go back and tell you about this other guard if you want me to.

Marcello: All right.

Burns: This was one guard that I was telling you about was "Peg Leg." Then we had another guard that we called "Scar Face." He had a big scar down the side of his face. I think that it was on his right side. Of course, he was nicknamed "Scar Face," and he wore heavy, thick-rimmed glasses. He was in charge of the detail...they had about three men working during the day and about three men working at night. This was a little way up from the building that we were in, up on the side of the mountain, and what we were doing up there was building a bomb shelter. See, during the night these three men would go in there and would blast. They would drill a hole into the side of the mountain--of course, they already had the tunnel

started in there--and they would take this dynamite, and they would do so much blasting. Then in the daytime, the detail that went up there in the daytime would have to carry the rock out. The way that we did that was that we had a box, a good-sized box made, with two bars or handles going down the side of it. One man would get in front and one man in back. We would take this box into the tunnel, and one guy would load the box up with rock in the tunnel, and the other two would carry it out and dump it and then go back in.

And this guard was in charge of this detail, and he was a mean son-of-a-gun. Maybe I am getting a little ahead of myself, but, anyway, when the war was over--when we got word that the war was over--why, he took off. Boy, it was a good thing that he did because he knew what would happen to him.

Marcello: What made him so mean?

Burns: Well, I guess that was just his nature.

Marcello: Why do you say that he was so mean?

Burns: Why do I say that he was so mean? I don't know. I guess that he was one of these guys that thought that the Japanese was going to win the war and...I

don't know. He was just that type of guy.

Marcello: What I'm saying is, what did he do to make you say that he was a mean guard?

Burns: Well, the way that he treated the prisoners.

Marcello: Well, how did he treat the prisoners?

Burns: He would knock the heck out of you and beat you any chance that he would get--the least little things. You couldn't agree with the guy or nothing. He was just mean. The treatment that he gave these guys that were on this detail...of course, they would change the detail from time to time, and... of course, he was just that type of guard, that type of guy. He just treated the prisoners mean.

Marcello: How often did you have this detail?

Burns: I had it for quite a while--this particular detail. I had it for quite a while. I was on the day detail where we would go up and pull the rocks out. He did the right thing because if he had not taken off...the first thing that the guys did was went looking for that guy, and that would have been one dead Jap, especially him. Now this other guard that we called "Peg Leg," he would have been another one, too.

But more or less toward the end of the war, they did away with some of these old guards that we

had there, and they brought in some younger Japanese guards. Of course, they didn't know what was going on. Then they moved "Peg Leg" out of there to another place in Japan. It is a good thing that they did because that would have been another dead Jap.

Marcello: Describe the situation there at Moji when these air raids took place at the end of the war.

Burns: Well, this bomb shelter that we were building up on the side of the mountain was for some of the civilians and especially Japanese guards and, of course, the POW's that were there. Every once in awhile, we would have an alert. They would pull an alert, I guess, to see how fast we could get up there.

But if you want me to go this close to the end of the war, well, okay. They came in there and hit us one night, and they pulled us out for this alert. They wanted us to...they put us up there in the shelter. Some of the Japanese NCO's in the Japanese headquarters there...there was one guard there that was a pretty good "Joe." We think that he was pro-American because he didn't give us too hard a time. I think that he would have liked to have done a lot more than what he

could. He couldn't because of the other Japanese. So this one particular night we got an alert, and we were supposed to go up to the shelter there, which we did. We had to go back and bring a lot of rations up there and then had to go down to the Japanese headquarters. They wanted some desks and stuff brought up, so the detail had to do that. We were up there the biggest part of the night. During this time, we would go out...and, of course, it was dark, and you could...boy, if you wanted to see some pretty fireworks, you should have been there then (chuckle) because you could see all of these tracers in the night. You could see them. I don't know what they were shooting at or what, but they were American planes in there doing this.

Marcello: But I gather, from what you say, that you were really never under any of these air attacks?

Burns: No.

Marcello: What did they do for your morale when you saw this taking place?

Burns: They didn't do anything. They didn't do anything at all. Do you mean the Japanese?

Marcello: No. Obviously, the Japanese aren't going to do anything for your morale (chuckle). When you saw

these planes coming over, and they were bombing Japanese installations and so on, again, without putting words in your mouth, that must have built up your morale quite a bit.

Burns: Oh, sure. We knew sooner or later the Americans would come in there one way or the other. Sooner or later it was going to end. But during the time that we were there, we just lived from day to day.

Of course, I was at Moji at the time that Roosevelt died, and, of course, the first thing that we knew...the Japanese knew it, too, and they come in and asked us who was this guy Truman. We had been over there almost four years, and we didn't know what was going on or who this guy Truman was. We never heard of him. We didn't know who he was. We told them that we didn't know. We asked ourselves, "Who is this guy Truman? Who is he?"

