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Interview with
Mr. C. L. Permenter
October 25, 1972

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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(Signature)
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Oral History Collection

C. L. Permenter

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: October 25, 1972

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing C. L. Permenter for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place in Dallas, Texas, on October 25, 1972. I'm interviewing Mr. Permenter 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. Permenter was a North China Marine, was captured in China, and subsequently spent the rest of the war in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps in China and Japan. Mr. Permenter, to begin this interview, would you very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education-- things of that nature?

Mr. Permenter: Well, I was born in Shelby County in East Texas, deep East Texas, right on the banks of the Sabine River. Our little farm was about two miles from Toledo Bend Lake, which is the largest man-made lake, I guess,

in the Southwest. And we moved here in July, 1936, to Dallas, and went through school here until 1940. On January 16th, I entered the United States Marine Corps.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Marine Corps?

Permenter: Oh, I don't know. Jobs were hard to get. I was working at a drive-in over here on Zanes Boulevard, and jobs were hard to get--things like that. I don't know, maybe I was a little wild.

Marcello: You know, this was one of the standard reasons that I think a great many people that I've interviewed give for joining the service. It was 1939 but the Depression was still on, and jobs were still hard to find yet. Some people say they liked the uniform, especially those who joined the Marines. Others say they wanted to travel and give that as a reason for joining. So there are a variety of reasons, but I think usually those are the three reasons that most people give. They couldn't find a job; they liked the uniform; or they wanted to travel. Where'd you take your boot camp?

Permenter: San Diego.

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service and during your boot camp days, did you have any idea that the

country would very soon be at war?

Permenter: No, I didn't. In fact, if I had known it . . . I had a choice to stay in the United States or go to China. All I'd have had to have done was stuck my hand up, and that'd have been . . . in fact, I didn't think I would get to go. Our boot camp came out of training, and it had the approximate number of men that they wanted to send to China. There was a lot of old timers told us that we'd never get to go because they'd been on the list for years to go to China. They'd go out and spend their time and come back and get right on the list to go back.

Marcello: I understand that that was pretty good duty going to China in those days.

Permenter: Well, a private could live out there as good as a colonel could here in the States even though we were getting \$19.80 a month at that particular time, but we could still live real good out there.

Marcello: How old were you at that time?

Permenter: Oh, I was nineteen.

Marcello: What did you think about going to China? In other words, what made you decide? You said awhile ago that you had a choice to whether or not you wanted to go? What made you decide to go?

Permenter: Well, they said foreign country, and my hand just automatically went up. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen on this trip from California over to China? I assume you probably went through the Hawaiian Islands.

Permenter: We went to Hawaii and Guam, and we were supposed to have went to the Philippines. For some reason we didn't go over there. In fact, we had our shots and they issued us a special liberty card, and for some reason they cancelled it, and we went to Shanghai instead and then went on around to Chinwangtao before we got off to go to Tientsin or Peking. I got off at Tientsin, China.

Marcello: In other words, I gather you didn't stay very long at either Shanghai or Chinwangtao.

Permenter: No . . .

Marcello: . . . the first time around anyway.

Permenter: The North China Marines were a part of the Fourth Marine Division, which was stationed in Shanghai, and a few of them got off in the Philippines, a few of them off in Shanghai, and the rest of us went on to North China.

Marcello: Incidentally, what was the exact designation of your unit? Can you identify it by division and this sort of thing?

Permenter: We was just known in Tientsin as the United States Marine Corps. I was in Company B, Tientsin, China, at that particular time. But we were detached from the Fourth Marines.

Marcello: From the Fourth Marines.

Permenter: But we wasn't recognized as a part of the Fourth Marines.

Marcello: What did you do when you got to China?

Permenter: Guard duty.

Marcello: Was this guard duty at the American Legation?

Permenter: Well, yes. There in Tientsin we didn't have a legation. I stayed there until September of 1941, and I was transferred to Peking. That's what is called the Legation Quarters up there. We had a lot of foreign people, that is, consul-generals mostly in Tientsin. And it was all guard duty.

Marcello: What sort of guard duty was it? Was there a foreign compound there?

Permenter: No, in Tientsin we were in old World War I German barracks there, and we had Chinese boys. We paid fifty cents a month--each squad would--for a Chinese boy to keep our area clean, keep our ironing up, send our laundry out--for fifty cents. No KP duty. All we done was stand guard and go to school.

Marcello: How long was a typical work day?

Permenter: Oh, it varied. If you was on guard, you was on guard for twenty-four hours. You didn't stand four hours on four off. You'd stand eight hours or sometimes twelve, depending on what shift you caught. And on our regular day, which started out after reveille, we'd have troop and drill--what we called troop and drill. In the afternoon we'd have . . . sometimes liberties would start at 2:00, 2:30, or 3:00 depending on what day it was when you were to go out.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that in addition to guard duty you went to school. What type of school was this?

Permenter: Well, it was just on weapons and stuff like that-- field training.

Marcello: In other words, it was advanced Marine infantry training or something of that nature.

Permenter: That's what it boiled down to.

Marcello: I would gather that this Marine outfit at Tientsin was more or less a spit-and-polish outfit. Is that correct?

Permenter: Boy, you don't know the half of it! We used to have those generals, for instance, who'd come in. It got hot out there. Man, it was something out there! It'd get to 115° in the shade! They'd fall us out about an

hour before some big shot would come in. Those dress-blue uniforms had that choke-neck, if you want to call it that. You'd get so hot that you'd stand there and move your feet and hear sweat squashing in your shoes down there. Sweat would run down your legs, and that's how hot . . . and it got just as cold in the wintertime. Man, it got cold! In fact, we had our own ice skating rink there in the wintertime. Over at the club they just built up a little old dam about a foot high and filled it full of water, and in a couple of days it was froze solid, and we had our own ice skating rink. That's how cold it'd get.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago the fact that there were foreign troops there also. Did you have very much contact with foreign troops personally?

Permenter: I never did personally, no. In Tientsin, besides ourselves there was French, British, Italians, and Japanese.

Marcello: I gather that, generally speaking, the Marines got along fairly well with the Italians and were kind of suspicious of Japanese.

Permenter: We didn't have too much contact at all. We were right next to the British sector there in Tientsin,

and all our liberties--what we called liberty there or leaves--were in the British sector. And there were very few Japanese over there. For some reason, we could get along better with everybody other than the British. And the Italians, for some reason, if you ever got in a big scrap or something, the Italians always come to the American side. I never did find out the reason. But I don't think anybody liked the British period. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I think this was generally true of all the prisoners that I've talked to also, that is the prisoners who came in contact with them in the various prisoner-of-war camps.

Permenter: That's true. That was true in our camp. We had some British there from Hong Kong--British merchant seamen--and nobody could get along with them.

Marcello: But, nevertheless, you did not have too much contact with the Japanese here in Tientsin.

Permenter: No.

Marcello: What did you do on liberty? I would assume you had quite a bit of liberty in Tientsin.

Permenter: Well, we had what we called our own private Marine club there. For instance, you could get a chicken dinner for six cents. You could get a can of Pabst

beer for a dime. You could get Chinese beer for . . . I don't know. I've forgot the price--five or ten cents for a quart bottle. And sandwiches were equally as cheap. Everything was cheap there. You also had what they called a club book. If you'd run out of money, you could use it to get credit. I never did use mine very much because I was afraid I'd get in debt and couldn't get out. (Chuckle) And there was night clubs there. You could go bowling, and you could go out and take pictures or sightsee and things like that.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you got into Tientsin very much or if you did any sort of sightseeing around the countryside.

Permenter: Well, we were within a half mile of downtown Tientsin. We were almost in the middle of Tientsin itself--where our barracks was at.

Marcello: As a young Marine, how did you regard the Chinese?

Permenter: Back then they was about the lowliest creatures there were as far as we were concerned. We didn't think very much of them.

Marcello: How did you treat your room boy?

Permenter: Well, I always tried to treat mine pretty nice. I found out that if you were halfway decent to them,

they would be the same to you.

Marcello: I gather that on many occasions the young Marines in China were the typical "ugly American" on a great many occasions so far as their treatment of the Chinese was concerned.

Permenter: They were.

Marcello: Now again, I'm not saying that the American Marines were the only ones who treated the Chinese this way. Probably all the other foreign troops and so on also held the Chinese in very low regard.

Permenter: Well, so far as I know, they did.

Marcello: Did you ever see evidence of Americans shoving or pushing or beating Chinese or anything of that nature?

Permenter: No, other than maybe hollering at them or something like that, but as far as getting into scraps with them, I'd say the Chinese wasn't the fighting kind. They'd more or less stay out of your way.

Marcello: How long were you in Tientsin altogether?

Permenter: Oh, I arrived there in May, 1940, and stayed until September, 1941. Sometime in September of '41 I was transferred to Peking. That was where the ambassador was supposed to be at, but he was in Chungking, and the first secretary there and was in charge.

Marcello: Now I would gather that by this time the Japanese had already invaded China, and great parts of China were already under Japanese control.

Permenter: Most of China at that time . . . well, the northern part and the central part of China was under Japanese control. Other than the British and the French and the Italian concessions, or what we called concessions that were parts of a town that belonged to the British. I remember there in Tientsin we pulled the British out. The Americans, or an American diplomat, I suppose, made an agreement with the British that we would protect their interests there. I kind of got a little bit scared there. I was in B Company, and we'd have one platoon on guard and a standby platoon in case of trouble. I got called on the standby platoon, and the city workers, that is, people who worked for the British sector with the lights, water, and so forth, was supposed to go on strike. And the Japanese was agitating. This was after they'd pulled their troops out. I got called on standby, and so we had orders to protect their water plant. And they brought the trucks around one morning, I believe. We stood by all day that day and all night and part of the next day before we was

called off. But we were loaded; we had to walk around the barracks with rifles on, packs, ammunition-- the whole works. We had orders that we had to hold that water plant over there.

Marcello: Now I would gather that by the time you left Tientsin the Japanese controlled a great deal of the countryside, did they not? Or hadn't they reached Tientsin yet?

