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Interview with

Billy Allen

March 1, 1976

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Billy W. Allen
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Billy Allen

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas   Date: March 1, 1976

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Billy Allen for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 1, 1976, in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Allen in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Allen was captured on the island of Corregidor and subsequently spent the duration of World War II in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

Mr. Allen, to begin this interview, why don't you just very briefly 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. Allen: Alright. I was born in Van Alstyne, Texas, in February 8, 1920. I went to high school at Van Alstyne High School and went to the service. After World War II, I went to East Texas State University on the G.I. Bill. I received my bachelor's degree in mathematics. I worked

for the Air Force for about six years and then began teaching mathematics in the Fort Worth public schools. During the summers, I commuted to North Texas State University and got my master's degree. I'm still teaching in Fort Worth public schools.

Marcello: Let's just go back a minute. When did you enter the service?

Allen: In 1939.

Marcello: What branch of the service did you enter?

Allen: The Marine Corps.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the Marine Corps as opposed to . . . let me just go back and ask this. Why did you decide to enter the service in 1939?

Allen: Times were hard.

Marcello: This is a reason that's given by a great many people of that particular generation for having entered the service. It was a matter of economics.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Why did you pick the Marine Corps as opposed to one of the other branches?

Allen: I just wanted to go into the service to have a little better life, I thought--a few bucks. I asked my cousin if he was interested in joining the Navy with me, and he said, "No, let's join the Marine Corps." I said, "Okay, let's try the Marine Corps." So we joined it.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Allen: San Diego?

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service, did you have any idea that the country would ultimately be getting into war, or was that the farthest thing from your mind?

Allen: That was the farthest thing from my mind, yes.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as a part of the record?

Allen: No.

Marcello: In other words, it was just a normal, routine Marine boot camp.

Allen: Yes, it was.

Marcello: Where did you go from San Diego?

Allen: To Bremerton Navy Yard near Seattle, Washington--Puget Sound.

Marcello: And what was the purpose of going there?

Allen: Guard duty. Marines did the patrol duties at the Naval base.

Marcello: How long did you stay at Bremerton altogether?

Allen: Only two months.

Marcello: And where did you go from there?

Allen: I was transferred to Sand Point Naval Air Station at Seattle, Washington, just across Puget Sound from Bremerton, for the same duty--guard duty.

Marcello: When did you go overseas?

Allen: In March, 1940.

Marcello: Where did you go when you went overseas?

Allen: To Shanghai, China.

Marcello: Was this volunteer duty?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Why did you volunteer to go to Shanghai?

Allen: Excitement.

Marcello: How long did you remain in China altogether?

Allen: Well, we arrived there approximately a month after we departed from San Francisco. We got there about near the 1st of April in '40, and I left there near the end of November, 1941, enroute back to the United States. We stopped in the Philippine Islands for a two or three-day layover, and then the war was declared while we were there.

Marcello: You were on your way home from China when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Let's just go back here a minute and talk a little bit about your stay in China. During that stay in Shanghai, what particular function was the Marine Corps carrying out there?

Allen: Looking after the interests of some American companies. One I remember in particular--Standard Oil Company.

Marcello: In what way were you looking after their interests?

Allen: Well, that Japanese had most of China at that time. They had Shanghai with the exception of the International Settlement. There were troops from several nations within the International Settlement but no Japanese. Of course, I suppose we were doing guard duty again.

Marcello: During this period did you have very much contact with the Japanese?

Allen: On occasions. We weren't supposed to but we did. The Soochow Creek that comes through Shanghai--they were on duty on one end of the bridges and we on the other. We sometimes met on the bridges and tried to converse. Then we almost had combat with them in the International Settlement. They'd pass through it on occasion, brought troops into it illegally. We had to head them off. We had some pretty good confrontations there and almost fired shots on occasions but never did.

Marcello: As one got closer and closer to actual war with the Japanese, did you notice any change in the routine that you underwent while you were here at Shanghai?

Allen: Yes. We weren't allowed as much liberty as we had previously. We noticed the tension growing and more presence of Japanese within the International Settlement in civilian clothes. I guess the tension was growing all along. Of course, we thought of the war before we left there. War looked more as a possibility.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind? Now you had some contact with them here in Shanghai. What were your impressions of the Japanese as a soldier or as a military man?

Allen: Cunning, dedicated, and cruel because I had seen the atrocities in Shanghai that they had committed--very cruel.

Marcello: Can you go into detail on some of these atrocities that you witnessed?

Allen: Yes. Of course, they murdered the Chinese by the thousands. There were some cases of rape, and after finishing the rape they'd leave the bayonet sticking in the woman and just walk off and leave the bayonet there.

Marcello: Did you normally see the after effects of this, or did you actually witness it taking place?

Allen: The after effects. The dead woman was abandoned.

Marcello: Okay, so I would gather, then, that as relations between the United States and Japan did continue to worsen you were pretty glad to get out of Shanghai.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you went from Shanghai to the Philippines for a three-day layover. Do you recall the name of the transport that you took from Shanghai to the Philippines?

Allen: I've forgotten.

Marcello: The name was mentioned to me at one time, and I can't think of the name of it either.

Allen: I'm embarrassed by this. I should remember it.

Marcello: I want to say the McKinley, but that doesn't sound right.

Allen: No.

Marcello: I want to say the Chaumont, and I'm not sure that sounds right.

Allen: It is the Chaumont.

Marcello: It is the Chaumont?

Allen: The Chaumont, yes.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do when you got to the Philippines?

Allen: We started having a ball, you know, for two or three days. I say two or three days. I don't know--possibly four. But we were given liberty, and it was new to us. We were running around having a lot of fun, riding a calesa for the first time--a horse-drawn buggy--to the cabarets and dancing and, you know, just having fun. We thought this was great until . . . let's see. Now there's one day difference here than there, so to me the war started December 8, when it was actually the seventh.

Marcello: Do you recall what you were doing and where you were and what your feelings were when you heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

Allen: Yes. That's what I was leading up to. The night before the war, we had been out dancing and riding in the calesas and having a lot of fun. We came in and went to bed, and about four o'clock the next morning, being a different time than Pearl Harbor, the bugle blew a call I wasn't familiar with. It was call-to-arms. I didn't know what it was until somebody else told me what it was. Our company commander had us fall out, and he told us what had happened, about the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor. There were troops streaming toward the Philippines and getting very close, and we were to be ready for combat.

We had breakfast, and they put us aboard a tugboat. I was at this time at Ologapo Navy Yard, a submarine base. They moved us to Mariveles Navy Yard. We arrived there late in the afternoon. By the way, on the way there an American PBY, I believe it was, flew over us. Of course, we thought we were being attacked, and a lot of guys dived over (chuckle). But we got them all back on. We got to Mariveles, and my name being Allen, they picked Allen and Adams to go on guard duty on a floating dry dock that was out in the bay. They carried us out some two or three hundred yards in a motor boat and let us off with no food. We had had no food since breakfast that morning. We

spent that afternoon, that night, and the next day out there.

Marcello: Was it just the two of you?

Allen: Just two of us.

Marcello: Okay, now what sort of thoughts went through your mind when you heard about the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?

Allen: Oh, I thought that we'd be able to repel them with no trouble. I just thought our planes, our ships, and everything was superior and that we'd have no problems. It'd only be a matter of weeks.

Marcello: In other words, you really didn't know how severe the damage actually had been at Pearl Harbor.

Allen: Oh, no, no.

Marcello: Okay, so you got out to this floating dry dock. What did you do to occupy your time while you were out there? Did you think very much about the war that was coming?

Allen: Yes, I did. I began to think about it then. I thought about the possibility of them bombing that dry dock. I knew it would be a valuable target. Also, here I was in a strange land and didn't know anything about it, and I spent better than twenty-four hours out there before I saw anyone or had any food. I was getting pretty worried. I thought surely they would bomb that dry dock.

But late the next afternoon the sergeant came with some other troops, came out with a motor boat and relieved us, took us back to shore, and told us, "Mariveles is in that direction," and pointed. We should go there. It was five or six miles through the jungle. I was pretty worried going through there, too, but we finally asked natives until we found Mariveles Navy Yard. Then we got some rest that night.

Marcello: In other words, this would have been the day of December 9 when you got to Mariveles.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Now by that time none of the air attacks had occurred yet, I gather.

Allen: No.

Marcello: Okay, before we go any farther, what I want you to do is to identify your unit in full. Were you part of the 4th Marines?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Can you identify your unit in full, or is that all you were known by--just the 4th Marines?

Allen: Just the 4th Marines.

Marcello: What was your particular rank at that time?

Allen: Corporal.

Marcello: And what were you striking for, or what was your specialty?

Allen: Just a "ground pounder."

Marcello: In other words, a rifleman.

Allen: That's right.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened when you got to Mariveles?

Allen: Okay, the next day we were informed that some troops had landed on Luzon.

Marcello: Up near the Lingayen Gulf probably.

Allen: Yes, and we started to meet them. But we never did greet them at that pass--my group didn't. We were pulled back and kept there for guard duty on the ammunition dumps and food dumps that were near Mariveles. There was a tunnel there with a lot of ammunition, a lot of explosives, in it. So my particular unit . . . my platoon stayed there. We didn't go over and make contact with the Japanese at that time. I don't know. We marched twenty or thirty miles, and we got word that we were to go back. Then we marched back to Mariveles. I personally didn't have any contact with them until late December--about the day before Christmas. I believe it was Christmas Eve or maybe Christmas Day. It was Christmas Day--my first contact.

Marcello: Describe this first contact that you had with the Japanese.

Allen: I thought it was going to be fun or some excitement or something--not fun but excitement--but it was a lot

more than I wanted. It was very scarey when it first took place. I began to hear real bullets coming at me, and it was not exciting at all.

Marcello: Well, describe exactly what took place from the time it started until it was all over.

Allen: Okay, we heard that there were some Japanese not too far from there, and we started marching there. I don't know where it was. Somewhere around twenty miles or so, maybe farther--thirty.

Marcello: Now were you on the Bataan Peninsula actually? Is this where Mariveles is?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, continue.

Allen: So we marched there and we made contact with them. We were reinforced later, and then we were pulled back again. I didn't have any more contact at that time except they bombed us.

Marcello: Well, now when you had this initial contact with them, were you actually meeting them face-to-face? Did you actually see Japanese?

Allen: No, not at this time. Just rifle shots. We exchanged rifle fire.

Marcello: This must have been one of those Japanese groups that tried to come behind the American lines in the Bataan Peninsula.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: This was actually too early in the war for the war to have pushed all the way down through the peninsula.

Allen: Yes. There were some groups--I don't know how many--and there was more than one attempt. I don't know how large a group.

We didn't stay there long. The Marines kept being pulled back and eventually before long were moved to Corregidor. I saw no more action until they came on Corregidor, and that action only lasted, well, from eight or nine o'clock on the night of May 5 until we surrendered on May 6 at . . . I guess the final total surrender was late in the afternoon. Probably around noon was when the surrender was made, but troops that were still out on the island. Maybe some of them didn't know about it until late in the afternoon. But it only lasted a night and most of a day. That was my other close combat. Now other than being bombed and strafed and shelled almost daily by many batteries after Bataan fell . . . and they moved right up, I think, when we came across from Bataan or the Mariveles Navy Yard to Corregidor. I believe they said it was only about three miles of water across there. After Bataan fell and the death march and all this, they had many batteries near us. Lots of shelling and bombing and so forth occurred but not too much combat.

Marcello: Okay, this is getting a little bit ahead of the story. Let's go back to the Bataan Peninsula again. You mentioned that you had this initial contact when the Japanese tried to land some troops behind the American lines. Then, as you mentioned, you didn't have any more contact until they actually bombed Mariveles. Is that correct?

Allen: That's right.

Marcello: Okay, how long of a time span are we talking about here, that is, between the time that you had this initial contact and when the aerial attack occurred at Mariveles?

Allen: A day or two, I guess.

Marcello: Okay. Describe what the aerial attack was like at Mariveles.

Allen: Well, it was very frightening. The reason I know for sure what day it was was . . . you know, I said it was either Christmas Eve or Christmas, and then I changed to Christmas. We were having Christmas dinner when it occurred. Why I'll never know, but I took my tray with me with turkey and stuff on it, not realizing I had it until I jumped in the ditch with it. Believe me, I wasn't that brave. I just had it without knowing it. We just hovered in a ditch--scared.

Marcello: Were these high-level bombers that were doing the work here?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: How long did this attack last approximately?

Allen: About half an hour, I would think. There were a few waves of them but not large waves.

Marcello: How much damage had they done to the base as a result of this attack?

Allen: Not an awful lot I don't believe. There wasn't too much right there in the base except barracks. The ammunition and supplies were in a tunnel. There were no planes there. There was no air base there. So I don't think they did much other than to barracks, and very few people were killed.

Marcello: Okay, from the time of this initial attack, how long was it until you were moved over to Corregidor?

Allen: Now I don't know, Ron, on several of these things, but it was two or three or four days at the most.

Marcello: In other words, it was a very short span of time.

Allen: Before December was over. Yes, it was a very short span of time.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going to Corregidor?

Allen: It felt great!

Marcello: Why was that?

Allen: They weren't fighting on Corregidor.

Marcello: And was there a feeling that Corregidor was more or less impregnable?

Allen: Yes, at first.

Marcello: Were you still expecting to be relieved or rescued by the United States Navy at this time yet?

Allen: At first, yes. We expected to be rescued, sent reinforcements and all sorts of supplies. But we still didn't realize what a complete job they had done at Pearl Harbor, and we didn't know how well they had encircled or how completely they had encircled us. It didn't really matter how many ships we had. We still couldn't have brought anything in.

Marcello: Okay, so you proceed from Mariveles over to Corregidor. Was the trip over there rather uneventful?

Allen: Yes, we just got on some little boats and went across. A few minutes it took to get across there.

Marcello: Okay, what did you do when you got over to Corregidor? In other words, what sort of a function did the Marines perform on Corregidor?

Allen: Okay, they studied the island over, and our commanding officers went around and studied the terrain all over the island--the beaches--and then they began to put squads here, platoons here, companies here, and scattered us around the island. They began to dig in for the beach defense of the island.

Marcello: In other words, the Marines were specifically charged with beach defenses.