Marcello: On the other hand, you mentioned that you did hear about Roosevelt's death. What was the reaction of you and your fellow prisoners to the fact that Roosevelt had died?

Burns: Of course, it was a shock to us, and we didn't know what the score was. The Japs are the ones

that told us.

Marcello: What was their attitude or reaction?

Burns: Oh, they were glad that Roosevelt had died because I guess that they figured that Roosevelt gave them a hard time. They seemed to be pretty happy that he had died, and, of course, they didn't know anything about Truman. I guess they didn't know what kind of president that he was going to make or what was going to happen. I guess that they thought, since he died...I just imagine that the Japs thought that they were going to have it pretty easy and that they were going to win the war. I don't know.

Marcello: Awhile ago I asked you what the air raids did for your morale. What was the attitude of the Japanese toward the prisoners after one of these air raids had occurred?

Burns: Are you talking about the guards or the Japanese civilians?

Marcello: Both.

Burns: What was their reactions?

Marcello: Yes, toward the prisoners.

Burns: (Chuckle) Well, the only thing that I can tell you is what happened. Most of these young guards that they had brought in, as I mentioned before, had replaced some of these others. This particular night (chuckle),

these doggone guards took off. They scattered. Of course, the older Japanese couldn't figure it out. You see, they thought that since they had taken off, we were going to try and escape, but we didn't. Of course, when it was all over with, and we got outside and they got more or less a count on us, they found us all there. But these other little ol' shavetail guards got scared, and they just scattered. They took off.

Marcello: Could you detect any increased hostility on the part of the guards or the civilians as a result of these air raids?

Burns: No.

Marcello: I guess that you couldn't show too many feelings of happiness and so on after one of these raids. You had to keep your feelings to yourself.

Burns: Well, there was only once that I really can say that...it was the raid this particular night and then the day that the war ended. We could tell that something was going on. It was in the atmosphere, and we knew.

Marcello: Describe the events leading up to the end of the war.

Burns: This might be interesting to some of your future students. Getting into the atomic bomb, you see,

when they dropped the atomic bomb...a lot of people don't know this, but Moji was picked to be the target. I don't think that there are too many people that know it. The day that they came over to drop the atomic bomb, which was supposed to have been at Moji, the visibility over the city was so low...in other words, it wasn't right and so they decided not to drop it. Two days later, they dropped it on Hiroshima, so the guys with me there at Moji say that we missed the atomic bomb by two days.

Did you know that they also dropped one at Nagasaki? It was just fortunate that the camp at Nagasaki was out on a little peninsula there, about five miles out of Moji. If they had not been out there, they would have been right in the middle of the second atomic bomb that they dropped there at Nagasaki.

Marcello: Describe the events leading up to the war and your eventual liberation.

Burns: Well, going back a little bit, another detail that I happened to get on was across from Moji to Shimonoseki. That was a three-man detail during the day and a two-man detail at night, which they were also building a bomb shelter over there. On

this particular detail, the Japanese guard did not go with us, but they had a shavetail, as we referred to them, from the police station. I guess that you could call him an apprentice. He would bring the two men back. Of course, you had to ride the launch from Shimonoseki to Moji, which took you about twenty minutes. When he would bring these two men back at night into the camp, then he would pick up the three men to go with him during the day. See, then when he brought us back, he would pick up the two men that worked at night. Of course, they had one of these guys up there where they were working.

When we come in from Shimonoseki to Moji there, every once in a while...I think that we are getting into the part of the question that you asked me. The Japanese civilians knew the B-29. Of course, they had come out with this bomber, the B-29, and we had heard about it. They could see these bombers come over in this particular area. They would be in this particular area because they were trying to get on the launch to go from Moji over to Shimonoseki. Once or twice the B-29's came over, and they'd shout, and they were scared! The Japanese were scared because they knew what it was,

and it scared the heck out of them.

At one time they were going to use Moji as a port of embarkation. They were going to bring ships in there to bring the prisoners out. But at this particular place at Moji, there was a little body of water there. Instead of calling it a harbor or something like that, they called it the Inland Sea, and it was real shallow. I don't know how they did it, but, anyway, I guess planes came over and dropped them...but, anyway, they got mines planted in the Inland Sea. In fact, the building that we were in, we went back into the back of the building to wash up at the latrine... we could look up...of course, this was screened-in, no glass. We could look out the back and over into the water at this Inland Sea, and there was a small freighter that was in the water, and it was at about forty-five-degree angle, and one-third of it was sticking up out of the water. This is how shallow that Inland Sea was. Of course, they had mines planted in there, so the Americans decided that it was too big a risk to go in there because of these mines, and that is when they decided they would go into Nagasaki.