Permenter: They were already in Tientsin when I got there in '40. In fact, they controlled all the Chinese sector of it and the countryside, too. Of course, I found out later on that at night the guerrillas controlled it, and in the daytime the Japanese controlled it. An I didn't find out about that until years later.

Marcello: And these were Communist guerrillas, too, were they not--most of them?

Permenter: Some of them were, and some of them were what I call "Shanghai Check's" guerrillas. Both types, I understand, were there then.

Marcello: Well, what did you do when you got to Peking?

Permenter: The same thing--guard duty.

Marcello: This was guard duty also, but now this was at this American Embassy?

Permenter: Yes. There was a wall that separated the American Embassy compound and our compound. They were right

next to one another. Now in Peking we were in what you'd call legation quarters. They kept a full U. S. colonel there in order to have more say-so with the French and the British and the Italians there. They controlled this legation quarters, and the highest ranking officer had more say-so than anyone else, so the U. S. kept a full colonel there. We only had 247 people, and they were in three places-- Peking, Tientsin, and Chinwangtao. But he was commanding officer over all three groups. Talking about spit-and-shine, we . . . regulation khakis, that is, trousers, we had to have tailor-made trousers. Our Marine Corps shoes had to be died black. We had to have what I call a "bibb" cap. And all uniforms had to be taken to the tailor shop to have them cut down to fit you. We looked real nice.

Marcello: You mentioned a 'bibb' cap awhile ago?

Permenter: Well, we had what we called "go-to-hell" caps, or overseas caps. And when we got out there, well, we had to buy these special caps that looked similar to an officer's cap, and we had to pay for them out of our own pocket. But a pair of tailor-made khakis only cost eighty cents.

Marcello: I was just going to say, you mentioned tailor-made uniforms awhile ago, and I knew from what some of the other people told me that they didn't cost a whole lot. Incidentally, was this where you also had the fur caps and the fur coats, the long coats?

Permenter: Yes, that's right. In the wintertime, a wool scarf. You had to. Boy, it really got cold there in the wintertime!

Marcello: You know Sparkman still has his fur cap.

Permenter: Is that right!

Marcello: Yes, he does. He showed it to me when I interviewed him. He still has it.

Permenter: I don't remember what happened to mine. I don't know.

Marcello: It's still in fairly good shape, too.

Permenter: Yes, we had to buy those, too. It had to have that Marine Corps emblem on a shield up there. They were warm; they were good caps.

Marcello: Well, at Peking did you have very much contact with the Japanese?

Permenter: No, I didn't have any contact with the Japanese, really, before war was declared. In fact, the day that war was declared, that's when I really had contact because I was on guard that night.

Marcello: What happened?

Permenter: Well, we were on guard, and we had a guy . . . maybe I shouldn't say this, but this guy really went crazy later on. We figured he was crazy to start with (Chuckle)--a guy by the name of Battles. He was corporal-of-the-guard. At that time, we had to sleep in our trousers, shoes, and ties--or we called them scarfs. We were allowed to pull our coats off, but we had to keep our cartridge belts on, I believe. We had a guard that got shot up on post one night. He was on the embassy gate over there--a guy by the name of Dunn.

Marcello: How'd he get shot?

Permenter: Well, this was an intersection that deadened right into the embassy gate where he was standing guard. The Japanese pulled right up in the intersection, got out, and just opened fire on him with a pistol, and the last shot caught him in the instep of his foot. And he fired . . . up until that time we only carried ten rounds of ammunition in our belt, and he finally got five rounds in his rifle and got them off, and, of course, the Jap that shot him was already gone by that time, and the guard got out of there. But the day that war was declared . . .

Marcello: Well, did this incident cause . . . was this a serious incident?

Permenter: I don't know because they couldn't really prove it was Japanese that did the shooting on that, but from then on out, Captain Hester . . . he was our company commander there. He was known to be one of the fairest company commanders there was. I believe he's retired and living in Arkansas. He came up through the ranks and went to Annapolis and then back in as an officer. And if you got run up by the sergeant or first sergeant or somebody, he heard both sides of the story before he'd take any action, and he was a real fair person. And, anyway, the next morning they carried us all up to the company barracks, and he said if there was another shooting accident like that, he didn't want any wounded or captured--that he wanted them dead when he got there. He said that if we didn't, we'd better go over the hill, and right then, over the hill meant taking off or deserting or whatever you want to call it.

Marcello: Going AWOL.

Permenter: Yes, that's what it amounted to. And from then on we carried five rounds in the magazine. And we had a lieutenant we had to break for slipping up on us one night. His daddy, he said, was a captain in the

Army. He acted like an Army brat. (Chuckle). We controlled about, I don't know, four or five hundred yards of the wall with a good many bushes and trees up there. But the lieutenant had a pretty bad habit about slipping up on you. He was on guard duty one morning, and we decided we'd break him. We heard him coming--"Newt the Boot"--we called him. He was right out of Annapolis.

Marcello: "Newt?"

Permenter: "Newt the Boot." Newton was his name. Lieutenant Newton, First Lieutenant Newton, but we called him "Newt the Boot." And anyway, we shoved one home when he got real close. You could have heard that lieutenant hollering for miles. He was officer of the day. He was acting as officer of the day that night. That was the last time he ever tried to slip up on anybody on guard duty.

Marcello: Well anyhow, getting back to the events leading up to the declaration of war, do you remember what you were doing and what your reactions were when you heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

Permenter: Well, we'd already met the Japanese that morning-- I had, the guard had. Battles came in that morning and woke the guard up and said, "Turn out the guard."

Well, if you holler turn out the guard, well, you knew it was an emergency of some kind. Well, everybody looked around and said it was time to get up, and he was always kidding with people and so forth and so on, and everybody yawned around, stretched around a couple of minutes. And he dashed back in there in what we called a patrol truck--a pickup truck that carried MP's around at night--and hollered, "Turn out the guard! Japs are on the wall!" We all hit the floor, grabbed our rifles, jumped in the truck, and went out to the quartermaster compound. There was a squad of Japs up on the ramp going up on the wall. Well, we went up. They aimed in on us and we aimed in on them. We had already put one in the chamber. Well, we pretty well knew by that time war had been declared because they were all around us.

Marcello: But you really hadn't heard about Pearl Harbor?

Permenter: No. As best as I can remember it was man-to-man up there. Well, we were, I suppose, as close from here to my wife over there, just standing there aimed in on one another, and I made up my mind real fast. I said, "If someone gets real trigger happy and shoots, well, that's going to be all the command I need, and I'm going to get that second round off."

I'm going to get one of them anyway." But luckily, the Japanese . . . somebody hollered up, some Jap hollered up . . . that sergeant up there, and they lowered their rifles. In a few minutes our colonel came down and ordered us off the wall and said that war had been declared then. And so we went on back then.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that war had been declared?

Permenter: Well, really, I don't remember. I imagine it was pretty gloomy because we were buried there in the north part of China, and there wasn't no chance for anybody to get out of there. And I don't know how many we had in Peking. It was 247 of us that was in three different places. Some were on train guards with freight going to Chinwangtao. And this happened on a Monday morning, and on Wednesday night we were leaving to go to the Philippines to join the Fourth Marines, and we had everything shipped out, and we were living out of sea bags at that time. And everything we had had been shipped out. Everything we'd shipped out of there, we had to put a train guard on it. The Japanese would go through it if you didn't. I suppose you've heard of the Peking Man. I received

a letter here sometime ago from some organization in New York offering a \$5,000 reward. We had that in our possession. I didn't know it at that time, and what happened to it I don't know.

Marcello: I was just going to ask you. I'd seen an article about this in one of the newspapers or magazines that apparently on one of those train trips to Chinwangtao the Peking Man was on it and that it disappeared. Nobody knows what happened to it. There've been all sorts of theories, but nobody really knows yet.

Permenter: Well, this letter that I got from this organization, they had some contact with China here in the last four or five years, and they brought the question up, and they said they'd see what they could do. I believe they're offering a \$5,000 reward. So this man said that some lady approached him and met him some place and showed him pictures. But I have my doubts about that. She never did find out who it was that had this Chinese Man--Peking Man--in her possession. I doubt that very much. We were allowed to keep our sea bags and trunks.

Marcello: Now, what exactly did you have in your sea bag and your trunk?

Permenter: Well, I had a suitcase and a sea bag and souvenirs--stuff like that. After war was declared, we went

back to Tientsin and stayed there, and they let us store our sea bag or suitcase or trunk--whatever it might be--in a Swiss storage firm there. They held it all during World War II.

Marcello: When you say, "They allowed you to store it there . . .

Permenter: The Japanese.

Marcello: The Japanese. So this was after you had already surrendered.

Permenter: Right.

Marcello: Okay.

Permenter: They kept it all during World War II. In fact, we were already married when I received that, wasn't we?

Marcello: In other words, this is how several of you had picture albums and so on.

Permenter: I still have one.

Marcello: I know a lot of the North China Marines have shown me their picture albums, and I gather that these were probably some of the things that had been stored.

Permenter: That's right. Picture albums, souvenirs, things like that.

Marcello: Well, going back to the declaration of war, you mentioned awhile ago that you were quite scared and gloomy as to what the outcome would be. That's kind of strange because a lot of young servicemen at that

time usually took the opinion that the Japs had really done it now, and the United States would mop them up in about three or four months. But you never had this opinion?

Permenter: Well, no, I don't mean Talking about gloomy, the way I felt when they moved in, well, that was about all of it right there because I didn't know myself how much damage they had done to our fleet and so forth. Now later on I found out, but the gloomy part of it was that I didn't know how long I was going to be there and so forth. Now I think most of the troops' opinions were that it wouldn't last very long, but we didn't realize just how strong they were at that time.

Marcello: Also, is it not true that a great many of the North China Marines figured that they were embassy personnel and therefore they wouldn't be taken prisoners, and eventually they would be repatriated?