Allen: Beach defense. That's why they gathered up the Marines. The only reason I missed the death march is because they told the Marines to go over there for the beach defense of Corregidor.

Marcello: Okay, so what specifically did you do so far as the beach defenses were concerned, and where were you? Where was your station?

Allen: My station was on a . . . I've been trying to figure this before you came and I can't. It's a point. You might have heard other fellows mention two sea hangars on Corregidor. There's a part on a cliff above that. That's where my squad was. I was a squad leader. None of us were out on this point. We dug in. We had a regular Marine squad. We had a Browning Automatic Rifle, a .50-caliber air-cooled machine gun, a submachine gun, and the rest were .30-caliber rifles. That was our responsibility--to see that they didn't come on at this particular point. We spent most of the rest of the time between . . . by the time we'd got dug in and they'd decided where each group would be positioned, which was early in January, I guess--in the early weeks of January . . . I stayed there until May when we were captured.

Marcello: Now during this initial period on Corregidor, were you receiving regular rations? In other words, had

the rations been cut yet at this time when you got there in late December?

Allen: They had been cut a little but not as severely as they were later on. We were getting a lot of rice at this time.

Marcello: How was it being brought to you? Were they sending it out by some sort of a truck or something?

Allen: No, we had stoves out in the jungles. Our own mess sergeant . . . it was cooked just out in the woods but on stoves which they used wood or coal. I'm not sure which. They were large cast-iron stoves, kind of like I grew up with on the farm only much larger scale. We went there and got in the line. They had big cans of beans and rice and whatever. We went through the line and got our mess kits full.

Marcello: In other words, you were dug in in a wooded area on Corregidor.

Allen: Yes. Most of the people were dug in in a wooded area.

Marcello: Were you living in tents?

Allen: No, just outside.

Marcello: In other words, the climate was such that you could sleep outside.

Allen: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you're digging in on Corregidor. Fighting is, of course, continuing over on the Bataan Peninsula.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Now eventually, of course, the Bataan Peninsula falls.

Allen: About April 5.

Marcello: Yes, I think it was April 5. Okay, that meant that the Japanese could now concentrate on the island of Corregidor.

Allen: And brother, they did!

Marcello: Okay, explain how they concentrated on the island of Corregidor.

Allen: Well, we were told that there probably was about 120 batteries of artillery firing point blank at us for four and five hours straight with no let-up.

Marcello: In other words, I've heard it said that it appeared as though they lined up the artillery hub cap-to-hub cap and just blasted away.

Allen: Started blasting away. At any moment the first thing you knew you heard one whistling, and you hit the deck. Hopefully, you could get to your foxhole. You just stayed in it and prayed until they quit. They bombed frequently, but the shellings were much worse than the bombing.

Marcello: You know, I think this is a general concensus of just about everybody that was there, that is, that the shelling was much worse than the bombing. Why was this?

Allen: You knew when the bombs were going to start because you could see the planes coming. Once they flew over, you knew there wouldn't be more immediately behind unless there was another wave. That was it. Probably they flew right on and that was the end of the air raid, except, you know, many times before we went in the hole we could see several waves coming. Some only looked like specks. So there might be six or eight waves, but, nonetheless, when the last wave flew over and you could hear the engines fading out, that was it.

The shelling could go on, I guess, till they melted the gun barrels--and they did sometimes--for as much as four hours. It was constant--just thousands and thousands of shells--and they were hitting all around, and when it was over you were afraid to get out of your hole. Sometimes, until we got used to them, they would quit awhile and get us all back out of the holes and start right back. Later, we'd stay in the holes another hour or so sometimes to make sure.

Marcello: Normally, when did these bombardments occur, or could they occur at any time?

Allen: They could occur any time, but they got so that they bombed pretty well from . . . I think I remember from around noon till up around four o'clock in the afternoon.

But we had them at other times. Now I'm not sure on this time. Maybe some of the others would comfirm the time more accurate, but it seems to me it was pretty regularly from noon on for maybe two hours, maybe four hours, maybe one hour. But then we had them early in the morning and had them at night sometimes.

Marcello: What does this do to one's morale and emotions to come under this continual shelling like this?

Allen: Some men cracked up. I felt like it. I just wanted to come home so bad, I guess, is why I didn't. It's very hard on your nerves. I've seen men--one or two--run and scream. I saw one man who had a hole dug back, not in the ground but in a cliff. They started lobbing mortar shells over and hitting in the road, and the shrapnel was going toward him anyhow. He held a mattress up there for something like four hours--I guess it was superhuman strength--and it was ripped to shreds, but the cotton in that kept all shrapnel away from him. I saw him within minutes after they quit shelling, and I've never seen a man look so badly. He was a complete nervous wreck, but he didn't crack up. In a day or so he seemed to be alright again. But it's terrible. I don't believe it's possible to make the person realize what it really felt like unless he went through it.

Marcello: Also, I think it's true, is it not, that there was really very little on Corregidor that you could throw

back at the Japanese? Most of the guns were pointed toward sea. Most of them were rifles. There were very few howitzers at all and just a few mortars on the island. I think they were knocked out, were they not, by the air attacks?

Allen: Yes. There were some very large guns on Corregidor. I think they were . . . I don't know. But they might have been as big as sixteen inches. Fourteen . . .

Marcello: I think they were fourteen inches.

Allen: Fourteen or sixteen. I don't believe they would rotate all the way around. They were for sea--headed for sea. That's why nothing could get into that Manila Bay as long as Corregidor was there. They could out-shoot any ship that would come in there. They were bigger guns. But they wouldn't rotate around to fire at Bataan.

Marcello: In other words, in this sense Corregidor was very similar to Singapore.

Allen: Yes. And then we had those and antiaircraft batteries. That's most of the big stuff we had now.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the antiaircraft batteries were so antiquated that on many occasions they couldn't even reach the Japanese planes.

Allen: They could not.

Marcello: The shells would explode prematurely.

Allen: They could not reach them. The only time I saw anti-aircraft batteries reach Japanese planes . . . I believe we had nineteen-second fuses on Corregidor. The Japanese learned that the first time they flew over, and they flew a little higher than nineteen seconds. One time a submarine did come in and brought some twenty-one-second fuses. The next air raid, they got a direct hit on a plane, and it fell all around Corregidor. Then they flew just a little higher. Other than that one plane, I had never seen the anti-aircraft guns bring one down. Now I have seen machine gun fire get some of the fighter planes that were strafing, but not many. We did see some . . . what'd we have out there? Some P-40's, I believe. A P-40 or two did shoot some fighters out . . . some zeros out of the sky. But most of them were unmolested as they flew over.

Marcello: Now how much did your particular position come under direct attack by this artillery bombardment? Or did they play any favorites? Were they simply raking the whole island?

Allen: They would rake the island. We lost men in my squad. As a matter of fact, it was almost wiped out. We, too, had . . . the squad . . . we each had foxholes, individually. But we got down on the side of a cliff

away from Bataan and dug us quite a little tunnel back in there. Oh, I say quite a little tunnel. It might have gone back six or eight feet, and it might have been four feet wide. But the whole squad could get in there. We thought we were perfectly safe. But a mortar shell can drop so straight down. We always got in it during the shelling. We just felt perfectly safe.

One afternoon I walked down over the hill to visit a buddy from Wisconsin. They started shelling while I was gone. They quit shelling for quite awhile. I got out and started walking back up the hill to where my squad was, and I heard one lone mortar shell. You can tell a mortar shell from a rifle because they flop over and over through the air. It hit on up in front of me. It hit in the lip of that tunnel and blew about half of one man's head off--the top of it--and wounded some others seriously. I wasn't in it. I don't know why. I just walked down the hill to see a buddy.

Marcello: Okay, now in the meantime, while Corregidor was under this siege, General MacArthur and a few of the higher ranking officers and so on were evacuated from the island. What did this do to the morale of the troops that were there?

Allen: Well, some thought it was bad, I think. But I don't think . . . I know the group of men I was closest to

. . . and I didn't get far around the island. We had our responsibilities and our own location to look after. The men in my area didn't feel as though he was running out. We feel that he was following the orders of his commander-in-chief. It didn't bother us any.

Marcello: By that time did you know that things were getting pretty grim, though?

Allen: Oh, yes.

Marcello: How had your rations been cut by this time? Now this is getting up near the end.

Allen: Yes. Well, the last few times I went down where the stoves were, I got two biscuits. We would eat one and save one. We would tie them on a string and hang them in the tree to keep the ants from getting them. By the way, they got to where they'd come down the string and hollow out our biscuits. But we tried to save one for that afternoon. So during the last few days, there might have been some men on the island who were closer to the mess. Now we had quite a walk to get to it. Some days we couldn't get there for the shelling. We didn't even go. But when we did, the last few days I recall getting two biscuits each.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up, I guess, to the actual Japanese invasion of the island. As I recall, this occurred on May 5, 1942.

Allen: Right.

Marcello: What I want you to do is go into as much detail as you can remember at this point in describing the Japanese invasion, and then lead up to your actual surrender.

Allen: Okay. Well, as I said earlier, it seems as though it was . . . I'm just going to place it between eight and ten o'clock. I really don't remember. It may be probably about nine o'clock. It was certainly well after dark. We began to hear some rifle fire, it sounded like, at a distance. Of course, we wondered for a few minutes if it could be Japanese. I was on the opposite side of the island from Bataan, which, at the part of the island I was on, it's not very wide.

Marcello: In other words, you were at the "tail of the tadpole," so to speak. Corrigedor is shaped kind of like a tadpole.

Allen: Yes, they say it is. And I've seen it from an aerial view. It is kind of like a tadpole. We were more than half-way out the tail--not at the end--and on the opposite side from Bataan over toward . . . you've probably heard of Fort Hughes . . .

Marcello: Yes.

Allen: . . . and another fort on the other side. I forget now. They referred to it as the "cement battleship."

Marcello: Fort Drum.

Allen: Fort Drum and Fort Hughes. We were on that side. So we heard this rifle fire, and I guess it was on out a half or three-quarters of a mile--approximately a mile from us, it sounded like. Pretty soon we began to hear machine guns, and then we pretty well realized it was underway.

Marcello: Had this invasion been preceeded by an extra heavy bombardment?

Allen: Not that day. Not any harder than usual, I'd say. As you recall, it was day after day after day, four hours continuously for many days. No, I don't think that day it was any harder than the others. Now it could have been, but the way I remember it, it wasn't. So far as I could say now, I think I remember other days that were worse. Maybe not. Maybe it was the worst, but in my memory there were other days that were worse than that day just preceding it.

Okay, we heard the rifle fire, and we began to move around and tried to find out what was happening. Before long we found out, of course. We could hear people hollering, "They're coming on!" By the way, I saw some of the bravest men that night. I never dreamed I'd see men so brave. One man just crawled out of his foxhole and got on top of it and said, "To hell with it! This is probably the end of it anyhow!"

He sat up there with a Browning Automatic Rifle. I wouldn't even try to guess how many Japanese he killed just single-handedly.

Marcello: In other words, they were just engaged in frontal assaults.

Allen: Yes. They were coming across in barges and hitting on the opposite side from where I was. There was kind of a sandy beach down there. You come to that beach, and you come up a pretty good cliff. It wasn't a large sandy beach. I'm just estimating that it was the size of a gymnasium floor. It might have been three times that big. I hadn't been over there until that night, actually.

They finally got some men up the cliff, and our troops began to move back. They began to get scattered all over the island as the night wore on. There was hand-to-hand combat a little. I mean by that with machetes, bayonets, and so forth. I didn't use my bayonet or machete. But I was at close range, and I could see them close enough that one threw a hand grenade. I was as close as from you to me. But at the time I thought it was an American because I was walking on a road where they had cut the road out and left the embankment on the side of the hill maybe as high as this door here. As I walked along this, I saw up there

somebody in khaki. I thought it was another American--there were two of us--until something came up. I thought at first it was a chunk of dead wood until I looked and saw it spewing. He had dropped a hand grenade on us. Well, I fell beside the hand grenade because that's what I had learned in boot camp. The other guy ran from the hand grenade and got forty yards or so from it before it exploded. I think it takes from five to seven seconds from the time the pin is pulled. I wasn't harmed by it, and he got a large chunk of it in the back of the head. It made quite a hole. It didn't kill him, but it made a pretty good hole right in the back of his head. I was glad for my boot camp training there. That's the closest I got. That's the closest I could say I had so far as contact with Japanese.

Marcello: Now you mentioned the Japanese had landed in the morning and . . .

Allen: No, they landed in the evening.

Marcello: Oh, in the evening. I see.

Allen: Eight or nine o'clock. It was after dark. This was the next morning. No, by noon or shortly after we were surrendering the next day.

Marcello: Well, describe the events leading up to the actual surrender.

Allen: Okay, so then we were in combat. It's hard to see them because they're so well camouflaged. I guess we also

stayed hidden and were hard to see. Everybody was shooting. It's wild shooting, some of it. I know we did get some located, and we were able to get them--our squad. People were excited. They'd run back and say, "You'd better get out of here! It's overrun by Japanese!"

We'd move back and stop, and there'd be some more combat at thirty, forty, fifty yards many times. We could see them. They could see us, and they were shooting and killing some of us, and we were shooting and killing some of them. We were at hand grenade range. Well, we kept backing up, and people began to run by saying, "They're catching people alone and capturing them and tying them to trees and bayoneting them!" People came by and said that we'd better get to the tunnel, that we were surrendering.

Marcello: You're referring to Malinta Tunnel?

Allen: Yes. There was another tunnel on the island, by the way. The airstrip out on the tail of the tadpole . . . there was a Naval airstrip out there--a small little strip--and there was a Naval tunnel out there--a small tunnel. But, yes, we're talking about Malinta Tunnel.

So we began to try to get to the tunnel, of course. It was hard to make it. The Japanese were between us. They had gotten around us. It was pretty

well a mixed up mess by then. It was pretty hard to get to the tunnel. But everybody said, "You'd better get to the tunnel! If you're captured out here alone, you're going to be bayoneted," which we found out later, there were some men tied and bayoneted. They had been tied to trees and baoyneted. Fortunately, I got to the tunnel.

I think it was twelve or one o'clock the next day on May 6. General Wainwright had put out the word that we had surrendered unconditionally. There were still some . . . you could hear fire going on on the island.