Now to get back to a little before this, I was

working...the reason that I told you about this detail at Shimonoseki was because I wanted to get the B-29 part in there. Now on the day that the war ended, I was working on this other detail--the same type of detail--where they were building a bomb shelter. I don't know what area that it was in Moji, but it was up by the police station. They had certain district police stations in Moji just like we have here in the States. We were working up on this detail just on the other side of the police.

The same thing happened there. There was about five of us working there--two at night and three in the daytime--and the same thing happened. When we got back, well, these police or shavetails were bringing these prisoners back at night and taking the other three with them in the morning. Of course, we would have to be waiting when they came in.

Right on this side facing the building (gesture) ...we were building the shelter on the left side of the police station, and on the right side of it, they had a blacksmith shop. He sharpened their drills or something during the day so that they could drill and blast where they were building the shelter. He was an old Japanese. He was a blacksmith.

Of course, our detail was the same thing. We'd go in there and carry the rock out--three men--during the day.

This particular day...at a certain time, the Japanese people--you could tell--would come by this station. I guess that they were going to work. These are the civilians. They were going to work. And at a certain time in the evening, the same group would be coming back, you know. So that morning, when we got up there, we noticed that nothing had changed too much because people were going to work. It seems like around 10:30 or 11:00, all these people that had gone...they would usually come back in the afternoon, but you could see that they were grouped, I guess, about 10:30 or 11:00.

We knew that something was in the air, that something was going on. We couldn't figure it out. There were only two little shavetails left there at the police station. One of them was the one that came and got us to bring the three men up for the day detail. As these people were going back, why... the shop there where...we were at this blacksmith shop at something like a garage door. We were standing out there on the street watching the people

go. These two police shavetails were trying to keep us inside. They didn't want the civilians to see us. Why, I don't know. They knew, but we didn't. We knew that something was in the wind because we could feel it in the atmosphere.

It just so happened that one of the hanchos who had worked with some of the details down at the station happened to come by, and he recognized one of the guys that used to be on the detail down there. He spoke a little Japanese, so they got to throw in a few words together, and he told us more or less that the war was over. We didn't believe it.

So these two little shavetails...usually, we would quit about 4:00 and go back to camp in the afternoon. In the meantime, there was some Japanese guy that drove up in a big black car. I don't know who he was, and if I remember right, he also told us that something was going on. These two little shavetail policemen wanted to try and get us to go back to camp. They wanted to take us back into camp. We wanted to stay here, even though we weren't doing anything but just standing inside there. We weren't doing any work. The reason that we didn't go back was if you came back in--

if you were out on a detail and you came back early--they would take you and put on some ol' detail that didn't amount to anything around some area there in the building where we were. Of course, we knew this, and we didn't want to do that. That is why we didn't want to go back. So they kept insisting. "No, we don't want to go back." So finally, they got "teed off," so they made us get our gear up and took us back to camp.

As we got in there, the other details had come in, especially from the station. They were outside in formation. See, everytime that a detail went out, they had to make a formation. If they had three men for the station, why, the guards would take those men and take off for there, and the other men would go to Moji. So they had the men out there in formation. They had come in. They had brought them in from the other details, and they had them out there. As we came in, we came in behind this group of prisoners that were making this formation.

As we walked up and stepped up in front of the building, one of our men that was standing there... he was in sickbay. He hadn't been out on detail. I forget his name. I can picture there him in my

mind, but I forget his name. He told us. He said that the war was over. We didn't believe him. He said, "Yes, the war is over!" And, of course, that was why this group was out in front. Then the Japanese that was in charge, he announced that the war was over.

Marcello: When he made this announcement, did he display any emotions or anything of that nature?

Burns: No, not that I know of.

Marcello: Did the prisoners display any emotions?

Burns: Not while they were in formation. Of course, after they got inside, why, naturally, you know, we were all happy that it was over with, see. You must remember, see, that not only the Americans were there, but we had about, say, 300 there in this camp--I forgot to mention that--when we first got to Moji. And as I say, when I got there, they took fifty Americans off of the detail that I was on. Before we got there, there was only one American there, and the rest was Dutch and British. All totaled, I would say there was about 300. I do know that after the war was over...see, they didn't move us out. We didn't know where to go because we had no word of what to do.

Marcello: Did the Japanese who made the announcement give you

any instructions as to what you were supposed to do?

Burns: No, he didn't know either. This one Japanese NCO that I mentioned awhile ago--I forget his name--that I thought was pro-American, he is the one that more or less...I guess that some of the others stayed there, but he was the one more or less more concerned for the prisoners than the other Japs because they had no way or they didn't have any way or anything to provide rations for us. He was concerned because he didn't know how he was going to feed us because there wasn't anything coming in.