Permenter: Well, I didn't know about that. I forgot what they called this agreement they drew up in 1901. I didn't know about it until we were moved back to Tientsin, China, sometime in January. And the Swiss consul brought a letter of some type in to our colonel there, and they read it to us, and they were protesting them

taking us as prisoners-of-war because we were there strictly as noncombatant troops. We were there to protect American citizens only under this agreement, and they were protesting them taking us prisoners-of-war. Later on in February, I believe, they moved us to Shanghai. In fact, they caught two or three Marines . . . or it was as best as I can remember two or three there in Shanghai that was left . . . we'd been given a bunch of stuff that the Fourth Marines had left. Now they did get repatriated a year or two later, but they never did recognize the North China bunch as noncombatant troops. In fact, the Count Verde, it was held several months. It was an Italian liner that got caught in Shanghai. It was caught there in Shanghai, and they were going to use it as a repatriation ship. And things were held up several months, and the United States government was trying to get us back, but the Japanese refused to let us come back.

Marcello: Well, anyhow, describe the events leading up to your capture. Exactly what happened after you had received the news about Pearl Harbor?

Permenter: You mean the day that war was declared?

Marcello: Right. In other words, after war was declared, you

obviously surrendered very, very shortly after that.

Describe the events leading up to your surrender.

Permenter: Well, yes, they sent a note in to the colonel that morning. Three or four people lived out in the town that was married to Chinese, Russians, English or what-not. Every nationality in the world was in those towns. And they picked those people up around midnight, some of them, and helped them. And at nine o'clock, then, the next morning they sent a note into the colonel and told him they'd give him to one o'clock to either surrender, or they would open fire on us. Well, we had maybe 150 people there in the compound. We only had--I think we figured it up later--two rounds of ammunition per man. Only the guards had ammunition because we were leaving Wednesday night, and we didn't have anything left. We couldn't have fought anyway. They had several divisions there at Peking. They had tanks where we had Thompson submachine guns. Well, you don't fight that many with what we had. Anyway, the colonel went out before one and met them someplace, and they moved in about three o'clock that afternoon.

Marcello: What were your thoughts when you learned that the Marines were about to surrender?

Permenter: Well, I don't really remember, except it was a pretty gloomy day when we had to go out and lay the weapons down. But that was an order that we had, and I knew that we couldn't fight there, that the odds were too great. We all fell out in a company in our platoons and laid our rifles down and so forth, and the Japanese marched in. I don't know who was the scarest, the Japanese or us.

Marcello: I understand that for awhile anyhow the Japanese were kind of leary of these big, American Marines and so on.

Permenter: Well, we had a Japanese captain that was in charge of the guards there in Peking. I can't believe this is true, but, of course, the uniform, the clothes, civilians clothes we had, and so forth and so on--we had a lot of clothes. And at that time we didn't know just how poor the Japanese were. They had two uniforms--small and big. One of them fitted. (Chuckle) If it didn't, well, you got the nearest thing. We found that out later on. Toilet articles and stuff like . . . the PX was sold out. We had seastore prices which was real cheap, and when the PX sold out, they cut those prices half in two. In fact, we were buying cigarettes out there for about 25 or 30 cents a carton.

Marcello: This was before or after you were captured?

Permenter: This was just before we were captured. They didn't want to ship that stuff out, and they were selling it real cheap, and they'd just keep lowering the prices. Well, everybody was loaded with cigarettes, all kind of toilet articles, and stuff like that because they got it so cheap, see. And, of course, they come in, and we had large, steel double lockers. We didn't know that they didn't have those. We figured that maybe they was better and, you know, as well off as we were. We didn't know just how poor those people were. And, man, they would see our lockers, and that was unbelievable! Their officers didn't even have anything compared to what a private had there. They'd steal anything they could get their hands on there at first. We didn't know it until later on that they'd issue one razor to a whole platoon of their men to shave with. Well, Lordy, everybody had his own razor, one or two, and all kinds of razor blades, shaving cream, shaving lotions, and what not!

Marcello: At the time of the surrender was the usual rumor going around that the Japanese never took prisoners?

Permenter: It could have been. I don't know. It probably was. There was a lot of rumors flying around at that time.

Marcello: Well, what happened after you had laid down, had laid down your arms and had surrendered?

Permenter: We had a street right in front of our barracks there. We lined up in the street, and the Japanese come in and put their guards around us and made a speech and so forth. I don't remember what the speech was about, but they took our flag down and raised theirs.

Marcello: Some of the Marines that I've talked to were kind of moved emotionally by this particular scene.

Permenter: Well, when you see your own flag coming down . . . of course, we'd never let our flag touch the ground, and they just pulled it down and left it there, and they ran their flag up. We kind of got even with that later on after the war about that pulling our flag down. We made our own flag during the war out of parachutes and run it up on them.

Marcello: At the time of the surrender, did the Japanese molest you physically in any way? Did they push you around, shove you, hit you--things of that nature?

Permenter: Not the first several days.

Marcello: I gather they were still leary of you yet, like you said awhile ago.

Permenter: Yes, they were probably as scared of us, I guess, as we were of them because we didn't know what was

going to happen. I don't think they knew what was going to happen. This Japanese captain told us that 90 per cent of the Japanese couldn't read nor write. That was pretty hard for me to believe, and I think he was wrong because we found out later on that the Japanese up until the war started, they'd take three years of English in high school, and that was one of the things in Shanghai that we really had to watch for. When they brought a new guard in, we had to find out just how much English he knew before we could start shooting our mouth off around him because they'd come in and act like they didn't know anything, and they'd be listening to what we were saying.

Marcello: Did they ever make any attempts to loot you at this particular stage? In other words, did they attempt to take any rings or wristwatches or any other valuables that you might have had?

Permenter: No, not that I know of. They'd steal a camera or a razor or something like that, and we complained about it to this Jap captain, and he came through and sealed our lockers up and told us to take what we wanted out. And he sealed our lockers up at that time. I don't know how many days, but I do remember that it was paper tape and after it dried this tape

bursting especially where your doors opened. So we were beginning to get pretty worried about that, and we reported it to the Japanese.

Marcello: Did they confine you to quarters for a couple of days? Or what exactly did they do after you had laid down your arms and had surrendered?

Permenter: I believe they did confine us to quarters, but I don't remember how many days we were confined up there.

Marcello: And during these couple of days that they had confined you to quarters, I assume they didn't bother you very much in any way.

Permenter: No, occasionally these guards patrolled through there. That's when they would do the stealing-- when they were by themselves. There'd be a locker open and each of them would just grab something. Of course, he had a rifle and we didn't--things like that.

Marcello: Well, after a couple of days what happened then? You mentioned that you were confined to your quarters here in Shanghai for a couple of days. What happened then?

Permenter: Well, there in Peking we had our own heating systems, these big furnaces, and we started running those

ourselves. They were fed by coal. I don't remember how long we stayed there. It was some time in January when they moved us back to Tientsin.

Marcello: Did you think that help was on its way by this time?

Permenter: No, I didn't.

Marcello: You say you only remained at Peking for a couple of days or a couple of weeks.

Permenter: Two or three weeks. Well, no, it was some time in January as best as I remember.

Marcello: In other words, you didn't remain there too long, and during the period that you were in Peking, they didn't harass you in any way.

Permenter: Not that I remember. Not too much other than petty stealing and stuff like that.

Marcello: In other words, this was more or less a period of nothingness. You didn't do anything while you were at Peking . . .

Permenter: That's right.

Marcello: . . . other than being confined to quarters. And then, like you say, later on they moved you to Tientsin.

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: Did they take you there by train?

Permenter: Train, yes.

Marcello: Was this a very uneventful trip, or did anything out of the ordinary happen?

Permenter: Yes, it sure was. They loaded us on baggage cars, and that was . . . of course, we'd always been used to going first class on everything out there. When they sent you to Peking, Tientsin, or vice versa, or wherever it might be, you went first class. Well, really, trains were the only transportation they had. They bought us first class seats and so forth and so on. They made arrangements ahead of time. And we went on boxcars, and it was just about as cattle here in the United States.

Marcello: Were you crowded in these . . . were you packed in these cars?

Permenter: Going to Tientsin, I rode in a baggage car, and I had plenty of room--me and three or four other guys. Now the other people were in these cars . . . well, they were pretty crowded. But I made out fairly good myself going back to Tientsin.

Marcello: How long did this trip take?

Permenter: I don't remember, but it couldn't have took over a day and a night because it was only about ninety miles. The difference, of course, was that trains were pretty slow out there.

Marcello: I assume you slept on the train.

Permenter: Yes, when you could.

Marcello: Did they provide you with any food, or were you expected to take some rations along from what you had back in Peking?

Permenter: The best I can remember we furnished our own rations going from Peking to Tientsin. They didn't furnish us with anything. In fact, we had some turkey for Christmas that they tried to steal from us, and the cook seen them and went over and stole it back from them. And we furnished our own food from Peking to Tientsin.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you had to provide your own food even during those couple of weeks that you were at Peking.

Permenter: Yes, they had enough stacked back. Of course, we went on light rations and so forth, and I don't remember them giving us anything. Now I don't know. They may have offered to give us food, but you've got to remember that the Americans lived good out there. They fed us good, and there was plenty of it. And where the Japanese were getting a bowl of rice, we were getting T-bone steaks. That's about what it amounted to. Of course, later on after we got to Tientsin that's when we began to really feel the difference.

Marcello: Incidentally, when you made this trip to Tientsin, what sort of belongings did the Japanese allow you to take with you?

Permenter: As best as I can remember, they let us carry everything we had with us--that is, our personal clothing and stuff like that.

Marcello: Did you have your sea bag? Did they allow you to take your sea bag?

Permenter: Sea bag and a suitcase.

Marcello: What did you do when you got to Tientsin?

Permenter: Of course, at Peking we still had our own bunks, blankets, sheets, so forth and so on. At Tientsin, well, we got in about midnight that night, and they had straw on the floor with a grass mat for us. That was when things really began to dawn us that it was going to start getting rough. But we still made out. The Marine Club had closed the door, sold out, and then divided up the money, and we got a payday. At Tientsin the colonel had got caught with the payroll in his hand, and we got some more money. Oh, there was plenty of money in our pockets!

Marcello: Was this after the surrender?

Permenter: Yes, this was after surrender, and we were back in Tientsin. The club was divided up before the war.

Marcello: Right, this was what I was referring to.