Marcello: What thoughts went through your mind when you got the official word that the island was capitulating?

Allen: Well, it was a lot of fear. We had heard so many things. We thought perhaps they would kill all of us. There were some anxious moments the rest of that afternoon and into the night.

Then they began to come. They came. They made us line up inside the main tunnel. Malinta Tunnel is a large tunnel all the way through Malinta Hill, I believe, with a railroad and highway going through it. I believe it had twenty-two laterals--eleven on each side. We were in the main tunnel.

They made us get on our knees with our hands behind us and bow to them, I believe, as they came

through and looked us over. Of course, we were scared then. These were high-ranking officers, but we had no idea what they were saying. They talked awhile and left us alone awhile. Finally, we . . . they didn't bother us, and we went to sleep. I remember sleeping on a pile of rocks that night. I was so tired I could have slept on a bed of needles, I suppose, because we hadn't had any sleep in a few nights. The shelling and all didn't allow sleeping for the last few days and nights.

Marcello: Were you still inside Malinta Tunnel when you were sleeping?

Allen: No, I was just outside it--just out of it a little ways. We sat down on a pile of rocks wondering, and I went to sleep there. I woke up there the next morning.

Marcello: Now during this initial contact, you really didn't have any real contact with the average Japanese soldier yet. Is that correct? Just officers?

Allen: Yes, until the following day.

Marcello: Okay, what happened on the following day then?

Allen: The following day they came for work details to clean up the island and pick up the dead bodies. Then, of course, we were with enlisted men who were in charge of the work details.

Now I remember that afternoon I developed a very severe headache. This same friend I mentioned earlier

from Wisconsin, I kept telling him I just believed it would split or something to that effect. He said, "Tell them!" I said, "No, if I tell them, they'll think I don't want to work, and they might shoot me!" But I finally said, "Well, okay, they'll shoot me. My head is hurting too bad."

I went to this . . . I believe he was a sergeant--a Japanese sergeant. I made gestures that my head was hurting bad. He gave me something, a pill, had me to lie down. I took the pill, and he gave me something to drink. I believe it was a glass of milk. I couldn't believe it. He was very nice to me. He gave me a pill and a glass of milk. I laid down. It must have been a strong pill. Within fifteen or twenty minutes my headache was gone. I got up and went back to work, not scared any longer.

Marcello: Now these were frontline troops that you were coming in contact with at this time. Is this correct?

Allen: I would think they were. They really hadn't had time to pull the frontline troops out and bring in others, although it possibly could have occurred during the night.

Marcello: Okay, now what sort of work were you doing during this initial period here immediately following the surrender?

Allen: Picking up the dead.

Marcello: What was done with the dead at this time? Were they cremated? Were they put in a common ditch? What happened at this point?

Allen: Just burned with . . . piled up with gasoline or kerosene or something poured on them.

Marcello: Now were these both American and Japanese dead?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: How long did you stay on Corregidor before you finally left?

Allen: I think it was about a week, but I'm not sure how many days.

Marcello: Were you doing the same sort of work during this entire period?

Allen: Well, not bodies but clean-up work--scrap metal and all and cleaning up. There were some big cement barracks, which were called . . .

Marcello: They were on Topside, right?

Allen: Topside and Middleside barracks. We were cleaning those up trying to make them livable, I suppose, for the Japanese. They had been bombed severely. Although they said they were bombproof buildings, they weren't. They were for little bombs, but they weren't for big bombs. I was in the Middleside barracks one day when, I would guess, a thousand pounder came all the way to the bottom floor where we were. I was under a pool

table, and it was close enough it threw the acid--picric acid, they called it, yellow-looking stuff--all over us. I was stained with it for a long time. That was a three-story barracks. It came through the roof and the other two floors and exploded down where I was under the pool table (chuckle). I know that. So they weren't bombproof. But we were cleaning those up and general clean-up work.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were on Corregidor for about a week. Did the Japanese rough you up any at all during this initial period?

Allen: Not me or not anyone that I know of on that. I heard of some cases, but I didn't see any during that week.

Marcello: Did they ever loot you, that is, did they take watches, rings, other valuables at this time?

Allen: Yes, yes.

Marcello: What did you personally lose? Do you recall?

Allen: Well, I lost my watch. I had a little basketball that I treasured more than anything I had ever had. I was a basketball player. I played with our company team in Shanghai and we won the Intervational Settlement championship. Each of us had a basketball with our name on it and inscribed: "International Champions, Shanghai, China, 1940." That was just something to me because that's the only thing I had ever won. It was

a little gold basketball. They got that. That's what I really wanted to get home with. So the watch and that was all I had of any value except clothing and stuff and many pictures. Do you know the incident I told you about concerning the rape in Shanghai earlier?

Marcello: Yes.

Allen: I had pictures of that and many other brutalities similar to that. They didn't get those. We burned them. Our personal belongings we burned.

Marcello: What were your rations like during this first week on the island after you'd been captured? Did you eat a little bit better from what you had before the Japanese invaded?

Allen: Yes. We had a pretty good serving of rice then. We still had a little stuff out at these units, I guess, and we weren't being shelled, and we could get to it. We used that up. That's kind of hard to remember what we ate back then, but I remember getting some rice.

I remember that water was very scarce. Some guys got five-gallon cans, some Americans, and sold that water for a dollar . . . these little C-Ration cans. I think they charged about a dollar or a peso a can for that water supply. There was a little spring we used to get some water from, but the main water supply . . . where there was a faucet and you could get water, you

couldn't get to it--most of the people on the island. So some guys were selling the water. It was more scarce than the food at that particular time.

Yes, we were eating considerably better than we had the last couple of weeks or so.

Marcello: Did the Japanese allow you to scavenge for food? In other words, if you were on a work project and you came across some supplies, were you allowed to have your fill of these, or did these simply have to be turned over to the Japanese, period?

Allen: That depended on the Japanese. Some would let you. I have a great deal of admiration for some of the Japanese, and I had a tremendous hate for many of them. I don't now but I did for years until I outgrew it. But some of them allowed us. Some of them seemed sympathetic. For example, the guy that gave me the pill and the glass of milk and told me to lie down. And then there were Japanese who allowed us to scavenge; there were others who would attack you if you tried it.

Marcello: What did these Japanese captors look like? Describe them as soldiers in terms of appearance and things of that nature.

Allen: Well, I'm sure you've seen their pictures, and they look like very sloppy soldiers compared to our uniforms. Their sunshades were over the back, which is very good. You know what I'm talking about?

Marcello: Yes, the white sunshade hanging down over the neck.

Allen: Well, just bands of cloth hanging down from the . . . sewed on to the back of their caps. They look very sloppy and so small, it seemed like. How could they conquer us? But they did. They were fine soldiers, I think, very dedicated. And you know this from other interviews. They would fight to the death. I've never seen such dedication in soldiers as the Japanese had.

Marcello: At this particular stage--now you'd only been a prisoner-of-war for about a week--did you still think that your tenure as a prisoner-of-war was going to be a relatively short one?

Allen: Yes, I sure did. I thought it would be very short. I just thought America was the greatest. I still do. But I thought they could just take anybody in a short period of time, still now knowing what a complete job they had done in Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: And I assume that this was the same attitude that all of your buddies had, also.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: And at the same time, it was probably a good attitude. Had you not had this attitude, you still might be over there yet.

Allen: Sure, it's a good attitude, and I would deliberately have it again if it were to do over.

Marcello: Obviously, as many of the ex-prisoners have told me, the ones that gave up hope are still over there.

Allen: That's right. I've seen many men say, "This is just too much," and it wasn't long until they were dead.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you were on Corregidor for about a week. Then I assume that you were taken off the island.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe the trip off the island over to the mainland, and I assume you were going to Manila . . .

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: . . . and up Dewey Boulevard.

Allen: Up Dewey Boulevard.

Marcello: Okay, describe the trip from the time you left Corregidor until you hit the mainland.

Allen: Okay. Now let me go back first and say one thing. I'm really not sure of the length of time we stayed there. I'd say about a week, and it might have been two or three weeks. But that's one little lapse now. I don't remember how long it was. But we were put aboard a ship and went towards Manila. We could see Manila from Corregidor. It was twenty-five miles or so,I think. They put us out in water about waist-deep, had us wade ashore, and . . .

Marcello: In other words, the boat didn't go all the way to shore.

Allen: No. It could have gone to a dock but it didn't. They put us out in shallow water, made us wade ashore, and go up Dewey Boulevard. Of course, they've changed the name of that to one of their generals. I don't remember the Japanese general now, but I understand they changed the name of it from Dewey Boulevard to his name later.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that they could have taken you into the docks but they didn't, and they made you jump into the water. Then, of course, they paraded you up Dewey Boulevard and made a public spectacle out of you. Was this all a part of a Japanese plan to humiliate the white men before the native population?

Allen: Well, we think so, certainly. Certainly, it was pretty obvious. And then as we were marched up Dewey Boulevard, they rode along on horses--their high-ranking officers--and used quirts and whipped at them and hit them, struck them. The enlisted men sometimes walked along and hit men with rifle butts. Oh, yes, they were putting on a great show.

Marcello: Did you detect any signs of outward emotion among the Filipinos who were witnessing this specticle? I'm sure the Japanese probably ordered the Filipino civilian population to be out there and watch this march.

Allen: Oh, yes. The Filipinos seemed emotionless when there was a Japanese nearby. But when there wasn't one

around they were looking around, and they'd say, "Hang on, Joe! Hang on, Joe!" Nearly every American was "Joe," and nearly every Filipino to us was "Joe." I don't know why, but we were all "Joe." No, they were certainly for us and sympathetic, and when they had the opportunity, they tried to give us words of encouragement as we marched along.

Marcello: How long a march was this from the docks to Bilibid Prison . . .

Allen: I have . . .

Marcello: Which I think this is where you went?

Allen: Bilibid, yes. We spent a few nights there. I have no idea--two, three, four miles. I have no idea.

Marcello: At this time are you still in pretty good shape yet?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Had you been hit or struck any at all on the march from the docks to Bilibid Prison?

Allen: Only with a quirt--nothing to hurt.

Marcello: Okay, you got to Bilibid Prison. Describe what it looked like.

Allen: Well, it's a walled city. It had a big rock or cement wall--I guess both--around it and some barracks in it. Man, we were tired! We just went in and found places to lie down. I don't know other than that it was something like a penitentiary.

Marcello: But it was an old prison, was it not?

Allen: Yes, it was an old prison.

Marcello: In fact, it went all the way back to the days when the Spaniards ruled the Philippines.

Allen: Yes, it was an old prison. Well, I guess it was probably near the middle of Manila.

Marcello: Were you living in cells here?

Allen: We were not locked up in them. We were just living anywhere we could lay down in there--in the hall, floor. There were so many of us. We were just sleeping wherever we could lay down in there.

Marcello: Were you put on any work details at this time?

Allen: No, that was just a temporary thing there. We only stayed there a few days. I haven't the slightest idea whether it was two, three, or four.

Marcello: In other words, Bilibid was more or less a transit station until they sent you to a permanent prison camp.

Allen: Yes, which was Cabanatuan.

Marcello: What were your rations like here at Bilibid?

Allen: Oh, we got pretty decent helpings of rice each meal.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you were at Bilibid for just a short period of time.

Allen: Very few days, yes.

Marcello: And then they were going to send you on to Cabanatuan. Now describe the trip from Bilibid to Cabanatuan.

Allen: Well, now that was another thing (chuckle).

Marcello: This is when you realized that you were really prisoners-of-war.

Allen: Yes. We were put into enclosed boxcars--and the boxcars over there are very small compared to here--as many as could stand in them. You were pressed against the walls. I don't know. This was 100 or 150 miles. I'm guessing.

Marcello: It must have been hotter than all get-out in these cars.

Allen: Very hot in the boxcars, yes; very hot in all those boxcars. We arrived at Cabanatuan--the town of Cabanatuan--late in the afternoon and spent the night there. I slept under a church. No, I slept under a pup tent. There were so many under the church. It was high up on piers, five feet maybe off the ground. There was a terrible rain that night. I was so tired and sleepy. A friend and I who used to take the halves of our pup tents and put them together . . . it was raining so bad and coming in on us that he got up and went in the church. I stayed in the tent and slept through it.

Marcello: Let's get back to the train trip again. Now did you lose anybody in this train trip, that is, were there any deaths that occurred?

Allen: Not that I know of. It was only one day, maybe not a full twelve-hour day either. I don't know what time that morning we got on that train. I do know it must

have been four or five o'clock that afternoon when we got off of it.

Marcello: Did they stop the train at any point along the way so that you could relieve yourselves or anything of this nature?

Allen: To the best of my memory, no. But possibly. I don't remember them stopping.

Marcello: Did you experience any extraordinary conduct in the particular boxcar that you were in? In other words, was there any panic, shouting, emotions of any sort?

Allen: No. Fear but no panic. I don't believe I saw much panic during the war. Fear, yes; but panic, no, other than an individual case occasionally. I saw a man or two or three on Corregidor just completely crack up and go wild.

Marcello: But at this particular point, that is, by the time you reached Cabanatuan, you really hadn't lost anybody due to hardships suffered as a prisoner-of-war.

Allen: No, no. Then the next morning after . . . well, I guess we had rice. I believe we were allowed to fill up our canteens at that time. We started on the march through the Cabanatuan Camps then. There were three of those--I, II, and III. Now let's see. I went to Number II. We passed Number I on the way. I don't remember how many miles, but we marched just about all

day. Now some dropped out from exhaustion, but now we weren't as bad off as the death march. We didn't have as long a march. That was a one-day march. You could survive . . . you can go without one day. It's pretty terrible, but you can do it. I believe we did have water with us. We weren't wise enough. I know some of us drank it up too soon.

I guess nearly all . . . there might have been a casualty or two on the way. I don't know. I wouldn't want to say yes or no. But we made it to our camp. We were still in pretty good health for a few days there. Then the health began to get bad.

Marcello: Did they rough you up any on this march between the city of Cabanatuan and the Cabanatuan Prison Camp to which you were assigned?

Allen: There were guys who were roughed up. Not on a large scale like on the death march, but there were guys who were roughed up. A lot of the roughing up, I understand . . . and mind you, we were in camp later on with some guys who had made the death march, and they told us that when they dropped out they simply bayoneted them. I didn't see it. I was simply told of it. Now I didn't see any of this on our march, but roughing up, yes. When guys would start to fall down, they'd beat on them some, and they'd get up and go on.