So we got word. I don't know how we got it, but we got word--I don't know where it came down from--for us to go out and mark off a spot there in Moji. I think we were supposed to mark with a big white cross a certain area, and at a certain time a B-29 would come over and drop food and clothing to us, which they did, and they were in fifty-five-gallon drums with these small parachutes.

To get back to the number of prisoners that was in the camp, I don't know just exactly the exact number. Of course, they had a record of it. But they dropped rations of food and clothing

enough for five hundred to a thousand men. Five hundred was the smallest. The Americans knew just exactly where these different camps were in Japan, and they knew approximately how many men were in there. But I would say we had about three hundred because, see, they dropped enough rations for five hundred men. Of course, there were not five hundred men there, and, of course, we had excess stuff. They dropped C-rations and concentrated food and fatigues and boots and clothing and stuff like this, and the word got out to these different camps that we had excess stuff there. A lot of guys came in from these other camps to see what they could finagle--boots and fatigues and stuff--because they didn't have enough down in their camp.

Marcello: Did any celebrations take place after the surrender?

Burns: No, not really. Of course, we were all glad that it was over, but as far as making a big hullabaloo about it, no.

Marcello: Did you ever go out of camp to test your freedom in downtown Moji?

Burns: This is what I was getting into. After this was over with...see, it was unconditional surrender.

Of course, when we were captured...of course, the Japanese...if you had a watch or a ring or whatever, they took it, and there wasn't anything that we could do but to give it to them. But some of the guys, when they left camp, they ran into Jap officers or it could be enlisted men...also, the Japanese took our cameras, if any of them had cameras. Of course, this was probably in Manila or someplace like that. But the guys, when they ran into an officer, if he had a saber, well, they took it. If they had an automobile, they took it. Some of the guys did take their watch, camera. I didn't because I didn't go out that much, but some of the guys did.

There was one little kid there--I guess he wasn't over seventeen years old or eighteen at the most--and he tried to get two or three guys to go with him. He said, "I'm going to take off." He took off. See, at this time, even though the war was over, they were still fighting down at Okinawa because they had these Japanese marines, special troops, crack troops, and they were dug in at Okinawa. They said that these guys were big. You know, usually, your

Japanese are these small guys, but these crack troop were a special troop, and they were a big son-of-a-guns. I never saw any of them, myself. The fighting was still going on down there. They were trying to get these Japs out that were dug in. So this kid took off, and in seven days after he took off from Moji, he was back in the States. Some of the other guys took off, and they got down to Okinawa. Well, it wasn't too long after that until they got word out--I don't know how they did--that they didn't want anybody taking off and going to Okinawa.

Marcello: How did these guys get from Moji to Okinawa?

Burns: They would go down and get on the train or whatever or bum a ride, and they just took off on their own. We could ride the train and go anywhere that we wanted to.

Marcello: But Okinawa is an island.

Burns: What?

Marcello: Okinawa is an island.

Burns: Yes. I don't know how he got there, but he did. He took off, and within seven days after he took off from Moji, he got down to Okinawa, and in seven days we got word that he was back in

the States. See, what was happening was that these guys went off, and they were getting down to Okinawa. The U.S. Army that was down there weren't expecting these guys to come in, and they had no way to take care of them or anything. They were just in the way, so to get rid of them, the first plane out, they put them on that plane and shipped them out to get them out of their hair, see. They were busy fighting these other Japs, trying to get them out of there, and they didn't want to fool with no POW's coming in there, which you can't blame them.

Marcello: Discuss your liberation from Moji. When did the Americans come in?

Burns: So they got word to us and told us that they didn't want anyone else to go down there, for us to stay put where we were, because they had no facilities or anything to take care of us. We were not to move. I don't remember the date, but I would say that we were probably there five or seven days.

Marcello: After you received the word of the surrender?

Burns: After the war was over, yes, because the Japanese had nothing to do with us there at the camp where we were. So we had to just sit tight

until we got word. Like I say, some of the guys took off on their own.

When we got word to move, it wasn't through the military. The Japanese trainmaster there at Moji came up to the camp and told the officers in charge--it was about two o'clock in the afternoon--that he would have a train ready about 10:00 or 10:30 that night for us to move out and for us to be down at the train at 10:00. So naturally that was good news for us. We got our stuff together, and we pulled out, and we got down there at the station about 10:00, and, sure enough he had a train. He had so many coaches for the Americans and so many...I think that he had one or two coaches for the Australians, which was three Australians (chuckle), and so many coaches for the Dutchmen and so many for the British. I don't know whether that was in the right line, but, anyway, that is the way he had made the train up.