Permenter: Yes, before war was declared. I don't remember how much it was. But one of the things I do remember, they had a bunch of these old, long, wide money, U. S. currency. It was good money, but it was just old. It had been laying there in the safe for years and years, and they divided it up equally into each person. I kept some for a long time even after I got to Shanghai. Of course, I spent it. There's a funny thing that happened there in Tientsin after we got into Tientsin there a couple of days. I was out on an old balcony there right next to what we called _____ Number 2. They stationed their guards in the PX building. The lieutenant, the Japanese lieutenant, left and went around the corner, and the guards all went out there and lined up. I asked a fellow there with me, I said, "What are these idiots doing?" He said, "If you want to go any place, just walk out toward the gate and just motion for one of them to follow you." He said, "If you want to go to the grocery store, if you want to get a bottle of beer or anyplace you want to go, go on. When you get back, give him a couple of dollars." And I said, "You're crazy!"

He said, "No, they don't make but two or three dollars a month, and they'll make more in one night taking us out in town than they will in a whole month's pay." But I still didn't believe him and wouldn't try it. A couple of days later---I don't remember who it was--- a couple of us guys got together, and we went to a grocery store down the street, walked out and just motioned, and here one come. He followed us down there and followed us back, and we gave him a couple of dollars. He was happy, and he went to the end of the line. Of course, the lieutenant had to leave before they could do that. We bought most of our own food there. We had a real good deal there in Tientsin going out and buying our own food and stuff. And the Japanese were all on our side, that is, the privates and so forth. They was making money off of us, and we was living high, too, because we had our own money. And they had some food. The best I can remember they served two meals a day there, but it was very slim. But that's why we would go out, and we'd buy our own food.

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with the Chinese civilians there?

Permenter: After war was declared?

Marcello: Yes, when you went back there as a prisoner.

Permenter: I didn't, no, other than going to a grocery store or something like that.

Marcello: What was a typical day like here at Tientsin? Did they give you specific jobs to do, or was it still sitting around and waiting?

Permenter: Sitting around except one time they marched us over in the Japanese part of town. We cut up some wood over there and stayed over there nearly all day. The soldiers were glad to get out of the compound to get a little exercise. I don't remember how far-- two or three miles over there and two or three back. That's about the only work that we did around there or exercise or anything. We stayed strictly in the barracks.

Marcello: What did you do in your spare time while you were in the barracks?

Permenter: Played cards, dominoes, and things like that.

Marcello: What was discipline like now that you were prisoners-of-war?

Permenter: It was good at that time.

Marcello: Were you still obeying your officers and things of that nature?

Permenter: Well, they had them in another building, but we had

gunnery sergeants, sergeants, first sergeants, and enlisted men with us, and we had good discipline.

Marcello: I would gather that the Japanese sent orders down to the noncoms, and then they in turn passed the orders on to the privates and corporals and so on. In other words, there had to have been some sort of a chain of command in there.

Permenter: They may have, but the best I can remember in Tientsin and Peking they more or less stayed away from us, and we more or less stayed away from them because I don't think they really knew what they were going to do with us, and we didn't know what they were going to do with us. And, of course, the privates, that is, the guards, we got them on our side, and you could do almost anything you wanted to around there at night as long as you could pay them off.
(Chuckle)

Marcello: Were you staying in the old U. S. Marine compound here at Tientsin?

Permenter: Right, right.

Marcello: Did they harass you physically in any way while you were in Tientsin?

Permenter: Not to my knowledge, not that I remember.

Marcello: How long were you in Tientsin altogether?

Permenter: I'd say around a month.

Marcello: And generally speaking, while you were there there were no details or anything of that nature, other than maybe an occasional wood-cutting detail or something of that nature.

Permenter: Something like that. I only remember one detail that we went on over there, and . . . oh, it might have been a little KP duty, helping the cooks out or something like that.

Marcello: At this early stage of your term as a prisoner-of-war, did the thought of escape ever enter anybody's mind yet?

Permenter: Well, I think it did everybody's, and we had some people there in Tientsin--two, I believe--that got over in the recreation building. There was a recreation building that we used for several things, and the first floor was a guard house, the brig. The second floor, in the daytime it was recreation; at night it was a movie house. And they got up in the attic and got some guys to nail the entrance to it up. I didn't know anything about it until later on. They got frostbit while they were up there because, boy, it was really cold there. They had no way of keeping warm up there, and they finally

had to come down. They did, I guess, blow their tops when they found out those two guys had escaped. I didn't know where they'd gone myself, but there were some people in on it. Later on they brought them to Shanghai.

Marcello: What sort of threats did they make if they caught anybody who tried to escape?

Permenter: Well, their threats were always that they'd shoot you.

Marcello: Did you think they were bluffing?

Permenter: Well, I didn't really know. (Chuckle) At that time I don't think they were bluffing because they didn't have brigs. They used brute force to run their whole entire army. You either made it or you died. That's about what it boiled down to then. They'd use their shoes on . . . an officer or a corporal or anybody could take a buck private out there and beat him to death, I guess, and they weren't allowed to raise a finger against them. If they did, they'd kill him.

Marcello: I guess this is one of the reasons that you would use to explain why the Japanese in some cases were rough on the Americans. The thing is, the common Japanese soldier was being belted around by his superiors, and, of course, he in turn had somebody lower than him that he could beat around--namely, the American.

Permenter: Well, not at this time. Not until we got to Shanghai and not the guards that we had there in Tientsin. Now on the way to Shanghai we tried to get the colonel to let us take over the train, and it would have been no problem because we was . . . I don't remember . . . we had three or four cars, and there were only a couple of guards, and they were asleep. The rifles were under their seat. We had the rifles holding them for them. They were on our side. We were feeding them and so forth and so on, and it would have been no problem to have taken the train. But we had a bunch of old men in the service, in fact, that was retired. One retired person that I know of retired in China, and they called him back into the service. We had a good many old people there, and the colonel refused to let us, and really he was right because we wouldn't have went no place. Where we were at, we had approximately 900 miles of enemy territory to go through to get back into free territory or what we would call free territory-- back into "Shanghai Check's."

Marcello: Did you have a rather uneventful trip when you went from Tientsin to Shanghai?

Permenter: No, it was pretty smooth because we had the guards from Tientsin with us. But when we got to Shanghai, we knew that things were going to be different because when we got off the train they relieved those guards, and the guards in the camp . . . the Wake Island group of guards were there. We didn't know that until we walked into camp. Several guys got hit and slapped around and so forth on the way out there.

Marcello: Did you personally get hit or slapped in any way?

Permenter: No, I didn't. I seen two or three guys that . . . a guy would walk along with his rifle over his shoulder and swing his rifle that way (gesture) and hit a guy up aside the head with his bayonet or the end of his rifle. They carried fixed bayonets at all times. When we walked into camp, well, I think that's really when everybody's heart really thumped. The Wake Island bunch was there, and, of course, they'd been in battle. We had been feeding ourselves, and we had on overcoats with fur caps. They thought we were a bunch of mad Russians coming in there (chuckle) the way we were dressed.

Marcello: I gather that in the beginning there was a little bit of friction between the Wake Island Marines and the North China Marines?

Permenter: Well, there was because, see, the Japanese had let us keep this sea bag full of clothes, and we had a lot of cigarettes, toilet articles, and so forth, and good clothes in there. Of course, they didn't have anything.

Marcello: Those poor guys, as I recall, had been stripped of everything but their undershorts.

Permenter: Yes, they had.

Marcello: And all their watches and rings and everything had been taken from them.

Permenter: Everything. It was agreed that we were going to give those people . . . most of us had what we called two good uniforms, that is, two summer uniforms, two winter uniforms, plus older uniforms. It was agreed that we were going to give those people one of our uniforms, but it turned out we caught those people selling those uniforms. There was some guys that did give uniforms to them, and they were trading them for food, cigarettes, and so forth, and we quit. We wouldn't do it; we backed down on it because they were giving the uniforms away instead of wearing them. So I held on to everything I had.

Marcello: Now this prison camp was at Woosung.

Permenter: Right.

Marcello: Incidentally, when they marched you from the trains into Woosung, which as I recall . . . I recall the prison camp was on the outside of town, was it not?

Permenter: Right. It was out there . . . it was in the southwest . . . southwest Shanghai.

Marcello: Did they try and humiliate you in any way as they marched you from the trains into the camp?

Permenter: Other than hitting us with rifles and things like that.

Marcello: In other words, were they trying to impress the Chinese who perhaps may have seen you along the way?

Permenter: Yes, I think they were. Yes.

Marcello: Well, describe what the quarters were like here at Woosung.

Permenter: Oh, boy! That's when the bottom fell out--when we walked into that camp and seeing what we did.

Marcello: I gather by this time also you had come to the realization that you were not going to be repatriated.

Permenter: Well, we didn't really know, but that's about the way I felt. Being as they were putting us there, that was just about the end of it until the war was over, if we made it out of there. The camp was in real bad shape; the barracks was in bad shape; the outside grounds was in real bad shape. There was mud ankle deep and knee deep around there and so forth.

This captain got up and made a speech, and he couldn't hardly speak English. He threatened . . . every other word, as best I can remember, was that he was going to shoot us if we done this and we done that and so forth. It was pretty rough there for awhile. We had straw mattresses. You had twelve inches of sleeping room, no fires. It was in the wintertime--cold. Of course, we were still better off . . . in North China they issued us long-handled underwear because it was so cold up there. We had good uniforms, and we were better off than the Wake Island Marines and the Wake Island civilians. There were a lot of civilians in there from Wake Island.

Marcello: What were these barracks like? Were they one-story or two-story barracks?

Permenter: They were one-story, wooden barracks.

Marcello: I gather they crowded about 200 men in each one of these barracks.

Permenter: Oh, yes, more than that. We had 247 in our one barracks, and, of course, they had divided it up into sections. I don't remember how many, but at first we had twelve inches of sleeping room. The way we slept . . . I said we had mattresses. We didn't have to start with; we had cotton blankets.

Of course, we had our own blankets. We had two wool Marine Corps blankets which was real, good, warm blankets. But the way we slept . . . I've forgot how many to a side, but the thing was built up about a foot off the floor. We'd spread these blankets and everybody went to bed and went to bed together, and we laid that whole thing down into one bed. Everybody got in bed at the same time. If anybody turned, everybody had to turn. I mean, one man couldn't turn over because there wasn't enough room in there. So if you went to bed on your side, right side, well, you had to sleep that way all night, or everybody had to turn over on their back, or, more than likely, on the left side.