Marcello: Was this mainly beating with gun butts and kicking and things of that nature?

Allen: Yes, yes, yes. I didn't see anybody killed or bayoneted or anything.

Marcello: Did anything happen to you personally on this march?

Allen: No.

Marcello: Okay, so you got to Cabanatuan Prison Camp. Describe what it looked like from a physical standpoint, that is, in terms of the buildings and the other physical structures there.

Allen: The buildings were 100 per cent, I guess, bamboo. Their sleeping rooms were different tiers with bamboo floors. Of course, we had our G.I. blankets still with us. They let us keep them. We had our blankets, and we slept on the bamboo. Now it was rows of barracks--lots of barracks. I think they said there were about 15,000 of us in Number II.

Marcello: Now was this an old Philippine Army camp?

Allen: Yes. Now it had rows of these bamboo barracks--pretty large barracks. It had some down there, I guess, that had been headquarters. But everything that I remember was bamboo. By each barracks there was a water faucet outside, so we could have water to drink.

Marcello: How difficult was it to get the water? Were there long lines?

Allen: Yes, yes. We still had our canteens, and we'd fill up our canteens. Yes, there were long lines to get that water.

Marcello: Did the Japanese allow the water to flow constantly, or were there just certain hours when you were allowed to line up?

Allen: No, there was water . . . as far as I know, the water was always turned on.

Marcello: Okay, continue with your physical description of the camp.

Allen: Okay. Then they had one they designated as the mess hall. Now here with this large a group, from each barracks there was somebody who was to take care of the feeding of that barracks. They simply took buckets and went down to the big mess hall where they were boiling rice in tremendous pots. They brought back five-gallon buckets of rice. Then they laddled it out to us individually in the barracks. We ate in the barracks. Occasionally--I don't know where--they got some flour and we had some biscuits. That was about the extent of it.

Of course, we began to barter. We bought caleso . . . well, that means buggy . . . the ponies that pulled the caleso. We called them caleso ponies. They had brown sugar in half spheres that was stock

food. It was made out of some kind of old syrup and brown sugar. You'd even find straw in it. We'd buy that. Then we began . . . we'd eat that. That's where we began to get the diarrhea. But occasionally they'd take us down to a river and let us bathe in the river. When we went down there, there were a lot of Filipinos down there with stuff to trade. Sometimes we even bought some bananas and . . .

Marcello: What did you all have to trade with?

Allen: Well, we had a few pesos on us that they didn't take away from us.

Marcello: Okay, we'll get into the food situation a little bit later. Let's go back and talk some more about the physical structure of the camp. So you had these large barracks, and there were tiers of bunks inside which were nothing more than bamboo platforms.

Allen: Right.

Marcello: What sort of bathing and sanitary facilities did each barracks contain, or didn't they?

Allen: No bathing facilities. We dug trenches for latrines. That was it. The trenches we dug for latrines and the faucet outside the barracks was the only running water. There were no bathing facilities. Now sometimes we took baths when it rained. We'd get out under the eaves and soap up quickly. The whole camp was nude

and soaping up. I never will forget one day. It just looked like it was going to rain for weeks, but it stopped suddenly and left everybody soaped up. We were all getting our canteens and rinsing each other off because the soap would soon chap us. Most of the baths I took under the eaves of the barracks when it was raining.

But we did get to go down to the river a few times. There was a river--I don't know the name of it--that passed within a half mile or so from the fence. The guards went down with us, and we just all went skinny-dipping.

Marcello: About how often were you able to take a bath?

Allen: I guess about once a week.

Marcello: Did the Japanese provide you with soap, or what did you use?

Allen: I guess they must have given us a little soap because we had some soap. We each had a little soap with us. I don't remember if the Japanese gave us any soap. We traded for some soap, too, from the Filipinos down by the river. They had some vegetables and a little bit of . . . well, not so many vegetables but fruit--papayas, mangos, bananas. We might have bought some soap from them. I don't remember. I know I had a little bar of soap I carried with me. The Japanese

might have issued a little soap, but I wouldn't say they did. I don't remember.

Marcello: What did you use so far as toothbrushes and toothpaste and shaving material?

Allen: Well, of course, we had little kits of that which they let us keep until our toothpaste was gone. We still kept our brushes. I can remember lathering up with a bar of soap and brushing with soap--just plain bath soap. I guess that's what everybody did.

Marcello: How about razor blades and things of that nature? How did you adapt along those lines?

Allen: Well, of course, after we . . . oh, well, we sharpened them. We resharpened them. We made the same blade last for months and months.

Marcello: How did you resharpen them?

Allen: In a glass.

Marcello: In other words, you would take the concave part of a glass bottle or something and hone it.

Allen: Yes, inside it. I had forgotten all of this until you brought this up. You had me thinking there for a moment. Yes, we'd just resharpen them over and over and over, and you can keep one sharp. As a matter of fact, when I got home I felt how wasteful I had been. I used to sharpen my razor blades and use them over and over that way. It does a nice job of them. But I use an electric razor now (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, I would assume that the prisoners had to keep their hair relatively short in order to keep down the body lice and any other varments that might be parasites.

Allen: Yes, and there were scissors. There were some that had scissors and just cut each other's hair. It wasn't very neat-looking, but we didn't care. So we cut each other's hair a lot.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that when you went into Cabanatuan, you had a blanket, probably your mess gear, toilet kit, maybe a little bit of money. What other possessions did you have other than the clothes that you had on?

Allen: Oh, we might have had an extra suit at that time--maybe at that time. That's all that I can recall that we had--what you just mentioned there. Maybe an extra suit of clothes or maybe a towel. I guess we did maybe still have a towel in our little pack.

Marcello: Okay, now you had a barracks. Let's talk about some of the other physical structures in the camp. What were the medical facilities like here at Cabanatuan?

Allen: Well, we had a captured doctor with us. Now I don't suppose he had any supplies. I think he talked the Japanese out of a few supplies. Personally, yes, I did go to him, too. Now after a while we began to

get . . . they told me they were tropical ulcers--just little old holes that began to eat on you. They'd worry you. They'd get . . . I remember having two or three on my chest. They'd get rather deep--maybe not a quarter of an inch deep but they looked a quarter of an inch deep to me.

Marcello: In other words, this was just rotting flesh. Is that correct?

Allen: Yes. And they'd get bad under your armpits. I know the doctor had some sulfathiazole, and he'd powder it. I was to put that in there, and it would heal it.

Marcello: He used sulfathiazole?

Allen: Yes. Now that's the only time in Cabanatuan that I went to the doctor, was for those tropical ulcers, which they . . . that's all I ever heard them called. It was just rotting flesh. These smaller places were the size of the end of a cigarette. They were quite common.

Marcello: They were very painful, also, were they not?

Allen: Well, I don't recall them hurting all that bad, although they were a little painful. But I don't recall mine hurting that bad, no.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that certain individuals would be designated to go to the cook shack and pick up the supply of rice for the barracks. I assume that when

the food was divided among the people in the barracks that the ones who did the dividing were watched like hawks.

Allen: Yes, and would you believe that people would trade their ration of rice for cigarettes?

Marcello: I've heard that mentioned before, and it seems incomprehensible to me that somebody would do this.

Allen: Well, it was done many times--a ration of rice for two cigarettes. But now you have to realize that the dysentery got so bad that many fell dead just crawling around that camp with dysentery. They had no appetite, but they still wanted a cigarette. The men that were in the best health didn't have near all they wanted to eat, and I doubt if they would trade their ration of rice for cigarettes. But the weaker men who were pretty well gone and had lost all their appetite, or practically all, often traded it off for cigarettes.

Marcello: In still keeping with our discussion of the physical structure, what sort of an enclosure was there around this camp?

Allen: Just wire fencing. I don't recall . . . I believe it was purely a barbed wire fence, but I'm not sure. The barbed wires were very close together and stretched very tight. I believe that was all. It could have been something like a chain-link fence--but I don't

think so--with barbed wire on top of it. I think, and I'm not sure of this, that it was all barbed wire, but the strands were very close and very tight.

Marcello: How close to the fence could you walk as a prisoner-of-war? Could you get right up to the fence?

Allen: We were a little scared of that. In camp Number II--and this incident may have been related to you by other people--there were four guys at that fence one day. The Japanese claimed they were trying to escape. They took those men and put them in a torturous position and tied them for, I guess, about forty-eight hours out in the hot sun. They were tied with . . . they were down on their knees with boards behind their legs and then tied and their hands tied behind them. Those men were begging them to shoot them, which they did after forty-eight hours. So we kind of stayed back from that fence.

Marcello: Did you actually witness this occurring?

Allen: Yes. I watched the shooting. We all . . . I believe they made us go watch that.

Marcello: What sort of . . .

Allen: They were setting an example.

Marcello: Describe this incident in as much detail as you can remember, that is, the actual execution of these three or four men.

Allen: There were four men. They dug their grave--one long trench.

Marcello: Did the men have to dig their own graves?

Allen: Yes. They threw the dirt up . . . well, we'll say behind it. Of course, at this time there is no front and back, but we'll say behind it. They stood in front of it. They were given a cigarette. They smoked the cigarette. They put the blindfold on them and the firing squad was ordered to fire. They did. They just kind of tumbled back into the hole, and that was it. Not one of them asked for any mercy. They stood like men and smoked their cigarette, took their blindfold, and uttered not a sound. They were fired upon and struck several times in the head.

Marcello: What sort of threats did the Japanese issue in the event that somebody would escape and then was captured?

Allen: Ten-men squads. One escaped and they'd get all of them.

Marcello: In other words, they divided you into ten-man squads.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: And if one man escaped, the other nine would be shot.

Allen: They'd shoot the other nine.

Marcello: And, of course, number ten would be shot when he was caught.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Were there very many escape attempts in Cabanatuan?

Allen: No.

Marcello: Why not?

Allen: Well, you're put in ten-men squads, and that kind of eliminates you. These are good friends, you know.

Marcello: In other words, everybody was more or less guarding everybody else. Or, on the other hand, if one man had an escape plan, all ten would go.

Allen: That's right. They'd better!

Marcello: I gather that after witnessing this execution you knew the Japanese weren't bluffing.

Allen: That's right. Yes, we knew they weren't bluffing. I don't know of an escape from our camp. I really don't know of an attempt. There were men who escaped from them and were in guerrilla bands throughout the war, but from my camp I don't know of any escape. I don't know whether there was or wasn't. You see, this is a pretty good physical area here, and there were men on the complete far side of the camp that I never saw. I guess maybe I have seen them, but I didn't know them. There were mostly Army and Marines in there and predominantly Army, and some sailors. They made an attempt to keep the Marines in one group and sailors and the Army in a group.

Now there was a guy in there who was quite talented who began to put on variety shows once a week. I guess we all got together for those. He was a very

talented young man. His name was Melody. Did you ever hear of him from other guys?

Marcello: No, I've never heard of him.

Allen: When he came back after the war, he made tours at high prices speaking. My brother was a professor down at Southwest Texas State, and he spoke to them. He was in the Lions Club or something there. He spoke down there, I guess, for maybe five hundred or a thousand dollars. He asked me if I'd ever heard of this guy. He said, "He's one of the best speakers I've ever heard."

This guy put on some of the best variety shows I've ever seen right there in prison camp. That did more for the spirit of the men. We had nothing except that for awhile. We'd been in there for a month or so before he organized that and got it started.

That's the only time I ever saw all of these men, and probably not all of them were there then because by that time dysentery . . . oh, it was terrible. Some men weren't able to come to those.

Marcello: Okay, we've more or less talked about the physical structure of the camp. Let's move on to another topic. What sort of work were you performing here?

Allen: Not much. We'd have details sometimes to go out and chop wood to burn and to cook with. This was not only for us but also for the Japanese to use. You welcomed

a chance to get out and go chop wood and carry it back. We chopped it and carried it back on our shoulders into camp. But other than wood chopping and wood carrying details, that's all I can recall ever doing except just sitting around there.

Marcello: Was boredom a real problem? And if so how did you combat it?

Allen: Oh, we'd get together and sing. Maybe there was a few guitars or a few musical instruments in there, and if some guy could play one, we'd listen to him for hours. It didn't matter whether he could play it very good or not. We enjoyed it. That's about it. And we'd sit around and talk.

Marcello: When you went on a work detail, did the Japanese guards harass you at all?

Allen: No, not if you worked hard. I had an advantage, I think, all through that prison camp. I was in good physical condition and was strong.

Marcello: To what do you attribute the fact that your physical condition did remain fairly good throughout your tenure?

Allen: My childhood, hard work, long hours on the farm. I mean hard work--pitching hay when I was a little fellow sometimes twelve or fifteen hours a day. I participated in all sports in high school. I just

went in in pretty good physical condition and came out in far above average physical condition.

Marcello: At the same time you must have been very conscious of personal hygiene, too, because it seems to me that no matter what sort of physical condition you were in when you entered those camps, if you didn't take care of yourself from the standpoint of hygiene, your chances of picking up some of these diseases was much worse.

Allen: I stayed as clean as possible every chance I had, yes. I kept myself just as clean as it was possible in those prison camps. Now it wasn't possible to stay clean like we think of clean now. But I think my physical hygiene was above average in prison camp, though.

Marcello: What sort of rough treatment did you personally witness the Japanese guards dealing out to prisoners here in Cabanatuan?

Allen: Well, beatings maybe with rifle butts and maybe with sticks. They liked to put you in uncomfortable positions for long periods of time. Now I know one that I was in, and I just thought I couldn't make it.

Marcello: Start from the beginning and describe this incident.

Allen: Well, they thought I stole something, and they pulled two tables far enough apart that I could just put my hands on one and my feet on the other, and face down I had to support myself--like if my feet were here and

my hands were over there, only they were stretched out (gesture). And they were standing there, you know, with something drawn back on me. I guess it was a rifle. I didn't dare turn loose. And finally they let me down, and I just . . . I was very weak. I don't know. I couldn't stand right at first when I got down off of it.

But they had one worse than that where they would tie you with something like a two-by-four behind your knees and put you down on your knees and then tie your feet--your legs--up behind you and tie your hands, and you stood there. Sometimes they'd keep you in that position for forty-eight hours. You couldn't walk when they turned you loose from that either.