Let me go back a little bit to one of the guards after the war was over, there in Moji--this one guard that we called the "Old Sailor." Now like I said, during these details, you know, he more or less didn't care, or he didn't treat

the prisoners bad. Like I said, he would look the other way sometimes. While we were waiting to get word to move out, this guard that we refer to as the "Old Sailor" came up to our camp just to see some of the guys. We had no grudge against him. He got to talking to some of the prisoners, and through this I guess they asked him how he was doing because he didn't have a job, no money, or anything. So they asked him how he was doing. He wasn't doing so good. He didn't have any food or anything to feed his kids or anything. Of course, like I mentioned, the B-29 had come over and dropped this food to us--canned goods and stuff--and so the word got around that the "Old Sailor" was there. He had just come up there to see us. He didn't come for a handout. He just come up to see the guys. So the word got around, after some of them talked to him, that the "Old Sailor" was in a pretty bad fix. He didn't have any food. Of course, we had a lot of extra stuff. So word got around that the "Old Sailor" didn't have anything. So we all pitched in, and there was this guy going around collecting. When he left there, he had two tow sacks full of stuff.

Getting back to the train now, when we were getting ready to leave, well, that night... I don't know how he got word, but he knew when we were leaving, so he came down to see the guys off. He went through each boxcar and told us goodbye. This was just one particular individual, but he came down to see the guys off and tell us goodbye. In fact, in a way I think that he hated to see us go. I don't know whatever happened to him. I didn't hear anymore about him or what.

We pulled out...I don't know how long it was or what time we pulled out of Moji, but we went from Moji into Nagasaki. Coming into Nagasaki, I guess we started to pull in there around six o'clock in the morning. The sun was coming up and kind of to the back of us, so I guess that we were traveling west. As we were pulling into Nagasaki, you could look out through the window on the sides, and you could see all of this devastation there. There was nothing there, especially trees and scrubs. The trees that were there were nothing but stumps, nothing but just charcoal. That was on the left side of us, and over on the right there were some buildings. I guess that they were warehouses or something for

storing stuff when the ship came into the docks there. The concrete part of the frame of the building was still standing more or less, the structure--I would say the biggest part of it--but the inside and the steel reinforcements that they put in to build these buildings just looked like something had just twisted them just like a piece of wire. They were twisted all together, see.

The first thing that we started looking for was, naturally, the bomb crater. "Well, what happened here? The place must have been bombed!" See, we were used to bombs leaving a big hole, a big crater. We couldn't see any of this. Of course, we didn't know what was going on. Then it finally dawned on us that that was where the second atomic bomb hit. So as we came in, we came in right through the middle of the area where the second atomic bomb hit there at Nagasaki.

When we got in, the train stopped on one side, and over on the other side was the docks and the ocean there. The big Navy hospital ship was docked there, and, of course, the first thing that we did...when we got off, they had Navy guys lined up out there on those platforms where the

train stopped. So we got off of the train, and I walked up to a Navy officer, and I said, "What do we do? Where do we go?" Well, he said...the Red Cross had a setup there, too. They had donuts and coffee, see. The guys on the hospital ship were up all night baking donuts for us because they knew when we were coming in. He said, "The first thing that you do, you go to either one of those guys that are set up at one of those tables and give them your name, your rank, and your serial number." And that is what we did. Then he said, "If you want to go get some coffee or donuts, okay, you can do that."

Then the next day...well, I could say...after they got a record of us--who we were--then we went in, and they ran us through...what they actually did was to de-louse us. You went in...and this new clothes and everything that we had just gotten a couple of weeks before when the B-29 had dropped them, they were all new--new fatigues, new boots, everything. But we had to strip down all the way, and we had to turn all that stuff into this place that they had set up there. We went down one side, and if you had any personal belongings or anything like that, a watch or something like that that

some of the guys had picked up, why, they put it in a pillow case and marked it. Then you went on on downstairs, and you took a shower. They took all the clothes you had--all this new stuff that they just dropped to us (chuckle)... they took all of that. We told them that we had just gotten it. They said that it didn't make any difference--they wanted it. I guess they didn't want any chance of anybody spreading anything.

Marcello: Did you have any trouble with lice and bedbugs and things of this nature?

Burns: Oh, yes. There was one Dutchman that passed away there in Moji, and it seemed like he never did want to take a bath, and that is what killed him. He was so full of lice and bedbugs, but mostly lice. I tell you, he was pitfull, and that is why he didn't make it back. Yes, we had bedbugs and lice.