Marcello: I gather here at Woosung the Japanese issued you four blankets which sounds like a big deal, but they were four very, very thin cotton blankets, were they not?

Permenter: Well, I don't remember them ever issuing me four blankets. They could have; they did issue some, and maybe they did. I don't remember. They issued some blankets all right, but I don't remember the exact number.

Marcello: I gather it was bitter cold over there at this time of the year.

Permenter: Oh, boy, it was damp! In degrees it wasn't so cold, but we were right there on the coast. In fact, where we were at, we were between two rivers and the coast in Shanghai there. Man, it wasn't nothing but dampness there, and it was terrible there, the cold.

Marcello: I gather this camp was surrounded by a special kind of fence, was it not?

Permenter: We had what we called an inner electric fence which was cut off pretty early in the morning, and we had an outer fence that was an electric fence that stayed on all the time. We had several guys there in the camp that got killed on that fence. I believe that two guys of our bunch that got killed on that fence. One guy, I know for sure, got killed because I seen him get killed.

Marcello: How did he get killed? Did he just get careless and brush against it, or was he trying to escape?

Permenter: He got careless, and it was the outer fence, and he started to throw a sack at someone, and he had on these Jap shoes that were hobnailed. Of course, that would ground him out to the ground, but he stumbled and when he did he grabbed the fence. The sparks went out through his feet. Somebody threw

a coat or something and jerked him off of it, but it was too late. The doctors worked on him there for two or three hours, but it was too late. There were several other guys that got killed on it.

Marcello: Did you actually witness this yourself?

Permenter: I did that, yes. I was in a small working detail that he was in.

Marcello: What sort of rules did the Japanese make with regard to that fence? Could you get right up to it, or did you have to stay so far away from the fence?

Permenter: Well, they told us it was hot, and if you wanted to get up there to it, well, if you wanted to get killed, well, just grab it. That's all you had to do. In fact, after they cut that thing off, well, it had what we called static electricity in it. If you grounded yourself out, that darn thing would grab you. It wouldn't kill you, but it would hurt you. If badgers, rabbits, or anything would go under that thing, man, it would fry them just . . . I don't know how many volts they had on that thing but, man, it was loaded! As far as escaping, you could get out of the camp. That wasn't no problem. But where were you going when you got out? You couldn't live off the country out there like you

could here. If you went through somebody's vegetable garden here, you wouldn't hesitate to get a head of lettuce or cabbage or corn or anything. Out there, they use human manure and dilute it with water and spread it on their vegetables. Well, man, that's been going on for thousands of years, and you can imagine how polluted their land is. Any water you drink out there had to be boiled, and in the summertime we had hot water or tea, which was real rough when it gets up to 90° and you're drinking hot tea for water when you're thirsty. But it had to be boiled.

Marcello: Incidentally, what sort of toilet facilities and shower facilities did they provide here at Woosung?

Permenter: Well, we had a shower; we had a wash rack, a long wash rack with just a regular outside spigot on it. It run off down in the ditch and so forth. The toilet was what we called . . . a colonel described it as a "cash and carry." It was a big wash pot, stall, and a hole cut in the floor, and that's where you went to the toilet. And about once a week they'd let the Chinese come in and empty these out. They'd issue us so much toilet paper per week, but (chuckle), boy, it was so rotten you had to watch when you used it (chuckle).

Marcello: How often were you able to take a bath here at Woosung?

Permenter: Well, in the summertime when you could use cold water, you could take one every day. But in the wintertime they rationed it out. You were allowed one bucket or I believe it was a bucket of warm water to soap up, and you were allowed one bucket of water to rinse with on that.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that they had two electric fences around this camp, and that during the day they turned one of them off. What was the purpose of doing this?

Permenter: Well, they had one what we called the outer fence. This extended several hundred feet out from the barracks, or it was from the barracks. And the inner fence was just the barracks itself. Now that didn't include the kitchen and where they cooked rice and stuff. They'd let the cooks out each morning, and two of them would go over to the kitchen, and they done the cooking. Now just before the rice and so forth was cooked, well, they cut the electricity off and opened the gate to the inner fence on that. And we'd go out then, but we still had the outer fence.

Marcello: What did the standard meal consist of here at Woosung?

Permenter: Rice and boiled vegetables was the most frequent.

Marcello: How about liquids? You mentioned tea awhile ago.
I assume this was the standard beverage.

Permenter: Well, that's the only thing we'd ever get; that
was the standard liquid--tea.

Marcello: Were these vegetables that the Japanese provided,
or were you allowed to grow your own vegetables
here at Woosung?

Permenter: I don't remember the first year, but we had about
twenty-five acres. At Woosung, we changed camps
once there in Shanghai. At the first camp we didn't
have a vegetable garden.

Marcello: This was at Woosung?

Permenter: Right. That was the first camp; we didn't have a
vegetable garden. I don't remember what year it
was--it was '42 or '43--but we changed barracks,
and we did have a vegetable garden then. If I
recollect right, it was about twenty-five acres,
and we grew some food.

Marcello: But this was not at Woosung?

Permenter: Not at Woosung, no.

Marcello: How about Red Cross supplies? Did you receive any
of those while you were at Woosung?

Permenter: Yes, but I don't remember how long . . . now Mr.
Eckols was the Swiss consul there in Shanghai. He

was the International Red Cross representative there in Shanghai. To the best of my knowledge it was about a year before he got in there, before the Japanese would let him in there. The American government and other governments, I guess, was raising Cain with the Japanese. And we were lucky. In fact, I don't think he was allowed in Woosung at all. I think it was the second camp we was in that they finally let him in. We were lucky in this respect, that they made this a model camp. They would let him in, oh, I'd say, once every six months to see the colonel, and he'd walk through, and that was all he was allowed. We were allowed two trucks. I called it a "bob-tailed truck." It was a short, six-wheeled truck. We were allowed two trucks a month, but you've got to remember we had 1,500 people in that camp. Now later on, about '44, we received some Red Cross boxes from the United States. I don't remember anybody . . . once they unpacked that . . . if you unpacked it and poured it out, you could never get it back in there. We never did figure out how they packed those things. They was really compact.

Marcello: All this came later.

Permenter: This came later, yes.

Marcello: The model camp that you were talking about was not Woosung.

Permenter: It was not Woosung. It was the second camp. I don't remember the name of that, but it was between two airports.

Marcello: Getting back to the food again, I gather that the rice that you received was not always of the best quality either.

Permenter: No, it wasn't. A lot of it was moldy.

Marcello: It had pebbles in it sometimes, too, did it not?

Permenter: Pebbles, musty. Now the first year we did get plenty of rice and plenty of vegetables. Of course, that was with no seasoning. Occasionally, they would issue a little salt. But then they started cutting our rations, and before we left Shanghai they'd cut our rations 68 per cent. That's what I was told. I know it was getting pretty . . . in fact, the Red Cross sent in mostly cracked wheat. That's about the only thing you could buy. They got a few clothes in. They fed us breakfast; in fact, they offered to feed us period, take complete charge of the camp and feed us and clothe us. But the Japanese wouldn't do it. Of course, by that time

we knew that they would never let very much stuff in there because we knew the standards of living that the Japanese had, and they were not going to let us live higher than their own soldiers. They couldn't afford to.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you feel that you were receiving as much as a Japanese soldier at this time, or do you feel that he was getting more rice, for example, than you were?

Permenter: I think to start with we were probably getting the same rations, but it was prepared different. Where he was getting a little seasoning in his, we were not.

Marcello: How about meat?

Permenter: Occasionally, we got a little meat. But I'll tell you what the cook said it was. And I'd never heard of it up until that time because I'd never worked around a slaughterhouse, but they called it tankage, or it was called tankage here in the United States. In other words, it was a part of a cow, hog, so forth that was cut off, trimmed off, and sold to hog farmers and so forth like that. Occasionally, we get a little fish, but very little.

Marcello: Did you ever have any ways to supplement your diet at Woosung?

Permenter: Well, there were a few dealers, and they had a PX there, and occasionally you could buy a few bars of candy or some peanut butter, but that was about all.

Marcello: This was in Woosung? What I'm leading to, was this camp operated by the Japanese?

Permenter: Yes. Well, no. They turned it over to Americans, but there was never enough to go around. They'd just allow so much stuff. Now there was a few people that was dealing with the Japanese for cigarettes and stuff like that. Of course, that was strictly a black market on the Japanese side. The soldiers were dealing with some of the cooks or something like that.

Marcello: What were the guards like, generally speaking, here at Woosung?

Permenter: Well, they were pretty rough to start with.

Marcello: In what ways?

Permenter: Well, you see, they believed in mass punishment. Of course, they worshiped the emperor as a god, and every Saturday morning, I believe, they'd bring what they called the Imperial Rescript out. Of

course, they couldn't look down on the emperor, and they'd bring this thing out and hold it up or something. One Jap would read it, and the troops would holler banzai and so forth on that. Now getting back to this discipline, see, they didn't have brigs like we had. They didn't have court martials and stuff like that. They'd run their army by brute force, and that's the way they believed in running us. The worst punishment I ever got in my life was while I was in camp in March of the first year--1942. Somebody threw a piece of wire on the fence to see what would happen. If anything run into that fence, it would set off an alarm at the guardhouse. A rabbit or a badger or anything would go under it it would kill him. It would set off an alarm. Well, they'd had to send their guards running to see where it was at. Well, some guy threw a piece of wire on that fence and shorted it out and set the alarm off. Well, here come all the guards. Well, we got away with it. I don't know what happened the second time. I think it made them mad, and they just made up a story, but it turned out that we stood at attention for seven hours in the cold March rain that day.

A lot of guys passed out. I didn't, but . . . well, couldn't anybody walk when they got through with us. In fact, a fellow by the name of Bennett . . . they said they was going to keep us there until who had done it admitted it. He told them he done it, but he didn't do it. They locked him up with, I don't know, three or four guys. They let the rest of us go, but he didn't do that. He just volunteered.

Marcello: What did they do to Bennett when they locked him up?