Now I've been hit with their fists, and I have been hit with a rifle butt.

Marcello: Do you learn after awhile to take the blows, that is, do you learn how to fend off the blows as best you can?

Allen: You learn to roll with it, yes.

Marcello: It must be humiliating, though, and it seems that you might have to discipline yourself not to swing back at them.

Allen: You do. Oh, the hardest thing not to do is swing back. It has occurred on occasion.

Marcello: What would happen if a prisoner would swing back?

Allen: Well, you would say ordinarily they'd be killed. But I saw an exception. I saw a kid who just went wild one day when they were hitting him, and he just . . . he hurt a lot of them. He was never sane again after that. They put him in a little cell. They built a little cell three-by-six, I would say, out of two-by-two slats--about three inches apart and then a two-by-two slat going up it--sleeping on the concrete. Of course, we all slept on the concrete there. This is in Japan after I left the Philippines. They didn't harm him. As a matter of fact, they were hollering for us to get between them and him so he wouldn't hurt them anymore. They didn't have their rifles with them. He was wild and strong! It took several of us to handle him and hold him. But he was kept in there until the end of the war. That's the only case . . . no . . . well, we had a fight with them once and got by with it.

Marcello: Now was this back in Cabanatuan?

Allen: No, in Japan--in Osaka.

Marcello: Okay, we'll talk about that a little bit later on. Let's stay here at Cabanatuan for now. Describe what the food was like here in Cabanatuan. We talked a little about this before, but let's be more specific now.

Allen: Okay. We had rice every meal, of course.

Marcello: Three times a day?

Allen: Yes. Sometimes we had biscuits. Sometimes they brought in some little mango beans. They're very tiny beans. I've never seen any as tiny. They are about the size of okra seeds. Our cooks would cook those with the rice. To us it was very delicious. Well, it was Sunday dinner to us when they had mango beans cooked in the rice. Sometimes they gave us fish heads. They boiled them and made soup. That was quite a treat, too.

Marcello: Did you ever have any ways of supplementing your diet? I'm referring now to cats, dogs--anything of this nature?

Allen: Occasionally, something was caught to supplement our diets, yes.

Marcello: Did you ever personally sample any of these delicacies?

Allen: Not at this time. Later in Japan I did, but not in the Philippines. Not at Cabanatuan I didn't.

Marcello: What was the thought that was most constantly on your mind the whole time you were at Cabanatuan?

Allen: When the Americans would come. "They'd be here in a few weeks."

Marcello: More than food?

Allen: At that time, yes. There are two different kinds of hunger. One is what you hear people say when they're

hungry and they haven't eaten in six hours. The other is when you haven't eaten much except rice in six months. It takes a while to know what hunger is, so we just hadn't found out what it was yet. Hungry? Yes, but not starvation hunger. At that time the rice hadn't been enough . . . we hadn't been eating rice long enough for it to begin to get its effects--malnutrition and beriberi.

Marcello: At the same time you were getting a poor grade of rice.

Allen: Well, I guess it was a poor grade, but it was a good grade compared to what we eat here because it wasn't polished rice, and that's what saved us. We don't have any husk on our rice. I think that's how we got along, because we had the husk. I think food value is on the outside of the food, not in the kernals on the inside.

Marcello: Did you ever sit around and dream up menus and things of this nature?

Allen: Oh, yes, yes. Now a little later on this began to be the predominant thought, was food. Yes, we dreamed up all sorts of menus.

Marcello: What were some that you particularly thought about?

Allen: Well, some of these are really kind of embarrassing, but I'll tell them since this is for educational purposes. I can remember eating raw flour with a spoon. A friend and I sat and ate some of that one day and

decided it was as good as cake, and it was really silly to cook and make cakes out of it when it was just as good this way--raw flour. I remember that discussion very well. So that was one of our things. We were going to eat raw flour when we got home. Oh, I don't remember the recipes now, but I just remember that incident.

Marcello: Now I do know that in November of 1942, there were some Red Cross shipments. Some of the prisoners, at least, at Cabanatuan received Red Cross packages at that time. Do you recall that particular incident?

Allen: In November, I left to go to Japan.

Marcello: November of 1942?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: In other words, this was before the Red Cross packages actually got there.

Allen: I didn't get a Red Cross package at Cabanatuan. I left in early November.

Marcello: You must have been in one of the very early groups to get out of Cabanatuan then.

Allen: I Was one of the first groups.

Marcello: And in a sense you were lucky.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Because the submarine menace wasn't what it was to become later on in the war.

Allen: No.

Marcello: Okay, we'll go back and talk about that in a minute. Let's continue with some more general questions here at Cabanatuan. Were there any Japanese guards at Cabanatuan that stand out in your mind for either the punishments that they dealt out or for the kindness that they showed?

Allen: Not really, except I remember two officers who took a liking to a lieutenant--a Marine lieutenant--who was a friend of mine because we were on that basketball team together. I remember them taking him with them into Manila once when they were going in with a truck. They were very nice to him around camp there. They saw him with me. I guess they saw us talking on many occasions. They seemed to be friendly with me--this group. Unfortunately, he went to Manila with them once, and they were ambushed by the guerrillas, and he was killed. This was an American lieutenant.

Now I never got in much trouble in the Philippines. I always remember what my mother used to say: "There's safety in numbers." I tried to just stay in the crowd and not make any waves. I wanted to come home very much. I didn't think there was a chance to escape even if we weren't in ten-man squads because we looked so different. So if I made it out, I didn't think there was much chance of getting anywhere.

Marcello: When you say you looked so different, you're referring, of course, to the fact that you didn't blend in with the Filipino population.

Allen: That's right. We were larger, we were white, and we didn't speak the language. There was nothing to keep us from standing out.

Marcello: And at this stage of the war you couldn't be sure of the loyalty of these Filipinos either.

Allen: No, and still at this stage of the war we thought the Americans would be there in a month. As a matter of fact, when we were back on Corregidor and they had taken Manila . . . no, we were in Mariveles and they had taken Manila. MacArthur, I guess, was the one who said we'd be back in Manila by Christmas. That's how sure we were. Well, we never saw Manila again until we walked up Dewey Boulevard as prisoners in May.

Marcello: Okay, now when did you get to Cabanatuan? Would this have been in perhaps June of 1942?

Allen: It could have been the end of May or the early part of June.

Marcello: Okay, I'm giving you about a month between the surrender on Corregidor and the time you got to Cabanatuan.

Allen: Well, now it seems to me like it was a little less than a month.

Marcello: Okay.

Allen: You know, I told you I was hazy on the time we stayed on Corregidor. I really don't know that anymore.

Marcello: But you do know that you left Cabanatuan in November of 1942.

Allen: Yes, I do know that.

Marcello: Okay, now when did the health start to break down? When did the health of the prisoners begin to break down at Cabanatuan? How shortly after you arrived there?

Allen: Within a month or so the dysentery got very bad, and it grew worse. Now the open latrines--the ditches--and the flies . . . the green flies are huge there, and, of course, they were in swarms over there. Now I had never seen flies like that. They would land on your rice, and you could wave over it within an inch, and they didn't fly.

Our men began to die about forty a day. We'd just take them out and dig shallow graves and bury them. We began to see what was going to happen, and they began to offer rewards for a milk can full of flies. We made traps. We'd hustle up wire some way and make fly traps to set over these latrines. If you got one of these little condensed milk cans full, you got a biscuit for it. Men trapped those flies by the millions, I guess. But the dysentery kept on.

You couldn't trap all the flies out there if everybody in the Philippines was making fly traps.

Marcello: And dysentery was the big killer.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Now, of course, you had the beriberi, malaria, and the malnutrition. Of course, all of these things are diet related.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: But it was dysentery that was the big killer.

Allen: In the Philippines that nearly . . . well, I guess that was just about all the killing. Now I had very slight cases of dysentery. After going to Japan, I guess I had hardly any--occasionally for a day or two--but it wasn't as bad then. But, oh, it was terrible in the Philippines. It just killed, I guess before it was over, thousands of those men.

Marcello: Describe what one of these burial details was like. Now you mentioned there were about forty a day that were dying?

Allen: Forty a day.

Marcello: Forty a day were dying.

Allen: There for a long period of time, there were about forty a day. Well, they would assign a detail. We were still pretty well together as companies and squads and platoons, and our officers would say, "You go out and bury these

men." And we'd go with some shovels and dig holes. You couldn't dig very deep. The water would seep up. It was very wet. You could only dig down a couple of feet or so and just pile them in there and cover them with dirt. That was all there was to it.

Marcello: I have heard it said that one of the worst details that you could get on would be to have to get down in that pit and stack these corpses in there. Then I've also heard it said that a lot of times after the severe rains, you would see arms and legs and so on sticking out because the graves were so shallow.

Allen: Yes, that's right. Of course, they were decaying then, and the flies were on them. Yes, that was pretty horrible.

Marcello: I would assume that after awhile Cabanatuan became so bad that you would do something that you were told never to do when you were in the service, and that is to volunteer for some work detail someplace. In other words, anyplace couldn't be any worse than Cabanatuan.

Allen: I was happy to go to Japan even if it meant my life at sea. We spent, by the way, thirty days just going to Japan down in that hold. Yes, that's very true. You would volunteer for any type of detail--anything to get out of there.

Marcello: Incidentally, what sort of respect did you have to show your captors? In other words, what procedure

did you have to follow when you met a Japanese guard or a Japanese officer of something of this nature?

Allen: Well, we bowed to them and spoke 'Good Morning,' Ohaiyo goziamasu. We all got to speaking Japanese fairly well--not fluently, some few fluently. But we bowed very polite and nice, just as they were to each other. I guess if they were here and we were their captors, they would shake hands and try to show that they were trying to be courteous. Theirs isn't a handshake. They bowed and so we bowed to them.

Marcello: Suppose you would forget to bow?

Allen: I don't think anything serious would come of it. It depended on the Japanese. Now there were some kind Japanese--very kind. I know some would slap you, but some wouldn't.

Marcello: There's another question that I meant to ask you awhile ago with regards to the sickness and the disease and so on. You mentioned, as I recall, that at one point in the initial stages the average death rate was about forty per day. Now after a time did the death rate level and then perhaps decline?

Allen: Yes, I'm sure it must have, or they would have all been dead.

Marcello: In other words, it was almost like the Darwinian law in effect here. There was more or less survival of

the fittest. The weak ones died very quickly, and then the strong ones hung on, and perhaps nothing short of being shot was going to get rid of them.

Allen: That's right. I think that's true.

Marcello: We talked about this a little bit also, but let's see if we can elaborate on it. Did you actually witness men giving up and dying?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe how this would take place, that is, how could you tell when a person had given up the fight?

Allen: Well, in conversations with him you could . . . I don't know how, but you could tell in conversing with him that he had lost interest. Sometimes they would make remarks as such, "I just don't care anymore." They seemed not to fear the Japanese and wouldn't do their work. They used such remarks, "To hell with it. I've had enough of this." Well, it was pretty obvious in their speech. Usually, it wouldn't be long then. They're not strong men to start with at this time. None of us were, not strong as compared to what we had been. Some of us were much stronger than others, of course. But the men who gave up were in pretty weakened condition to start with. It usually wasn't long from the time we noted that they were giving up. When I say not long, I mean two or three weeks usually till they were dead.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that in November of 1942, you were in one of the first groups that was assigned to go to Japan.

Allen: I think maybe the first group, but I'm not sure about that.

Marcello: Okay, describe the process by which you were selected and what your reactions were when you learned that you were going to Japan.

Allen: Well, they must have selected us alphabetically. I was always first on everything, my name being Allen. I guess that's how they selected us, but I don't know for sure if that was it or not. It's pretty hard to remember how that group was picked, but I guess it was alphabetically because I remember that Allen and Adams were both in it. But I remember a guy named Urbauer, so really I don't guess it was alphabetical. I guess they just told certain squads maybe from different outfits. I don't really know how I was on it, but I was on the first group.

Well, you're full of anticipation. You don't know what you're going to, but you do know what you're leaving. So what is there to lose? Maybe it can get better, and maybe I'll be gone in a month. Maybe I'll be dead in a month. But maybe, just maybe, it'll get better. It looks like, if you stay in this place long enough, you're surely going to die. Of course, there

are men who stayed right in Cabanatuan until the war was over. I even saw a movie, "The Return to Bataan," I guess. As they were releasing these guys, I recognized every one of them nearly as they came out. They were really the prisoners. I mean, it was a war film. So I know a lot of them stayed right there and did survive. But, oh, there was a lot of anticipation about what lay ahead for us. But I was glad to go, I think.

Marcello: Okay, so describe your trip from Cabanatuan down to the docks, and I assume you were going to Manila once again. What sort of a trip was it.

Allen: Well, a much better trip than the others because there weren't near as many of us. I don't remember how many went. I guess . . . it seems to me there were about 450 or 500 of us. We were carried back by train. We weren't nearly as crowded. We did march back to Cabanatuan to catch the train. We got on the train and went to Manila and got right on a ship. I don't believe we laid over in Manila at all.

I believe we got right aboard ship, a freighter, and were put down in a hold--the cargo hold--which had a lot of burlap sacks of rice and soybeans in it. The hold . . . I don't know its dimensions, but we could not all lie down at once. There wasn't enough room.

We would lean against the wall some to sleep and then change places . . . just on those sacks of beans and rice. That was the worst thirty days to me of the whole war.

Marcello: Describe some of the things that made it such a bad trip.

Allen: Well, of course, it was hot. We were below the water level in a hold. We never got to come out of there for thirty days except when somebody died. Four men got to come out . . . bring him up and throw him overboard. Now we were just lying around on bags of rice and beans.

Marcello: Were you in the dark?

Allen: Yes, except in the daylight some light would shine down the hatch when the hatch was open. It'd be some light down in there--enough, you know, that we could see each other and recognize each other. They let rice down to us in five-gallon buckets, and water. Then we used those as the bathroom. Then those buckets were drawn back up.

Marcello: In other words, the rice was brought down in the buckets and the water was lowered down in buckets, and then you used the empty buckets for your lavatory facilities?

Allen: Yes. It was drawn back out, and we looked up and saw the men letting it down, and then we saw them again the

next time they fed us. They didn't feed us regularly then. I don't want to say how often, but it wasn't three times a day.