Of course, I meant to mention this awhile ago, but after we got to Moji there, the Japs made us clip our hair all the way--not just a few of us, but all of the prisoners. The Japs did that themselves. They took the clippers and went right down. Some guys, since they had theirs

cut all the way, would shave their heads. I meant to bring that in a while ago.

Getting back to after we got to Nagasaki, they took everything from us and put our personal things into a pillow slip and marked it, and then we went on down, and they issued...they had a big roll of towels there, and they would cut you off a piece of this and gave you some soap, and you went in and showered and dried off. After you showered and washed up, they had a guy there to spray us, to de-louse us (chuckle). Then you came on down, and then they issued a new set of clothing--fatigues, khakis, a new pair of shoes. When you got through there and you got everything, there at the end of the line, the Red Cross was there, and they had you a personal kit--a shaver, a couple packs of cigarettes, toothbrush, toothpaste, and stuff--and that was about it.

Like I said, the train was on one side. We got out and we went to the table, gave the guy our names, and then we went through the de-lousing. By the time we got out...it was kind of like a U-shape, and you came out on the other side. On the other side, like I mentioned, was this hospital ship, the Haven, I think.

Marcello: The Haven?

Burns: Yes, I think that was the name of it, but, anyway, it was a Navy hospital ship. Of course, a lot of the guys that were very bad or sick were put on the ship.

 Then they had some other officers over on this side (gesture), and they weren't pressing us or anything, so I walked up to one of them, and I said, "What do we do now?" "Where do we go?" He said, "That is up to you. If you want to go down there to see that guy waiting at the launch, go down there and give that guy your name, and he will take your name, and you get on the launch, and he will take you out to the ship," which was a way out from the dock. There was another guy with me. His first name was George, and I am trying to think of his last name. And there was another guy with us, and I forget his name. But there was more or less three of us standing together.

 So we decided that we didn't want to hang around there anymore, so he said we could go and do whatever we wanted to, or whenever we got ready, we could give that guy our names that was sitting at the table and get on the launch, and he would take us out to the ship, which happened to be an

aircraft carrier. I forget the name of it.

So that is what we did. We went down, and it wasn't too long that he got a load, and he took off, and we went out to the aircraft carrier. We got on that, and, of course, the guys that were on this, you know, they were glad to see us because they were looking for certain people, and they knew that we were POW's. Of course, their friends were asking them, if they had a chance, to look out for so-and-so. Of course, they had guys that they knew that might be there. Of course, they just went out of their way to really accommodate us.

So after we got loaded there, I don't know how long it took the guys to get out. We were loaded onto this aircraft carrier, and I guess that it was during the night that we pulled out, and we went from there, and they took us into Okinawa.

Marcello: In the meantime, had you gotten any kind of special food or anything on the aircraft carrier?

Burns: Well, I can't say that it was any kind of special food. We got the food that they fed us. Of course, by the time we got there, you know...see, this food that they dropped to us from the B-29 back in Moji...you know, we wasn't too interested because we had gotten a fill of these packages dropped from

the B-29.

Marcello: Again, I am sure that they had different kinds of food on the aircraft carrier than what you were getting from those B-29's.

Burns: Yes. But, you see, the stuff we got from the B-29, you know, some of it went to the mess hall and was cooked up, and some of it was individual stuff.

Well, after we got on the carrier, we didn't have any particular place assigned to us. We just found a spot out on the deck there where the planes landed. Of course, they had these elevators that came up and then went down below, and that's where all the planes were--down below. Some of us weren't out on the flight deck, but that is where the biggest part of us was on the flight deck. If I remember right, I was fortunate enough to get a bunk down inside. I got acquainted with one of the guys on the aircraft carrier there, and he took me where they were, you see.

Of course, I didn't know about it until after it was over with, but going from Nagasaki into Okinawa, we hit a tidal wave or a typhoon. Of course, the ship dropped, but I was asleep. I could feel it rocking, but I didn't know what was going on. But the guys on the aircraft carrier did,

and they told me after we got out of it...the next day when we got up, they told us, I think, that if the ship had rolled five more degrees, it would have gone under. That is how big of a storm that we were in, and this actually happened to this particular aircraft carrier. I forget the name of it. It wasn't too big--it was pretty good-sized. So that is the way that we got into Okinawa.

Of course, we got up there...I don't know what the name of the place was where we were taken to there at Okinawa, but we were told that we were assigned to certain areas, and they told us to go in there and go by and see the supply sergeant. We got our bedding. They gave us a couple of blankets and a pillow, and then they assigned us to a certain tent. They didn't have any barracks; they were all big tents. Of course, they had the Army cots lined up on the ground. We stayed there that night, and, of course, we went and got something to eat. They told us which mess hall to go to. Of course, we threw our blankets and stuff down on the cots there, and we took off and got our mess kits and took off for the mess hall and got us something to eat

and came back. During that night, there was a lot of activity going around because the guys were coming down and waking us up, especially officers. They were flying these officers out to the Philippines.