Permenter: Well, it was my understanding that they beat up on him when they got him in the guardhouse. Now they did build a guardhouse for us, and they would lock us up on anything like that. They beat him up pretty bad. You didn't have to do very much to get hit over the head with a rifle. We had two or three guys that got shot there or got bayoneted or this, that, and the other and so forth. In fact, it didn't take very much to set some of those guards off.

Marcello: What would especially irritate them?

Permenter: Well, one thing was passing one and not saluting him or bowing to him. Of course, an American, you'd bow to somebody. Later on we found out bowing to them is just an act of courtesy, no more than you and I shaking hands or something like that. But we

didn't know that right at that time. You either had to salute them or bow to them, and that was a pretty hard thing for an American to take--to bow to a Japanese. But you'd do it or get the devil beat out of you--one of the two. And you had to do it in the correct way, or they'd get on you about it--slap you around or kick you around or something like that. There in Shanghai we were working out there at that rifle range. Of course, we tore up a lot of stuff every chance we'd get.

Marcello: We'll talk about that in a minute. I want to keep these things in order. Do you remember a Japanese soldier at Woosung who was referred to as the "Beast of the East"--an interpreter--Ishihara?

Permenter: Ishihara--he got twenty-five years after the war was over. That was twenty-five years hard labor.

Marcello: What did he do to deserve such a nickname as the "Beast of the East?"

Permenter: Oh, Lord, you name it, he done it! Boy, he was. He was an interpreter . . . I guess you heard about "Mortimer Snerd," the other interpreter.

Marcello: I've heard the name, but we'll talk about him after we talk about Ishihara.

Permenter: Ishihara--I'd say he about half way run the camp, and he could speak fairly good English. I don't

know why, but, boy, he was really down on Americans here.

Marcello: What were some of the things he would do to Americans?

Permenter: Anything--you name it, he'd do it! (Chuckle) But mostly, he'd get them talking, and they'd get him mad, and then he'd beat the devil out of them. So people learned better not to . . . in other words, stay away from him.

Marcello: Who were some of the other guards that kind of stand out in your mind? You mentioned "Mortimer Snerd," for example.

Permenter: Well, that was Charlie McCarthy's . . . is that who it was? The country cousin. That Edgar Bergen had one of these wooden dummies. Boy, he was ugly! And he did, he looked just like him. And somebody told him . . . he wanted to know why they was calling him "Mortimer Snerd," and they said, "Well, he's a big movie star." Of course, really, he was! (Chuckle) They got in some magazines out of Shanghai; I believe they were Life or Look or something. Somebody was working in an office up there, and they run across his picture, and they knew the gig was up. They passed the word, and "Mortimer Snerd" got him a . . . he had a riding quirt. Is that what you call them? He walked around for two or three days

waiting for somebody to call him "Mortimer Snerd."

(Chuckle) Nobody ever would call him "Mortimer Snerd" after that.

Marcello: I understand there was another guard named "Tiny Tim."
Do you remember him?

Permenter: Yes, I sure do. He was one of these guys who was supposed to have been wounded in battle. But he was just a big smart aleck.

Marcello: I understand that some of his favorite threats were to run the POW's through surprise drills and inspections and things of that nature.

Permenter: Yes, boy, he was full of tricks.

Marcello: I think what we have to keep in mind here is that the Japanese were not going to put their best soldiers in charge of these prisoner-of-war camps. The best soldiers were out fighting probably. I would assume in many cases these guys were "eightballs" who were running these camps or that were the guards in these camps. It couldn't have been the most pleasant duty in the world for these guys.

Permenter: No, I don't figure it was. No, that's probably true there. Now we had what we called "G-1" and "G-2." I never knew to three or four years ago what "G-1" and "G-2" was in the Japanese Army.

And we had two of them in there. One of them was a halfway decent person, and the other one was pretty rotten.

Marcello: These were nicknames you had for these guys--"G-1" and "G-2?"

Permenter: Yes, they were a special, elite force. I read it in some article. What it was was a real controlling power in Japan of the factories, munitions, and so forth, and the emperor's family and this, that, and the other. They had their own elite group. The emperor had his own private army is what it really was. But they spied on the regular army and reported to nobody but the emperor, according to this article. And that's what "G-1" and "G-2" were. They didn't go to the front line, but they spied on the rest of the army and reported to the emperor. They were better educated and everything--you could tell that by being around them--than the average Japanese was.

Marcello: Did they try to stand out? Were they conspicuous?

Permenter: Yes, most of them was.

Marcello: In other words, the Japanese soldiers themselves knew what the jobs of these guys were?

Permenter: I imagine they did because as a rule they took orders from them, although I don't remember of them

having any special . . . it must have been a special rank because they didn't wear any insignias or anything.

Marcello: I gather that the first camp commandant, a man by the name of Colonel Yuse, died in the fall of '42, did he not? What do you remember about Colonel Yuse?

Permenter: Well, he was about four feet high, and his boots came up to his knees or just past them. I never will forget when he died. We got some peanuts. When they die . . . they had an old model-T to come in and get his body. I never will forget that. They lined up there and us up there and so forth when he left. When the Japanese die, they bury so much food with them. This is my understanding. Anyway, they passed out a three-quarter or maybe a teacupful of peanuts. We were beginning to get pretty hungry at that time, but they were eaten up by the weevils so bad that everybody just sat up and waited until they turned the lights out that night and eat them where they couldn't see the weevils. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I understand that Colonel Yuse was replaced then by Colonel Otera. He was referred to as "Handlebar Hank," as I recall, by the troops. Do you remember him?

Permenter: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Apparently, he was a chronic drunk, and I gather he didn't pay too much attention actually to running the camp.

Permenter: I don't think he did. I think he was . . . it seems to me like he was a retired lawyer or something, and they had recruited him back in as a reserve--some kind of a reserve force. They made a colonel out of him and put him in charge of our camp and so forth. He was pretty stubborn sometimes, I'll tell you, on a lot of things. For instance, we got some Red Cross boxes one month. Our colonel and major . . . Colonel Ashurst and Major Brown were pretty smart. Major Devereux was in charge of the Wake Island Marines. He was a big horse's rear end, as far as I was concerned. Of course, our colonel outranked Major Devereux, and this colonel wouldn't talk to a major. Major Brown went up and asked him when we were going to pass out Red Cross boxes. I don't know what his answer was, but they went back and tried to figure out what was wrong, why this Japanese colonel wouldn't pass those Red Cross boxes out. As I understood it, it was because it was the major asking instead of our colonel.

So sometime later on in the day, the colonel went up and asked him and he gave him . . . he said, "Okay, you can have those Red Cross boxes." It was a matter of . . . I don't know how they looked at it, but it was a major asking a colonel when we had a full colonel there. I don't think he'd have ever given them to us if our colonel hadn't went and asked him.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had no love for Major Devereux awhile ago. Why was that?

Permenter: Well, he was just a horse's butt in general is all I can say. (Chuckle) His own group didn't even like him.

Marcello: Was there anything specifically that you recall that he did that gave him this particular reputation?

Permenter: Oh, I think he wanted to be camp commander, that is, as far as the Americans were concerned. Of course, that don't go when you've got a full colonel, and the colonel finally got control of things and let him know who was going to run things there in camp as far as we were concerned.

Marcello: Incidentally, another one of the guards at Woosung was one nicknamed "Popeye." Do you recall him? I gather he treated the prisoners rather humanely.

Permenter: I don't remember him, but we had a "Doctor Shindu" there. He was Japanese, and he was real good. He acted as camp commander there for awhile, and I do know that he gave orders that no guard was to touch any American. He was a lieutenant, and he was all right. There wasn't anything wrong with him.

Marcello: Now, his name was Shindu.

Permenter: As best as I can remember. And we used to have to count off in Japanese at night when they'd have roll call in the morning. Boy, that was something else. Ichi, ni, san, shi, go, roku. That's about as far as I can remember now.

Marcello: And I assume that if anybody fouled up the counting, you had to start all over again.

Permenter: Start all over again on that, and, man, when we first started out, it was something else learning how to count in Japanese. But later on, the longer you'd stay around them you'd pick up enough Japanese that you could tell exactly what they were talking about. You knew when to get out of there or when to hang around. We run into a guard once that was raised in the United States. We were up on the . . . this was in the second camp in Shanghai. We were at the Shanghai race course. He was a corporal. We were

burying gasoline out there. We'd dig a hole big enough for these sixty-gallon drums to go in. At that time we were getting a little, real small loaf of bread about so big (gesture) at night instead of a bowl of rice. I don't know if somebody saved a loaf or something, and he seen it, and he said it'd been a long time since he'd had any bread. He could speak real good Japanese.

Marcello: What was the camp routine like at Woosung? In other words, what time did you get up in the morning? What did you do throughout the day? What exactly was the camp routine like?

Permenter: Oh, I don't remember the exact time we got up. It must have been around six o'clock in the morning-- 5:30 or 6:00. They had roll call, then breakfast, if you could call it breakfast. Then a short time after that, we fell out for a work detail. At the first camp we worked within the camp mostly.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do?

Permenter: Hauling dirt and stuff like that. We had I don't know how many acres out there where there was a big ravine going through that thing, and we filled that in and leveled it off. It really was improvement of the camp--digging drainage ditches around, bridges

where we could cross, and building walks and so forth like that. About the only thing we had to do it with was a few shovels and picks and "yahoo" poles with a sack on it to carry it with.

Marcello: I would assume that a lot of this work was slipshod, too, was it not? You tried to sabotage the work as much as possible.

Permenter: Well, especially after we got out at Mount Fuji.

Marcello: Yes, we'll talk about that in a minute, but I think that there was also some sabotage that went on with some of these road projects and so on.

Permenter: Well, that's right.

Marcello: Slow downs and things of that nature.

Permenter: You'd do anything you could to slow it down or to foul it up or make it last as long as you could and so forth on that. You'd never cooperate 100 per cent with them.

Marcello: In fact, I believe that things got so bad on one of those road projects that the Japanese finally had to abandon it. They were simply getting no work at all out of the prisoners. Maybe you don't recall that particular incident.

Permenter: No.

Marcello: How long did a work day last?