Marcello: What sort of discipline was there down in this hold? Here are all of these hungry men, and the rice is coming down. You would think that all discipline would be lost.

Allen: Well, it almost was, it seemed to me, for a time until we sat down and began to talk about this thing with each other. "Now look. We're not going to survive if we don't pull together. When this rice comes down, every man gets an equal share or we'll just kill him." These men would kill. As a matter of fact, has anybody related to you about the major who made lieutenant colonel and who became the battalion commander of the 4th Marines?

Marcello: No.

Allen: Well, they hung him in prison camp. They had his trial and hung him. Officers and enlisted men alike participated in the trial. So they would kill if it was necessary--their own men.

So we had a talk in this hold. "Now we've got to survive together, or we may not survive at all. We've got to quit acting like animals. We are human beings. We've got to have some pride." It's hard to keep this

attitude, and I'm not sure we did. We just kept enough of it to survive.

Marcello: Did you personally ever get above deck at all, that is, did you ever get out of the hold?

Allen: I was on one burial detail. Then we got to Taiwan, which was Formosa then, I guess, we all got to come up on deck. They stopped there and they let us all up on deck. They got some canned mangos, I guess it was, and gave us some of those. They're very good, by the way. Have you ever eaten a canned mango put up in syrup like our canned peaches? Very delicious. But they let us out up on the deck in the sunshine for an hour, I think. I'm guessing about an hour. They got some stuff from the . . . well, let's see. The Japanese had Formosa at that time, I suppose. They brought on some stuff and gave us maybe a little can per two men. It's hard to remember. It's like we . . . later on in Japan, we got Red Cross boxes. I don't remember if it was split four ways--sometimes four ways, sometims eight ways. But anyhow, a can of this per man or two or three was distributed. Other than that, I was never out of the hold.

Marcello: What were these burial details like aboard the freighter?

Allen: Go up and throw them over.

Marcello: In other words, it was simply a matter of raising the body out of the hold, and they were simply thrown over the side.

Allen: Four men to carry them up and throw them over. That's all--no ceremony at all.

Marcello: Now when you got to Formosa, I assume you just stayed there very briefly.

Allen: A matter of an hour or two. We zigzagged, is why we were on that ship so long.

Marcello: In other words, even at this stage they were worried about the submarine menace?

Allen: Yes, and from the conversations we heard going above, we think they spotted some. We were very frightened because at that time they set machine guns on the hatches and pointed them towards us. We heard the alarm whistles going off and . . . see, some of us were beginning to speak a little . . . we are not sure it was submarines, but we think they sighted some at one time on our voyage.

Marcello: What did you think about the possibility of being torpedoed by a submarine?

Allen: Oh, that was scarey! That afternoon, which seemed to be the only occasion that they saw it or we thought that they saw it . . . they had spotted something. That's the only occasion . . . we were very scared. Here we are, below the water line and about where the torpedo would hit possibly, maybe not lengthwise but at the right depth level for it to hit, and the machine guns

set up above us. You know, this could be it now any minute.

Marcello: In other words, there's one danger after another. When the war first broke out, there was the danger of being killed by a bomb or by an artillery shell. You were captured and then there was the danger that the Japanese would execute you then and there. You get to Cabanatuan prison camp, and once more it's a struggle for survival. Then you embark on this trip back to Japan, and now you have to worry about friendly submarines. There's simply one danger after another throughout your tenure as a prisoner-of-war.

Allen: Throughout, yes, until the last day.

Marcello: Do you ever learn to live with this danger?

Allen: I think so. I think we did. The ones who came back, I think, learned to live with it. We knew at all times it was there, and we knew we might get it. But so what? After awhile you begin to realize that the United States wasn't as all-powerful as we had once thought. When you think they're going to be there in two or three months from the time you're captured and then it's two or three years and they're still not, then you wonder, "Will it be ten years?" We know some day we'll win. I never did think the United States wouldn't win. But sometimes I began to think, "Is it going to be five years or ten years or how long is it going to be?" Then you'd say,

"Well, what if you do get it? What are you leaving? Not too much." But I never did want to get it. I wanted to come home and see my loved ones again. I held on and I tried and I ate and I took as good care of myself as I could just for that reason.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you left the Philippines in November. You were heading north through Taiwan and then, of course, ultimately on to Japan itself. It was getting colder.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: What sort of clothing did you have at this particular time? Now you'd been in the tropics, and you'd been there for almost a year.

Allen: At this time I had nothing but a khaki shirt and khaki pants and pretty worn-out shoes, some socks and underwear--what I had on my body.

Marcello: What other possessions were you taking along to Japan with you? Did you still have your mess gear and your canteen and things of this nature?

Allen: Yes. My blanket, the old toothbrush and no toothpaste anymore. I guess I was still sharpening my razor blade.

Marcello: Okay, so after thirty days of zigzagging, one or two stops, you finally get to Japan. What happens at this point?

Allen: Pretty scarey. They unload us and there are lines of Japanese there. A few throw rocks, but nobody is hurt. We are marched, put on a train.

Marcello: Where did you land in Japan? Do you recall?

Allen: That's what I was trying to think of. I can't call the name of the town. We went directly . . . got on a train and were carried to Osaka. There I was put in a prison camp at Osaka. Now I know the name of that town. I just can't recall it.

Marcello: Now in November, 1942, I would assume that the home islands were not yet suffering from the American air attacks. This was too early in the war yet.

Allen: No, so far as I know, there had never been an air attack. There might have been someplace.

Marcello: This is why I was amazed when you mentioned awhile ago that civilians were already throwing rocks at you. Now I know that later on in the war, after the air attacks had begun, that this was a rather common occurrence. But even when you landed they did start throwing rocks?

Allen: But there wasn't much of it--very little, very little. I'm saying three or four people out of the lines of people. But, you know, this is the first time you've ever seen just masses--and I do mean large masses--of Japanese. They're looking mean at you. It's a pretty scarey situation. But it didn't last long. We marched to a train, got on it . . .

Marcello: I assume the guards kept them in check.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you get on the train, and you go to Osaka. How long did you remain here altogether?

Allen: In Osaka?

Marcello: Yes.

Allen: Okay, I would think we got there in early December of '42. We stayed there till late March or early April, '45.

Marcello: You were there for just about the duration of the war then.

Allen: Just about. On Friday night, March 13, 1945, you've never seen such waves of B-29's that hit that town.

Marcello: Okay, let's not get to that point yet because we'll talk about that. I think it's a very important part of your story. What did the particular camp look like at Osaka where you were housed?

Allen: It was a big wooden building three stories tall. It had been some kind of a mill or factory or something, I feel quite sure, because right outside it had its own smoke stack and all there and some little buildings around it which they used for guardhouses. Inside it was a concrete floor, oh, built five feet up on a tier--just a ledge--six and a half feet out from the wall and all the way around the room. The second story had the

same thing, and the third story also had the same thing. You either slept on the floor or up on this ledge--men right over each other. You slept side by side on the floor or on the ledge, one or the other.

Marcello: Did you have any mats or any straw ticking or anything of that nature?

Allen: A thin straw mat, and then we had two blankets each. They issued us a Japanese blanket. We probably still had our old GI blankets then. We had two blankets each.

Marcello: Were these the old thin, cotton, Japanese-type blankets?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: How about clothing? Did they ever issue you any clothing?

Allen: Finally, ours wore completely out, and they issued us Japanese clothing. We were quite some pictures in those Japanese clothing.

Marcello: What were the sanitary facilities like here at this camp at Osaka?

Allen: Outside the building was a long row of latrines. A latrine over there is nothing but a straddle ditch in the floors in their own home sometimes then. It was a long slot in the floor. They were enclosed, though, like our old outhouses here and had a series of doors that made a kind of privacy in them--ten or twelve of

those back there, but one long trench underneath them. It was like when you went into a bus terminal with a row of doors there, but one long trench went underneath them. We had a bath. It was a concrete tub eight feet square, two feet deep--I'm guessing--two or two and a half feet deep. A boiler heated that water. In most weeks they heated some water, and we took a bath. We all took a bath in the same water. If you were the first in that, you had clean water and it was too hot. If you were the last ones two or three hours later, it looked like you were taking a bath in a sump tank, and it had cooled off. By then it would nearly freeze you.

Marcello: But at least you were taking some sort of a regular bath.

Allen: Yes. Now sometimes the water didn't work, and some weeks we didn't take a bath. Some of us would go down there and take cold baths.

Marcello: What sort of heat did you have in the barracks. After all, it gets pretty cold in Japan.

Allen: We had a charcoal hibachi in the middle of the floor two feet in diameter, I'm guessing. Most of the charcoal we had to burn we stole it on the jobs and smuggled it in in our pants legs or something.

Marcello: Now what sort of guards did you have here at Osaka. In other words, did you have military guards?

Allen: We had military guards at the camp--a few. Now we don't need many guards. We're in Japan and where would we go it we escaped? Swim home or go downtown to Osaka with the Japanese? So they didn't watch us that closely. There were five maybe there and about 500 of us roughly. They'd come through and check. We'd hear them walking through making bunk checks at night. But we weren't closely guarded. They were checking on us.

Marcello: You mention that they were checking on you. What sort of articles were you forbidden to possess? Now obviously weapons of any sort.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: How about writing paper and things of that nature? Writing utensils, I should say.

Allen: We could have them if we could find them anywhere. As a matter of fact, after being a prisoner for a year or two, they let us write a postcard and furnished them. But they didn't mail them. But they did broadcast them from Japan--what we had said on them. Ham operators picked those messages up, and my parents heard from these ham operators. That's the first they knew I was alive in, let's say, two years. I still have a lot of . . . many of those letters from people who wrote and . . . of course,

the Japanese were broadcasting it, so my name sounded like a lot of different things. Different people from California and all over the United States had picked those messages up. But we could have writing material if we could find it because they gave us pencils and cards at one time.

Marcello: I would assume that as time went on all the prisoners became scavengers or scroungers, whichever word you wish to use.

Allen: You better believe it! If you didn't, you didn't survive.

Marcello: What were some of the things that you gathered? I'm sure that you were all a bunch of pack rats.

Allen: Well, yes. We liked to hoard soap. We'd steal it in the freight yards where we worked. I was a stevedore out there. Cigarettes were good trading material. We could trade those back to the Japanese civilians. Now we got to know . . . we learned a lot of stuff. We got to making out pretty good on a comparative basis before that war was over because we had to be pretty slick thieves, knew how and when to steal, how to get it and smuggle it in, and who to trade with then.

The Japanese . . . see, when we went to the freight yards to work, there were no military guards with us any longer. We were with civilians. We got

to know some of them quite well. We got to speaking Japanese quite well. We traded lots of stuff with them. As a matter of fact, we got Red Cross boxes, and they had little bars of Lux in them. They really did like the American soap. We knew that and so we thought it was more valuable to us to trade the soap than to use it, so we'd trade it for an unbelievable amount of goods in return. The Japanese said, "That sure is good. Now if you get anymore of it, we want it." So we'd steal bars of soap two or two and a half feet long in six-inch squares. They shipped it in large bars. We'd spend hours making Lux soap and etching "Lux" on it, and we'd trade it back to them. You'd get good prices for that "Lux" soap. They sure did like it.

Marcello: Now that's interesting. I've never heard this story before.

Allen: Well, this probably just occurred at this Umeda Bunsha Camp in Osaka.

Marcello: Now going back again to a question I asked earlier--and I'm going to come back and talk about this trading and so on in a minute--but what were some of the articles that you absolutely could not have?

Allen: Well, I don't know. We couldn't have guns and knives and such, but we made knives and kept them hid. You

know, with hours and hours at night around there, you could soon make a knife and sharpen it out of just a piece of raw metal. We made something to cut with, and that's how we made our soap and stuff. It was nothing that could endanger them.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the Japanese had one-track minds. In other words, maybe they would hold a sneak inspection of the barracks one day and be looking for a particular item. You could have all sorts of other forbidden items, but if they were looking for that one item on that day, that's the only thing that they would confiscate.

Allen: Oh, well, now, of course, we couldn't have uncooked rice because if we did, it had been stolen. But we had it in the walls. We pulled panels. We had it stored up in the walls. And we couldn't have sugar, but we had it because we stole it. We unloaded car-loads of it and stole it and smuggled it in. Really, we couldn't have anything that we didn't come there with, you might say--anything to speak of. A pencil and paper, yes, if we could get hold of it some way or another. But we weren't supposed to have any food that didn't come in a Red Cross box, and which we didn't get very often. I would say in the time I was a prisoner I suppose we got three. Once, it seems to

me like, we got to split one with two men, and I know once with four. The next time eight men split one box. When you split one of those Red Cross boxes with eight men, you don't get much of anything. Anyhow, we weren't supposed to have any food. They wanted to know where we got it if we had anything other than those Red Cross parcels. Yes, they looked for that rice. They had shakedowns frequently. You're right. There's one guy that would fill his hip pocket up with rocks. Man, right away they'd spot that and they'd find those. They decided he was crazy. They never searched him when he came back in at night. They'd just laugh at him and shake their heads when he'd walk through the line (chuckle). Every once in awhile he'd have his pockets full of rocks (chuckle).

Marcello: In other words, every night when you came back from the docks they would inspect you?

Allen: Not every night. But you never knew when. That's another thing. They're pretty regular. They set up a routine and stuck pretty close with it. You could pretty well guess when they were going to shake you down. Just like their shellings. We pretty well expected to be shelled back on Corregidor around twelve o'clock--twelve or one, something like that. So we'd usually sit pretty close around our foxholes at that time. Alright, now they're pretty regular on their

inspections. At first it was very regular. They found guys with loot, and they beat them up pretty bad. But as time wears on, they're not as strict and we kind of guess their routine.

Marcello: In other words, both sides began to fall into a routine.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: That is, both the Japanese captors and the American captives.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned the Red Cross pacakges awhile ago. How many did you say that you received during your whole time as a prisoner?

Allen: I think three. I believe three.

Marcello: Do you recall what some of the items were in those Red Cross packages?

Allen: There was a little box of raisins. There was a nice chocolate bar. There was a pack or so of cigarettes--some cigarettes.

Marcello: I'm sure there was some Klim in there.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: How about cheese?