We got up the next morning, and we were just getting ready to go to breakfast, and there was a corporal coming down there, and he said, "Anybody that want to take off, turn in their bunks! They got a flight going out! Anybody that wants to leave then, why, go now." So I said, "What do you want to do, George? Do you want to take off with this group, or do you want to go and eat some breakfast?" I forget this other boy's name, but he said, "No, I want to go and get some breakfast." So he took off over to the mess hall, and George and I turned our blankets in, and we got in the group.

I don't know how far it was from where we were at, but, anyway, when we got down to where they were loading us, I guess there were maybe five guys sitting at a table. He said, "You go up and give them your name and get on the truck." So there were quite a few guys there, and they had about five or six trucks there. So we gave them

our name, and we got on the truck, and they got loaded so this convoy took us out to some airfield--I don't know what it was--and they had these planes out there. But the biggest part of them were bombers, and what they had done...some of them got fortunate enough to sit up where they could see out, and what they had did was...they had gutted the bomb bay part, and they loaded us in there in the bomb bay. You had to be careful that you didn't get over and trip that bomb bay door, or otherwise you would have fallen out (chuckle).

They took us into...where did we land? Someplace in the Philippines. It wasn't Nichols Field. It was another field there where we were. We were waiting for a flight to come in there to fly us into this replacement center out of Manila. We kept waiting and kept waiting and kept waiting, but it never did mature because it started raining, so they quit flying. They had to make up a troop train. So I guess that we didn't get on the train until 9:00 or 10:00 that night, and they got the train, and you could have sandwiches and stuff made for us. We finally got on this train, and they loaded up this train and pulled out. Where we

went and what route we took, I don't know because it was at night, and it was just as dark as everything.

The next thing that I knew, we were in this replacement center, 18th Replacement Center, outside of Manila. Of course, when we got off from there, we were taken down and run through supply, and he issued us bedding, and then they assigned us to a tent. Of course, the next day we had to get assigned, and they got us together and told us that they would like for us to stay around pretty close for the first two or three days because they had a lot of processing to do. This is where they processed us.

There is one thing during this processing. Of course, this is all tents now. They didn't have any permanent buildings there. They had a big table like this (gesture) but with benches on the side, and this is where they interrogated us. They had papers, and you were supposed to fill these forms out. They had an officer in charge there, and he told us what to do. It got down to one point, and he said, "This is where you get even." He said, "If you got any Japanese or anybody that you want to get even with, this

is the time to do it." He said, "If you know his name, write his name down; and if you don't know his name, write his nickname down."

Marcello: In other words, this was your chance to bring charges of war crimes against these Japanese.

Burns: Yes. Of course, we had to sign on this paper... of course, the officer explained to us that we had to sign a statement that none of this would be let out to the newspapers. It was more or less confidential, and we were not supposed to go home and broadcast this and tell anything about it, you know. I guess the Army wanted us to sign this statement for their protection.

Marcello: Did you bring charges against any particular Japanese?

Burns: This particular one that I wrote down was "Peg Leg" and "Scar Face." These are the ones that I wrote down. He said that it also worked the other way. He said that if there was anybody that we wanted to be treated well or give references to, like, say, the "Old Sailor" or guards like that, we could put that down, too. He said that he would get a fair deal or not bother him or something on this order. In other words, it worked both ways.

I think after that, the doctor gave you a quick look-over or a physical. It wasn't too thorough, but, anyway, he checked you over. Then from there you went to the dentist, and he looked at you. They had a nurse there...I don't know if this is significant, but, anyway, after you got through, this nurse would hand you a shot of whiskey (chuckle). I don't know what that was for, but I guess it was to settle your stomach or something. I don't drink, so I didn't take it, and they couldn't figure it out, you know.

At this replacement center, after we more or less got processed, you were kind of on your own a little bit. I mean, you could...they wanted you to stay pretty close for the first couple of days, so that they could get hold of you or ask you any questions or anything to complete the process. Some of the guys took off and went into Manila. Like I say, this replacement center was about twenty miles from Manila, which wasn't too far. All that you would have to do was to just walk out on the road and flag a truck down or a jeep. "Where are you going?" "Manila." "Okay," You would hop a ride or catch a ride and come back. We had

pretty well the run of the replacement center there. I think some of the guys that were stationed there kind of resented us because we got, I think, three cans of beer a day at no charge, a package of gum, a pack of cigarettes, and a couple of other things that were issued to us. In other words, you got a coupon book that you got from your first sergeant, and you would turn this coupon in, and they gave you your cigarettes and beer if you wanted it. There again, I didn't drink beer, and I didn't smoke or anything like that, but I took my cigarettes because I could trade them. I made a couple of trips into Manila just to look around.