Permenter: Well that depended on the Japanese. If they'd just lost a big battle, it might last from daylight till after dark. The first year wasn't too bad. Of course, they were winning the first year. They were just taking one little island right after another one and so forth. But in about the latter part of '43, that's when it started really getting rough then. They started losing, and we could always tell when they'd lose. Of course, they'd come out in their papers with this, that, and the other and tell us they'd won a big sea battle. They sunk our fleet at least two or three times a year. Man, we began to think that thing was made out of rubber, and they just refloated it that fast—the way they'd sunk it! Incidentally, our group had a radio that they had torn down, and I knew about it. I knew it was in use someplace, but I kept my mouth shut and didn't ask any questions.

Marcello: In other words, they would tear down the radio, distribute the parts among several people, and then at specified times they'd put it together.

Permenter: Right. The Japanese couldn't recognize a radio tube. In other words, they could see a radio tube laying here and a part of a chasis laying over there, and

they couldn't put the two together. Every so often they would reassemble that thing and pick up Chungking on news broadcasts, and I knew it was coming from someplace, but finally I asked my bunkie. He was what we called a "dog robber." That's where I missed the boat when I first got to camp, and he tried to get me to be a "dog robber." In other words, it was cleaning an officer's room and washing his uniforms, and I said, "No deal!" I said, "There ain't no way I'm going to be a 'dog robber.'" Well, I missed the boat right there.

Marcello: Why?

Permenter: Because when things really got rough, they were allowed to stay in, while the other people were out working ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day, and you stayed in and done almost nothing. He could rob or steal from officers, steal his rice and his food. (Chuckle) My bunkie worked for one, and finally after the latter part of '44 or early part of '45, he finally worked me in, but it was getting pretty late at that time. I was Doctor Theissen's. The other boy got to doping off, and he finally worked me in.

Marcello: So how long did a work day last?

Permenter: Well, that depended. It depended on how the Japanese felt. It might last eight hours; it might last ten; it might last fourteen hours.

Marcello: What recreation did the Japanese provide for you, or what recreation did you make for yourself? Or were you worked so hard that you didn't really have time or energy for recreation?

Permenter: No, there at last we were. I'd say the first couple of years . . . the civilians in Shanghai sent a complete library. I won't say complete, but there were several hundred books. You've got to remember at Shanghai there were a lot of Americans and British there. We had Americans, British, and Italians in our camp, and they sent these books in. They sent a lot of other things in--athletic equipment and so forth--that they contributed to the camp. The Japanese let it in. We had some basketballs, and people played it. I never did play any of it. I read mostly to try to save energy I guess. But it was a pretty good library.

, Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the Italians were in this camp. Weren't the Japanese and the Italians allies of sorts? At least the Germans and Italians were in Europe.

Permenter: Well, now this was after Italy fell.

Marcello: I see.

Permenter: And they formed another government, and the Italian consul-general in Shanghai, wouldn't go in with the Japanese. That's where this Count Verde comes in at. We had the captain in our camp and the crew. That was the Italians there. Now they scuttled this ship. They didn't want the Japanese to get it. They sent the crew ashore, except officers. They swung this thing across the river and scuttled it. It was my understanding that the Japanese wanted this ship so bad . . . this was in the latter part of '44 if I remember right. They got busy, got this thing into dry dock. The Americans knew about it, that is, Chiang Kai-shek knew about it, and they had the American air force back in there. They got this thing into dry dock, got it all propped up, and were working on it, and the Americans came over and knocked the props out, and it went back in the river and sunk. They just pulled it right back into dry dock and was repairing it, and they knocked the props out of it, and it went back in the river and sunk. And so the tale goes that they slipped up, and they had it repaired

and was going up the river, going out to sea for a trial run, when they caught it and sunk it again. They got lucky and sunk it. And at the end, or when we left Shanghai, it was still in the river, they said.

Marcello: Did you ever resent the fact that you had to work and officers did not have to work?

Permenter: Yes, I think I did--especially the younger officers. I didn't feel like they was any better than I was. Now the older officers, older men, I could see it, you know, on light duty details and so forth. But I did resent the fact that they'd let them stay in, and they'd take us out and work the devil out of us.

Marcello: Did the Japanese ever try and force the prisoners to learn Japanese, to attend classes in Japanese? Did they ever set up classes? I know they did this for the officers, and I was wondering if they included the enlisted men in it.

Permenter: Not that I know of.

Marcello: Awhile ago we mentioned Red Cross boxes, and I think you did get one or two while you were at Woosung. Had the Japanese looted those boxes?

Permenter: Well, put it this way. The box that I got, they hadn't tore into, but you had to give them a cut

of everything that come in, or you didn't get any of it. Either you'd give them some of it, or you just didn't get it. That was all there was to it.

Marcello: Awhile ago you also mentioned that you received some outside news over this radio, and as a result you could more or less keep up with the course of the war. During your stay at Woosung, did you ever have the opportunity to write home?

Permenter: Yes, it was about six or eight months before we were allowed to write a card.

Marcello: Was this one of those standard Japanese cards?

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: This was the one that had on there . . . it was like a multiple choice test, was it not? My health is "good," "fair," "poor," or something like that.

Permenter: Something like that.

Marcello: And if you didn't encircle "good," the card didn't go through.

Permenter: I remember . . . my sister lives across the street now. The way I got a message to her how bad things were, we got a Red Cross box just before Christmas, and the way I put it to here, that Red Cross box was just like the first red wagon I ever got in my life. She knew what I meant on that.

Marcello: I gather those Red Cross boxes were life savers.

Permenter: Oh, you'd better know it, they were!

Marcello: What did they contain?

Permenter: Oh, they'd have a pound of butter in them as a rule, a pound of powdered milk. They'd have a pound of lunch meat; they'd have a candy bar in there, a baker's candy bar. I never will forget that. This candy bar was a concentrate. It had twelve squares to it. There was a thousand calories in each square. I ate one of them whole things one night, and I lay awake all night long burning up with energy--12,000 calories at one time. I couldn't close an eye all night.

Marcello: I gather that those Red Cross packages also contained cigarettes, and even though it's hard to imagine, some prisoners actually traded food for cigarettes.

Permenter: You know, that's something. I'm a real heavy smoker, but not once, never, did I swap any food for cigarettes. I done without cigarettes, but never did I swap my food for cigarettes. I always kept what I got and smoked them, but that's one thing I never did do. There was a pound of canned lunch meat, a pound of cheese. Incidentally, this is not a plug for Kraft, but we had, as best I can remember,

three brands of cheese in pound boxes. Kraft held up better than anybody's. Some of them would be a solid mold. Now these Red Cross boxes would come through Africa and sit down in Africa for several months out in the sun. Kraft's sometimes would have maybe one little corner that was molded, but the other two brands, Borden's and Sheffield's . . . is there a Sheffield cheese, or used to be?

Marcello: Might be.

Permenter: Well, they, as a rule, were spoiled or molded completely throughout, but Kraft's as a rule, was good and helped us.

Marcello: Did you ever resort to eating dogs, cats--anything else like that?

Permenter: I never did, no, because this bunkie of mine was feeding me from this officer over there. How we got acquainted, when the PX sold out, I had bought some pipe tobacco. I had several cartons of cigarettes and two or three pound-cans of pipe tobacco. Why I had that pipe tobacco, I don't know. I didn't smoke pipe tobacco except that it was just that it was so cheap, or maybe somebody had given it to me. I don't know. He smoked a pipe, and he

didn't have any. We finally buddied up with one another. He was staying in during the day, and I was out on working detail. He was in our section most of the time, and I told him to keep an eye on our things. I told him to use that pipe tobacco up there, and that's how we got to be buddies. As a result, he got to feeding me, and he'd steal rice from these officers and give me an extra ration. I done pretty good there for awhile.

Marcello: Incidentally, I would gather that as time went on food was more constantly on the prisoners' minds than anything else.

Permenter: That's right. See, the first year we got plenty of rice and vegetables. Then they began to cut us. Every month or two they'd cut us.

Marcello: As things started to get worse in Japan.

Permenter: Right. That's right. They started cutting us. At the war's end, I would say I was down to a hundred pounds anyway, and I weighed 165 pounds before the war. When we got to Japan. . . if the war hadn't ended, we wouldn't have lasted through the winter. Our food was just that scarce up there.

Marcello: Things eventually got that bad.

Permenter: Oh, man, I mean they got rough in Japan!

Marcello: Well, we'll talk about that later. Getting back to military discipline once again, I think you were also required to salute the American officers, also. Is that correct? Wasn't discipline maintained between the American officers and enlisted men too?

Permenter: I think it was there for about the first year as best as I can recollect? They required us to salute our officers up until that time. Then it was knocked off, but we did continue to salute our colonel. We didn't the rest of the officers, but we would a colonel. I mean, we had that much respect for him, but the rest of the officers we didn't.

Marcello: Incidentally, what were your thoughts concerning the outcome of the war? I'm speaking now of your tenure during this first year of the war at Woosung. Did you think that the United States was eventually going to win? Had you given up hope? Well, obviously, you hadn't given up hope or you'd still be over there, I guess. The ones that gave up are still over there.

Permenter: Right. That's one thing that we had—that when things began to get real rough, you had that one hope. Of course, now we'd live high there in North China before the war. We had lived real good. You

had that one hope that you knew that there was a better life on the other side once that war ended. You had that one hope to live for. That's what kept the majority of us alive. Two or three of the guys gave up there in camp and died. That's a pitiful sight to see somebody give up. Well, we had a guy by the name of O'Rourke in our section that gave up, and he died. But that hope was always there that that war . . . and all you had to do was to beat the game there and live through it, and you had it made. And the majority of us beat it.

Marcello: How many days did you live at a time? Did you live from week to week, from day to day, or from month to month?

Permenter: Oh, from day to day--just make this day and hope that you could make the next one. And food was constantly on your mind, and, of course, the more you thought of food the hungrier you'd get.

Marcello: And I gather that in some instances the minds of the prisoners played tricks on them to the extent that they could actually smell a particular type of food cooking or something like that. I had one prisoner, for example, tell me that he swears he could smell bacon and eggs.