Allen: Yes, some cheese. Let's see. You got a can of meat and the piece of cheese, a little box of raisins, some cigarettes, a nice chocolate bar, powdered milk. It was a pretty good chunk of cheese, if I remember correctly. It seems like that box had about eight

pounds of stuff in it, but I don't remember what all was in it other than what I've mentioned. I know there was more than that in it.

Marcello: What did those Red Cross packages mean to you? Were they very important to your survival?

Allen: Oh, yes. Well, they gave you a taste of home food that you hadn't had in a long, long time. Here's what you could depend on. Three times a day there was a little helping of rice. That was for sure. But sometimes you got some soup made with fish. Occasionally, you got some seaweed soup, also. That was terrible but we felt like it had iodine or something in it that we needed, so we ate it. Sometimes you'd get a little handful of dried seaweed. They eat a lot of seaweed. It's candied; it's pickled; it's dried. It's every way in the world. The candied seaweed, I thought, was good. But you see, when you start eating this . . . and then on the job finally we were stealing a lot of food--salmon, for example, potatoes and baking them in the incinerator, burying them in a foot or two of ashes, hot ashes, and leaving them for hours. We'd steal some onions and bake them; strawberry preserves in five-gallon cans, we'd just eat them with our hands; bananas occasionally. We got to so some of the men could read what was on the tag on the boxcar. We knew what was in some of the cars before we got in them.

Well, frankly, we began to buy off some of the civilians. They didn't watch us too close when we were unloading carloads of edibles. They even watched for us maybe a little because we had brought them some Lux soap or something sometimes as a gift. You know, they weren't too well off either--the Japanese civilians--and we were working with civilians out in the freight yards. So I guess we began to scratch each others' backs before the war was over.

Marcello: I would assume that by the time you got to Japan, then, that the death rate had dropped to almost zero. You weren't losing very many people at this time.

Allen: No. Had it not been for that trip, I don't think . . . if we had been in decent quarters going across, we probably wouldn't have lost anyone going across. But we did lost a few. I don't know--a dozen or so maybe.

Marcello: On the basis of what you've said, it seems to me that your working on the docks at stevedores was the best thing that could have ever happened to you.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe what your routine would be like as a stevedore. Now we've talked about some of it in the course of our conversations, but talk about a routine day as a stevedore on the docks at Osaka.

Allen: You get up in the morning, and you have your bowl of rice. You have a little bento box, which is a lunch

box--a little wooden box. They'd pack you a little bit in it--a little scoopful in that to take with you. You'll have a little satchel like a little child carried to school. You put that in there. You are marched to work by the military. One military man leads you.

Marcello: What time would you usually go to work in the morning?

Allen: About seven o'clock. We would arrive out there. He'd turn us over to the civilians. We were broken into three or four-man crews with a civilian _hancho_. He took you and he knew a series of boxcars that his crew was going to unload. Now it might be scooping coal from flatcars. It might be carrying bars of lead that weighed about, I think, 110 kilos each, or it might be unloading a carload of rice.

Marcello: It just depends on what was coming in that day.

Allen: Yes, whatever. You unloaded just anything. You never knew what you were going to unload next. And you worked with that guy all day. It was about a three or four-man crew.

Well, the Japanese _hanchos_ soon learned the strongest men. Now there were about four of us that were quite a bit physically stronger than the rest of the men in the camp. I mentioned earlier that I think it was to my advantage. This man was a hard worker,

and he wanted the strong guys. He picked the four of us. Because we put out a lot of work, we got a lot in return. He stood by the boxcar doors and watched us steal food and would warn us if anybody was coming. Of course, we got so we respected him very highly and gave him things, too. He was afraid to steal, but he would take stuff that we'd steal. We'd give it to him.

So a routine day, though . . . at the beginning this wasn't so. We didn't trust them; they didn't trust us. And it was just all hard work all day long. Now you did get to stop about twelve o'clock and eat your little box of rice. They had hot tea, unsweetened--just hot cooked tea--or hot water. They never did drink cold water. If it wasn't hot tea, it was just hot water. You had that for lunch. You went back to work, and you worked until about six o'clock. You were marched back into camp. At first they usually always searched us. Of course, then we didn't think about stealing anything. You'd have another little bowl of rice, and you had to go to bed by nine o'clock. You went to bed. You got up the next morning, had your bowl of rice, went back to work, and that was a routine day.

As time went on things got better. We finally got a Red Cross box. I guess I had been there a year before we got one--maybe more, maybe a year and a half.

Then, of course, we began to learn the routine and how to steal and make friends, speak some Japanese. If they were saying something about us that they weren't pleased with us, we could begin to understand it. Without letting them know it, we'd try to perk up and do a little better work or satisfy them a little better because we didn't want them down on us.

Marcello: Were the civilians ever prone to dealing out any physical punishment to the prisoners, or was this usually left in the hands of the military?

Allen: It was almost always left in the hands of the military. I think there might have been a case or two where a civilian might have slapped one or something like that.

Marcello: Did you ever have to invent any sort of devices to smuggle this food and other contraband back into camp?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: What were some of the devices that were invented? Do you recall?

Allen: Yes. Take a handkerchief or a square of cloth and sew it together on two sides and make a sack out of it; leave it open with a draw-string in the top and then put straps at each corner and wear it like a jockey strap. They just didn't fool around in this area of your body. That became the old standby. We'd make bags ten or twelve inches long sometimes with four inches in width, and maybe with raw rice

that might hold three pounds of rice strapped underneath you.

Marcello: And I assume that you had the proper cooking utensils back in the barracks to cook that rice.

Allen: Oh, we had found buckets and we would steal our own charcoal, and we'd cook it in the outdoor facilities.

Marcello: How much of a problem was vermin while you were here at Osaka? I'm referring now to lice and things of this nature.

Allen: Pretty bad, pretty bad. The lice were pretty bad, and we had rats in the barracks. A rat gave birth to baby rats under a guy's pillow one night. We heard the squealing the next morning. They'd been there all night. He was so sound asleep, he didn't know it until he heard them squealing. We looked at his pillow, and they were under it. So we had rats, and we had lice bad.

Marcello: Was there any way you could get rid of either the rats or the lice?

Allen: Well, we would chase the rats with a stick and try to kill them, and did sometimes. But we'd lay our blankets down on the concrete and take a glass and roll it on them and just smash them by the thousands, I guess, sometimes. We just . . . other than killing them by hand, no, we had no way to get rid of them. We took

a teacup with no handle on it or a glass and lay your blanket flat and then roll the object over it and mash the lice. It'd be bloody sometimes. Then we'd wash it. But that's the only way--killing them by hand and then washing the blankets. Of course, that didn't get rid of them. That just helped you for a few nights.

Marcello: How much did you weigh when you went into the service?

Allen: About 200 or 210 pounds. I varied.

Marcello: And what was the lowest that your weight got down to?

Allen: About 140 pounds. I have seen men that weighed 260 pounds get down to ninety pounds before they died.

Marcello: I've heard it said--and you may be an exception--that the bigger men usually suffered more than the smaller men in the prison camps.

Allen: Extremely large men, yes. I think that's true. I was . . . well, I was rather tall. I wasn't as fat then as I am now, but yet I weighed as much. I weigh about 215 now, and I weighed about 210 at that time. But I had no stomach on me then. I worked hard all my life and had been participating in all sorts of athletics. I had a basketball scholarship at North Texas State when I finished high school. So all my life I had done hard physical work on the farm and participated in athletics. I was in good physical condition, very fine physical condition.

Marcello: Would it be safe to say that the work at the docks was hard but not unbearable work?

Allen: Yes, it would be safe.

Marcello: Or would steady work be a better way to describe it?

Allen: Steady and heavy. Do you know what a "yahoo" pole is? I don't know what they're called. That's what we called them.

Marcello: I've heard the term, but I never have figured out how to spell it. We kind of guess at it.

Allen: It's a pole that lays across your shoulder with a hook on each end with some means of fastening it to a . . . you carry . . . rather than one 100-pound sack, you carry two at a time with those.

Marcello: And then you learn how to balance them.

Allen: You learn how to balance. You fall down several times with that weight on top of you. Your body twists. You're in rhythm with the sacks. It's the neatest way to carry two heavy objects I've ever seen. And it is great once you get the balance of it and the rhythm of it. So some men can't carry two 100-pound sacks. They're not strong enough. Well, I could.

Urbauer from Wisconsin, a guy by the name of Whitby from Okalhoma, and a guy by the name of Morvan from Huntington, Long Island--the four of us, I guess, were the strongest in camp probably. We were given

many cars of stuff that was heavier than the rest of them could handle. Sometimes when we'd do a car of heavy stuff, very heavy stuff, we'd get to rest two or three hours. They'd let us . . . "okay, go sit in the shade two or three hours," maybe give us something to eat.

But the average day was just hard work for about twelve hours a day or thirteen. Sometimes you might stay on a little longer but never much longer than that. It was seven days a week. Occasionally, you did get Sunday off. I'd say it would average once a month that you'd get Sunday off.

Marcello: What sort of news were you receiving from the outside during your stay here at Osaka?

Allen: The only news we got was through some Koreans who smuggled newspapers to us. Now as I said, a few learned to read and write it. I did not. I couldn't even speak it fluently, but I could get along. We were reading their own newspapers. By the way, we kind of read between the lines, and it worked out pretty good.

Marcello: How do you mean when you say you read between the lines?

Allen: If they said in Okinawa the Americans had lost 300 planes whereas they lost ten, we got to reversing the figures and found out later it was about right. So this is the only news we had, was through Japanese newspapers

smuggled to us by Koreans. Well, you're more familiar with history than I am. You know that Koreans were there many years before we got there--since 1927 wasn't it?

Marcello: Oh, even before that. Actually, it was back before the turn of the century.

Allen: Yes, when they were really conquered was 1927, I guess. But they did not like the Japanese, and they did anything they could to help us. They were not kept in prison camps any longer, but they hated the Japanese. So they would help us when they could, and they brought newspapers to us, so this way we heard some things. We knew when Italy surrendered. We knew when Germany surrendered.

Marcello: Now as one gets later and later into the war, the American bombing raids begin. Obviously, Osaka was going to be one of the major targets.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Now describe what those air raids were like while you were at Osaka.

Allen: At first, and this was in . . . maybe late in '44 but probably early in '45. Now I don't know. Occasionally, a lone B-29 would come over and drop bombs. I believe they could just fly too high for their fighters or their antiaircraft guns either because I don't think

one was ever shot down. Sometimes they would drop an incendiary bomb or a cluster of them. Sometimes they'd drop a high explosive bomb.

It seems like it just harassed us more than anything else until the night of Friday, March 13, 1945, about nine o'clock, I guess. We heard . . . it sounded like . . . we could recognize by this time different planes--hear them frequently. It got so . . . a plane a week, a plane a day, and maybe two runs a day, just B-29's. But we could recognize their sounds by then. So we heard one. It just came right across Osaka just dropping out incendiary bombs. In about two minutes, about the time it was dying out, we could hear another one coming. It just seemed to move over a half block or a block--like plowing a field--doing the same thing until morning when it began to get light. Then about every two minutes one came over. When morning came the entire city was ablaze. I guess it was almost complete destruction of that city.

Marcello: How close did the destruction come to where you were housed?

Allen: A half a block--one-half block. It so destroyed that city . . . well, two or three weeks later at night, we could still see the red in the sky from the flames.

Now, of course, in a few days the flames died down until we couldn't see them in the daytime. We could still see smoke, but then at night we could see the reflection of the flames. Two or three weeks later . . . and the destruction was so complete that--that was March 13--by about April 1, along in there, they took us out of Osaka.

Marcello: How did the attitude of the Japanese guards--either military or civilian--change when those massive raids took place?

Allen: Oh, now they began to throw rocks at us, and we were pretty frightened!

Marcello: How about your immediate supervisors at the docks?

Allen: The majority of those immediate supervisors at the docks, we had established a relationship . . . I don't know whether you want to call it a . . . I guess it was a relationship of friendship even with some of them. We still had a good relation with a majority of the immediate supervisors. Now you remember that we've worked with these men almost three years daily, seven days a week, and we've shared some things with most of these--not all of them. There's a few that would turn you in if you picked up a peanut to eat it. But most of these men had warned us of the ones we could not trust by then. I guess you would say we

had a pretty close friendship with some of those men. I respect them and would like to do something for some of them to this day. But they didn't turn against us. It was the people on the way to work along the street. Now the military didn't physically take over and start getting much worse then--maybe a little stricter. But I don't guess they started any more beatings or anything than they ever had done. I partly think it was because of superior officers. I don't know.

Marcello: Did you say that the civilians would stone you and perhaps spit on you and things of that nature when you went to work?

Allen: Yes, but it was never extremely bad. They were afraid of the military men walking along. Japanese civilians were just about as bad off as we were, we think. They were afraid of the military. They had to bow down to them. I've seen them slap them and beat them around, too. I think had we not had a military man walking with us, they might have hurt some of us pretty bad.

Marcello: In other words, this was a rather frightening experience.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Was it the first and only time you've ever been confronted by a mob?

Allen: Yes, I guess so.

Marcello: I would assume that as the bombing intensified, the amount of work that you could do on the docks kind of lessened, too, did it not?

Allen: Well, yes. We could do . . . we didn't . . . well, they kept us in the barracks a few days right after it happened. I don't remember--three or four days. Then they took us back. We did a little. They kept us at the barracks three or four more days, it seemed like. They loaded us on a train and carried us away up on northern Honshu to a little port town named Tsuruga.

Marcello: What did the bombing do for your morale?

Allen: Oh, it was terrific! You should have seen us standing at the windows cheering. To heck with the guards down there! We cheered! They didn't like that too well, but they didn't do anything about it. Oh, it was a tremendous lift.

Marcello: Even though there was the danger that you might be one of the targets of those bombs.

Allen: Sure! It was tremendous! We didn't go hide in a foxhole this time or get down on the ground. We stood in the windows and cheered and were very excited. We stayed up all night watching.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you were transported near the end of the war up to a town in northern Honshu.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Describe the trip from Osaka up to this town.

Allen: Well, again, we were put on a Japanese train. This time it was a passenger train, and there were seats on it. It took all day and into the night. We were given a box of warm rice on the trip up there by the military and treated courteously enough by those Japanese military. There were a lot of sneers along the way as we looked out the windows when we stopped.