I guess that I was there for about seven days before they had a list made up. Some of the guys took off on their own, and some of the guys didn't want to go. They knew that they were coming up on a list to go home, to be shipped home, and they missed it on purpose because they didn't want to leave because they had it too good there.

For the record some of the guys went into Manila there, and I guess that they got a little out of hand. I don't know if they got into a fight

in a bar, but, anyway, they did something, and the MP's picked them up. So the MP called the captain, and they said, "We have a couple of POW's down here," and told him what happened. "What do you want us to do with them?" The captain told him, "For God's sake, turn them all loose before you get us all into trouble!" They had orders not to make any trouble or to bother us. We just more or less had the run of the place.

Marcello: When did you then finally leave the Philippines and get back to the States?

Burns: I would say that I was there about seven or ten days. I was trying to think of the name of the ship that I came over on. Anyway, we were supposed to dock in San Francisco on the 20th of October, but we got in two days earlier, and we docked on the 18th of October.

Marcello: Where did you finally get processed out of the Army?

Burns: Well, that is quite a long story.

Marcello: Well, I don't want a long story (chuckle). Where did you get processed out?

Burns: Do you mean out of the Army, or where did we get processed when we came back?

Marcello: When did you get out of the Army?

Burns: Well, I stayed in. I stayed in the service.
That is why I asked you.

Marcello: What made you decide to stay in the service after
the experiences that you had?

Burns: Well, of course, the war was over, I believe,
on the 15th of August, 1945, and, of course, at
that time, when you got back to the States...we
had been out of the picture for a year, but I
found out at that time you had rations for this
and priorities. You couldn't buy a car; you had
to have sugar coupons and stuff like this. Of
course, with all these guys coming back, everything
was in such a turmoil as far as the States goes...
the guys couldn't get jobs, and the guys didn't
know what was going to happen or what.

I was going to go through and tell you because
this was after I got back. Of course, when we
got to San Francisco, we went through Letterman
General Hospital, and we were processed there,
and then they sent us to different places after so
long. I would up in Brunts General Hospital in
Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Marcello: So they sent you to a hospital as close to home
as perhaps they could get you?

Burns: They could have sent me to El Paso, to Beaumont, because my home in Deming, New Mexico, 105 miles west of El Paso, but I wound up there. The procedure was...you would check in and get processed. The first thing that I did...you could either stay there and be processed, but they automatically gave you a ten-day leave, so I took my ten-day leave and came back. They came in and processed you and then gave you a thirty-day leave; and at the end of that thirty days, you would come back in and have another check-up; and then at the end of that thirty days, you would come back in for another check-up. Then within that ninety days, you could either re-enlist or get out, which I re-enlisted.

During this ninety-day period there, I was in Tucson, Arizona, working while I was on leave, but I was still in the service. I was on sick leave or hospital leave, and I was working for my brother there in a warehouse. He was with the wholesale grocery business, and he had a warehouse there. He told me, "I have a job for you if you want it."

In this period of time is when I made up my mind whether I was going to stay in or get out.

Of course, I was weighing the pros and cons of what I would have if I stayed in or what I would have on the outside. Of course, during this period of time, like I said, a lot of the guys got out but couldn't get no job or didn't have anything, didn't have a place to live, couldn't get a place to live or anything like this. So I just weighed the pros and cons as to which would be to my benefit, and I finally made up my mind to stay in, so I stayed in for twenty years.

Marcello: I have one last question, Mr. Burns. As you look back upon your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as being the key to your survival? I am sure that you have asked yourself that question many times.

Burns: Well, to really get down to it, I believe that my Creator, the Good Lord, was watching over me all the time that I was there--not only once but more than once. I really believe this. That is the way that I feel about it. I was just very fortunate that I was one of the ones that made it back. Some of the guys made the remark...while they were in prison camp, they said, "I'll go through all of this, and I'll get home and walk

down the gangplank and fall down and break my neck." A couple of guys...it didn't happen exactly that way, but it did happen ever after they went through it and got back. The Good Lord was just watching over me.

Marcello: Well, I think that that is probably a good place to end this interview, Mr. Burns. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to be interviewed today. You said a lot of interesting and very important things, and I am sure that historians will find this information very valuable some day.

Burns: I know that there is a lot things that I probably left out, or maybe I went too much in detail on some things but not enough on another. But I really did enjoy it, and I hope that in some way it passes on to some of the others and gets them up here to be interviewed.

Marcello: Spread the word and tell them about it.