Marcello: Were you able to look out the windows?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: I know on a lot of the trains they made the prisoners keep the blinds drawn, or the curtains drawn.

Allen: There were times we had to keep them drawn, but there were times we got to look out the windows, too.

Marcello: Did you have any feelings of sympathy toward the Japanese when you were able to see the terrific bombing to which they were being subjected?

Allen: Well, I'm ashamed to say but, no, I didn't because I had been subjected to this for five months in the Philippine Islands, and I knew how Pearl Harbor had been struck. I didn't know what else of the American islands or even in America . . . I didn't know what else had been bombed. For five months I was trying to stay alive fighting them and dodging bombs and shells and . . . no, there was quite

a hate built up in you over that long a period of time. Now there are individuals I sympathized with, but the Japanese as a whole, I don't think I did. I'm sorry to say that, but that's the feelings I had at that time.

Marcello: Well, I don't think you should be sorry to say it because I'm sure that it was a natural reaction.

Allen: I think it was.

Marcello: It was one that just about all of the prisoners-of-war had. I'm sure that it was a reaction that all of your fellow POW's had, also.

Allen: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do when you got to this city on northern Honshu?

Allen: We were marched a mile or two through town to another large barracks, three-story, and put in it. Then we began stevedoring again but more from ships than . . . before it was mostly . . . it was from barges to boxcars, boxcars to barges, or from barges out on the dock or from barges into the carts that they hauled it away from the freight yards in--mostly horse-drawn carts, some wood-burning trucks. Did you know they had wood-burning trucks?

Marcello: Yes, I've heard some of the other prisoners talk about those.

Allen: They had . . . it looked like a hot water heater mounted on the outside, and they poured in sacks of little wood.

They'd fan it awhile or had something they turned and fanned it and got it going good. It built up, I guess, a little gas. They were very . . . they didn't have much power or anything. I'd have to push sometimes to help them get rolling, and then they'd chug off with the wood-burning trucks. But when we got to Tsuruga, we unloaded a lot of ships--down in the hold, loading in nets. Most of that was soybeans, some rice, sometimes steel, but mostly soybeans--putting it up on the docks. Sometimes we loaded it into boxcars. There was a switch yard that came down by the docks. But it was more ship work than in the trains.

Marcello: In the meantime, President Roosevelt died. That would have been in April, 1945.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Were you informed about this, and if so, what were your reactions and what were the reactions of the Japanese?

Allen: Yes, we did find out about it. I don't know how the word got into the camp. Somebody just told me. I don't know whether that was in the newspaper or whether a Japanese guard might have told somebody. They would tell us some things sometimes. Very possibly a Japanese guard told somebody that Roosevelt had died. Of course, it was a shock to us, and we wondered if

policies would change. We wondered if it would cause a different outcome in the war, of course. We thought there would surely be victory for us anyway. The Japanese . . . I don't think they thought it would make much difference one way or the other on the outcome of the war.

Marcello: Did you notice any feeling of jubilation or anything of this sort on their part?

Allen: When Roosevelt died?

Marcello: Yes.

Allen: No, I don't think so. I personally didn't.

Marcello: Okay, we're getting down to the closing stages of the war now. Did the Japanese ever warn you about what fate was in store for you if they did lose the war?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Describe this.

Allen: They said they'd kill us all.

Marcello: Did you believe them?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Were you making any contingency plans in the event that Japan would have to surrender? In other words, were you secretly hoarding any weapons or planning any escapes or anything of this nature?

Allen: Not really. It looked this way to me. You can't swim all the way back home, and you can't hide out in Japan.

Japan's a small country with 90,000,000 people, I believe, at that time. There's no where to hide out. So if it comes to that, it comes to that. I know I personally just kind of accepted it. If that's the way it's got to be, it's got to be.

Marcello: In other words, here was another one of those possibilities of death that you had to confront.

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe now in as much detail as you can remember the events surrounding the Japanese surrender and your ultimate liberation.

Allen: Okay. First, let me go back to Corregidor and make a statement that had a lot of influence on my attitude the rest of the war. There were two of us buried by a bomb once. We were down in a hole some three feet deep. We just jumped in it side-by-side, laying on our stomachs as we heard the bombs coming. The bomb probably hit within a foot or foot and a half from actually coming in there on us. It just buried us. The people who dug us out said that we were about six feet deep. Well, we could talk to each other when it first happened, and then he passed out. His shoulder was touching mine, and I couldn't arouse him anymore. I began to suck for breath through that dirt. I thought it was all over. I just had no idea of ever getting out alive. I just thought this was it.

After that, I just seemed to feel like someway I was going to make it through someway or another. If I didn't, so what? So maybe I had some attitudes later on that some of the other men didn't. I don't know. I just couldn't say. But I think it prepared me a lot--the fact that I had come out of that and I never expected to. I thought that that was it, and there was no way out of it. I was dug out of it, and all I had was ruptured eardrums and a loss of hearing for about six weeks.

Now then, back to your question. Okay, I've forgotten the date now. They dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The Japanese told us the next day about an awful bomb the Americans had dropped and it just killed things for . . . everything for five miles. Really, we didn't believe this was possible because there had been what they called the block-busters dropped near us. They would demolish about a city block. We thought this was the most powerful thing in the world, and there couldn't be anything that would kill people five miles away.

But they began to act different--really different. They were very friendly to us for the first time--very friendly, overly so--and tried to help us. Too, people began to leave the town and head up in the mountains,

and digging holes in the side of mountains. Then we began to believe them.

Okay, then in a few days they dropped another one . . . a week, I guess, later. Then they began to seem like the hopeless ones. We could see this.

Finally, in a few more days, they told us we didn't have to go to work. They were just going to let us have a day off. We needed some rest. This seemed very funny to us. But we enjoyed it, and we sat around with all sorts of speculation. "Why are they so good?" "I wonder if the war is over?" But they didn't say anything. Another day went by. "We're going to let you have another day off." We really began to think it was over then.

The third day we got up, and there were no guards outside. We were just there. Well, we just figured it was over, which it was. But we didn't dare leave the camp right yet. Where were they? Where were the guards? We couldn't find them, so we gradually began to walk out of camp and walk to little stores. When we walked in the proprietors would just back away from us bowing to us and tell us to help ourselves to whatever we'd like. We knew the war was over. In our minds we were sure.

Well, that same day a B-29 flew over at a very low altitude just skimming the housetops, dropping out

leaflets that Japan had surrendered unconditionally. "Mark your camps and we'll drop supplies to you."

I guess to me it was one of the most touching things that ever happened in my life. We got rags--red ones and white ones and blue ones--and sewed a flag together. One guy still had his old bugle with him. We made that flag and took the Japanese flag down and put ours up. Of course, he was blowing the bugle. We were all standing there crying. That's the way it ended.

Marcello: What sort of feelings did you have when you did learn officially that the war was over?

Allen: Well, I don't know. It's the greatest. I would imagine that the winners of the Super Bowl felt nothing compared to what we felt on that day when we put that flag up and bugler was standing out there blowing his bugle. We were all standing there crying like little babies. And it still chokes me to think of that one thing.

Marcello: I've never heard it expressed that way, but I think that's probably about the best way you could put it, when you said that probably the winners of the Super Bowl or the World Series couldn't have felt any more exhileration than what you did.

Allen: I don't think near as much.

Marcello: How long did you remain in the prison camp before the rescue teams came in and took you out?

Allen: The rescue teams didn't come in and take us out. We stayed around there anywhere from one week to two weeks.

Marcello: In the meantime, were the B-29's dropping supplies in fifty-five-gallon cans?

Allen: Food, clothing . . . in fifty-five-gallon drums . . . two fifty-five-gallon drums welded together, by the way. Cigarettes, clothing, and food of all sorts. I'll never forget one guy who opened the large can of peaches and just poured it over his head and said, "Peaches!" (chuckle) He sat there letting it run down his face. But they dropped out a lot of food, cigarettes, clothing. They said, "Hold tight!" on the leaflets. We started going to town and went to the sake shops. When we'd walk in, they'd say, "Help yourselves." We'd get sake. We boozed it a little. Go back to camp and just drink a little sake.

So in a few days we got . . . you know, a guy said, "Well, I'm going to leave here." Maybe fifty or thirty or seventy would go downtown and get on a train, not knowing where it was going, and just go until they came to a pretty place and get off. The next day some more said, "Well, I'm going." They got to going in larger groups. So finally three or four days after that, I got on a train. I ended up back at Osaka. I

got off. When I got off the train, there they stood--the troops and some nurses. They put me on a hospital ship. At this time I was sick. I became very ill after the war was over.

Marcello: From what?

Allen: Tuberculosis. I started hemorrhaging the first day after we knew it was over. I had holes eaten through my lungs--about ten-centimeter holes or cavities in my lungs. So they put me on a hospital ship. I came back on a hospital ship and arrived back in San Francisco about . . . I guess before I got back it must have been late October. No, I don't know--in October. I really didn't get back to some troops until about the first of September. I found them in Osaka. I guess about the first of October I got back to San Francisco.

Marcello: Were you ready to take out any revenge from the Japanese civilians after you left the camp and were making your way down to Osaka?

Allen: Yes, and not as much the civilians as it was the bad guards.

Marcello: In other words, did you go looking for them?

Allen: Some did. I think a few found them and killed them, I've heard.

Marcello: Did you have some pretty bad guards up at this last camp?

Allen: We had the worst that we'd had at the last camp.

Marcello: Oh, is that right?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: I hadn't realized that. I would assume that maybe that time things were easing up.

Allen: No. You see, we started bombing them pretty bad by then but not the atomic bomb. Only after the atomic bomb started falling did they get good. But from April when we got there until August when the war was over . . . well, maybe the first of August . . . or when did the first atomic bomb . . . about the fifth or sixth of August?

Marcello: The sixth, I think it was.

Allen: Up until that time they were pretty tough on us.

Marcello: Again, the usual beatings and that sort of thing?

Allen: Yes. See, now not long after we got to Tsuruga they started bombing there. Now not only with B-29's. For the first time--we knew then it was really about over--fighter planes came in and strafed daily. So there had to be something laying out there pretty close. The more of that they got, the tougher they got on us until the atomic bomb. Then they became very fearful at that time.

Marcello: As you look back upon your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as being the key to your survival?

Allen: Two things, I think, and, of course, there must be some luck involved. My background, my parents and what they had instilled in me . . . and the hard work I had done had physically prepared me. I think my parents had done a good job mentally preparing me. And just a strong desire, very strong desire, to get home to see those same parents. I wan't married at the time.

Marcello: Did you see men becoming more religious as they went through these adversities?

Allen: No, I don't think so. I don't think so anyhow.

Marcello: I'm just kind of throwing out some questions that I perhaps should have asked earlier at this point. Was theft ever a problem?

Allen: From each other?

Marcello: Yes.

Allen: Maybe on rare occasions. I heard of it happening a few times. For example, I steal some sugar--this didn't happen to me personally--and I have it stored and hidden, and somebody steals it from me. This happened very rarely.

Marcello: Were you still maintaining military discipline throughout your tenure as a prisoner-of-war, that is, were you respecting your officers and things of this nature?

Allen: Mostly. Some officers to this day I don't think deserve any respect. They got none. One lieutenant colonel was killed in Cabanatuan--hanged--Lieutenant Colonel Beecher.

Marcello: I'm surprised the Japanese would allow this sort of thing to occur, or didn't they really ever know about it?

Allen: They didn't know about it. He was piled out there with the forty men the next morning.

Marcello: I see. When you came back to the United States, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Allen: Yes.

Marcello: In what way?

Allen: Well, first of all, I didn't know it then, but as I look back, I don't think I was mentally all here. Well, I'll give you an example. I had not seen anyone I had known before, other than my buddies in the Marine Corps, from early 1940 until late 1945. This cousin that I joined the Marine Corps with . . . we got separated in boot camp. He was the last person that I had known back in my growing up that I saw. When I got back to the States, I was in a hospital at Oakland, California. He walked in the barracks. He had been a first sergeant in five major landings--Tarawa, Eniwetok, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, and some other place. He got malaria, looked real bad. He walked into the barracks, and he walked by my bunk. I said, "Hi, sergeant." He said, "Hi." We didn't recognize each other. He walked on up to the table where the

corpsman was in the middle of the . . . I said barracks. It was the ward. He asked if they had a Bill Allen in there. I recognized his voice then. I hollered, "Tommy!" He turned and ran back there. So he had been back, married, and was back on duty out there in California.

So they took our clothes away from us. We were contagious at that time. We couldn't go out. So he got me some clothes out of the car. We got headed down to the gate in his car. The officer of the day tried to get in front of the car and stopped us and said, "You're not going out!" We said, "We'll run over you! You'd better move!" Boy, we gunned it! You know that's not . . . we couldn't be too sane. So we went out on the town in Oakland.

But they couldn't discipline us then. They'd threaten us. We'd say, "What are you going to do? Put us in jail?" We were pretty hard to get along with for a few months. But we settled down.

Marcello: Did the whole process of getting you out of Japan proceed rather swiftly and expeditiously?

Allen: Once I got to Osaka and found some military, yes. They put us through . . . they took all of our clothes off, led us to a tent, and sprayed us. We came out with new clothes, went on a hospital ship, put me back to

bed. I guess we lay there in the harbor two or three days. They fed us six times a day, treated us like we had won the war singlehandedly. The first week I was on the hospital ship, I put on twenty pounds. The second week I put on seven.

When I got back to the States, oh, approximately thirty days later, I was nearly back up to normal weight. This cousin, who had never been captured, and I had our pictures made and sent them home. People who my mother and dad lived by and who had never seen me, when she showed them the picture they all thought he was me because I was in good-looking health. But I had tuberculosis at that time.

But that's the finest disease in the world to have. If you're going to get something, that's it. There's never any pain because there's no nerves in the lungs. You just get to lay around a few years and rest. You did then. Now they have a drug. You take a pill and that's it. It was a fine disease if you're going to have one (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, Mr. Allen, I can't think of any other questions. I think we've covered the subject rather thoroughly. I really want to thank you for taking all of this time to talk with me. I think you've said a lot of very interesting things and very important things so far as

historians are concerned. I'm sure that scholars are going to find this information quite useful.

Allen: Well, I hope so. I certainly hope so.