Permenter: I don't doubt it a bit in the world because until a person goes through that, they don't realize just how hungry a person can really get and still survive . . . and put in a big day's work and still go on. But that one thing was always there--that hope and getting back home--because we knew what we were coming back to. Now the Japanese didn't have anything to lose. They had everything to gain. But all we had to do was survive that, and we knew that there'd be a good life after we got back here. We had money riding on the books, and we had it made. You just had to outlive it.

Marcello: Incidentally, after you got the Red Cross packages, did you eat that food slowly? In other words, did you stretch it out as far as it would go, or did you gobble it up right away?

Permenter: Well, sometimes you'd gobble it up as fast as you could, and you'd get sick. You'd get too much grease, for instance. You'd get a pound of canned lunch meat or maybe a pound can of corned beef, and you could mix that in with that bowl of rice. Man, you'd get sicker than a horse eating it. We'd get a pound box of cube sugar. Now my bunkie, a guy named Timpony, was sugar crazy, or sweet crazy, and as a rule I'd give him my sweets. So you've got

to remember he stole from these officers and fed me-- give me this rice when he could. Any sweet stuff I'd give to him. I didn't crave sweets; I just craved food period. But he craved sweets all the time. I just wanted food period. Well, for instance, that night I ate that chocolate bar and lay awake all night, I mean . . . now that wasn't a sweet chocolate. That's not like a Mr. Goodbar or a Hershey Bar or anything like that. It was a real harsh chocolate bar. Man, you could get sick on that stuff, but it sure was good. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You mentioned that your bunkie would steal food from the officers. How great a problem was stealing in general in the camp?

Permenter: Well, there really wasn't anything to steal. I mean, the Japanese, they had everything under lock and key, and they issued the rice and the vegetables just before each meal. There really wasn't . . . unless you got out in the country and got in a bean patch or corn patch or something like that to fill your pockets full. You would steal anything you could from the Japanese.

Marcello: How much stealing was there among the prisoners? Are there any cases of one prisoner stealing from another prisoner?

Permenter: In our group, so far as I know it, very little. Now the other group, I understand, was pretty bad. I can't remember ever losing anything.

Marcello: By the "other group," are you referring to the Wake Island Marines?

Permenter: Wake Island Marines. Now we also had some Merchant Marines in there. Their ship had been sunk, and the Japanese brought a crew in there. We had some British from Hong Kong. But as a rule we had some older people. For instance, we had a sergeant major in there, Dutch Miller, in our section. He was in our section. Of course, that'd keep stealing down. What we called "dog robbers," they were in and out. That would keep the stealing down. You might have somebody in sick in your section that would keep it down. I don't remember ever losing anything.

Marcello: Now by the end of the first year of the war, or by the end of the first year of your captivity, was it more or less every man for himself, or did maybe two or three guys form a clique and look out for one another?

Permenter: Well, that's true. Like me and this guy, we buddied up, and you looked after one another. A lot of times I'd come in here on a cold day. He'd have me a bucket

of warm water there, and maybe he'd been able to swipe it some way from the Japanese, or this bowl of rice, extra rice, or something like that. Or maybe he'd do my wash for me. In turn, I'd do him the same way. You slept together; you shared your blankets; you shared your food; you shared whatever you had. Whatever I had it was his; whatever he had was mine. If he got sick, I looked after him. If I got sick, he looked after me--stuff like that. And in some cases there were three or four people that would do that. In some cases a guy was an individual. T. G. Crews was like that. I could get along with him. He was in another section. I could get along with him, I think, because we were both from Dallas, but a lot . . . most people couldn't get along with him.

Marcello: For what reason?

Permenter: Well, he had a pretty short temper, and he'd scrap with just about anything that would walk. I'll put it that way! (Chuckle) And some other guys in our section was that way. Hank Stowers, he was a real easy guy to get along with. Food got so short that me and a guy from Chicago had to pass the food out there on that. Stirred it up and passed it out and divided it out. Our side elected a man; the other side

elected him. We had to oversee and divide it out.
Now that was getting on down into the latter part of
'43 and into '44.

Marcello: Well, generally speaking, up to this stage you really
hadn't been worked too hard.

Permenter: Not until we got to Mount Fuji. That's when the
bottom fell out.

Marcello: All right, in December of 1942 is when you were moved
from Woosung to another camp called Kiang Wang.

Permenter: 1942?

Marcello: December of 1942, it was--the end of '42.

Permenter: It might have been in '42.

Marcello: This is when you went on the so-called "Mount Fuji
Project."

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: How did you get from Woosung to the Mount Fuji Project?

Permenter: We walked.

Marcello: And I think this is a distance of about five miles,
wasn't it--around five miles?

Permenter: I'd say around five miles there and back on that. Yes,
we walked out there.

Marcello: I don't know if you recall this incident or not, but
apparently on this march from Woosung to Mount Fuji

a guerrilla sniper shot one of the Japanese guards.

Do you remember this particular incident?

Permenter: No, I don't remember the incident. See, you might have eight or ten details of men two or three hundred . . . maybe our barracks might be separated maybe two or three hundred yards. Now I seen a Chinese woman stomped to death one day out there. It was a Chinese missionary that was passing out hand pamphlets as we went over a bridge. But they'd warned her away, the guards had, from there. She refused to listen to them, and one of the guards stomped her to death. I don't remember a sniper, but it could have happened. It would have been in another work detail maybe behind me or in front of me. See, we might all be in one group and go in together at one time, or we might be strung out there. Now this Mount Fuji Project, that's where we tore up so much equipment out there.

Marcello: Well, let's talk about the Mount Fuji Project. Apparently, this camp was a real hellhole. That's about the only way to describe it.

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: And it involved mainly working on this Mount Fuji Project. Now what exactly was it?

Permenter: It was a big rifle range when it ended up.

Marcello: Now they didn't tell you it was going to be a rifle range, or did they?

Permenter: No, no.

Marcello: What did they tell you it was going to be?

Permenter: Well, they just told us it was going . . . I don't remember really what they told us. They said it was going to be Mount Fuji, and that's all I ever really knew till there at last. It turned out to be a big rifle range on that.

Marcello: You had to put in pretty long hours on this job, did you not?

Permenter: Oh, boy, some of those days That's when they started losing the war—in 1943 and '44 especially, when they really started losing it. Those fighter planes would come into Shanghai and got those bombers operating against our fleet in those islands out there. Well, man, it wasn't anything for us to put in a fourteen-hour day. They'd come out there and say, "Okay, our men are all dying up at the front, so we're going to have a 'front day.'" We had so many loads of dirt on this narrow gauge railroad track that we pushed up. They might add twenty-five or thirty loads to us.

Marcello: Under normal circumstances did they have a certain quota that you had to meet every day?

Permenter: Yes, yes.

Marcello: And as I gather, in the beginning, at least, you would meet your quota rather early, and then they would increase the quota.

Permenter: That's right. We got wise to that, and later on we got . . . see, we had maybe ten or twelve of those tracks going up this mountain--so many men to a car. Me and Sparkman worked on a car and two or three others. These little groups were always trying to stick together. This thing was, I guess, fifty foot high, and you'd start going up a steep incline like that with two or three yards of dirt. We got wise, and on the last car, we'd look around, and if there wasn't no Japanese showing, whoever was on the last car, they'd let that thing go back down that railroad track. Or maybe the first one up there, he'd get up first. He'd turn that car loose, and here that thing would come. Well, couldn't nobody stay around because when it hit, it was going to tear up everything on that track. We had a . . . first group of shovels we had. Boy, they were terrible! We broke every handle they had just to get rid of them. Well, we finally got some decent shovels to work with;

it was strictly just pick-and-shovel manual labor.

Marcello: Did they ever do anything to you when you broke the shovels and things like that? Surely, they knew it was deliberate.

Permenter: Well, it was so much of it that if they started getting rough on one gang, well, somebody else would cut loose on the other side over there and tear up a bunch of stuff. And we kept them stirred up so much around there till they didn't know really what was going on.
(Chuckle)

Marcello: I gather your old buddy Ishihara moved right along with you into this camp, did he not?

Permenter: He stayed with us right up until the bitter end, or at least to Korea.

Marcello: Now, I gather he was in charge of this work detail, was he not--the Mount Fuji Project?

Permenter: Well, he acted like he was in charge of everything at all times.

Marcello: In looking at my notes here, I understand the Japanese told you you were building a park.

Permenter: They may have.

Marcello: And it turned out to be a rifle range, of course, later on.

Permenter: Yes, that was strictly against international law.

Marcello: What sort of pay did you get?

Permenter: Oh, you couldn't ever tell. One month you might get a couple of dollars. The next month you might get a dollar and a half, and the next month you might get three dollars. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Did they pay you in kind sometimes, also?

Permenter: In what?

Marcello: In kind? If you worked so long, perhaps, did they give you cigarettes or a small loaf of bread or something of that nature? You never saw anything like that?

Permenter: Oh, sometimes they'd give us a couple of cigarettes, extra cigarettes, or something another like that. I don't ever remember receiving any extra food. We could have, but I don't remember any.

Marcello: I understand that at this Mount Fuji Project there were also some black market activities that went on.

Permenter: Yes, we had some Chinese out there. It went on for quite awhile, and they finally broke that up.

Marcello: What sort of black market activities were they?

Permenter: Oh, you could sell a wristwatch, that is, a gold-plated wristwatch and so forth and so on. In fact, I sold one out there.

Marcello: In other words, you would sell it for money, or you would sell it for food or . . .

Permenter: Money mostly.

Marcello: And then you would take the money to buy food from the Japanese or something of that nature?

Permenter: Yes. Truck drivers . . . see, I think we had three trucks there in camp. Those drivers were always going into town or out on details, and we'd deal with them.

Marcello: Well, I gather also that Ishihara was in on this black market activity, and then eventually he demanded a bigger cut than the prisoners were willing to pay and that he apparently squealed to the camp officials. Like you pointed out, this black market activity was broken up eventually.

Permenter: Well, it was broke up. I don't know who was responsible, if he was the one that broke it up or not, but I'm pretty sure that if there was anything going on, well, he was in on it.

Marcello: Well, I gather also that by the summer of 1943 this Mount Fuji Project was beginning to break the prisoners' health. What were some of the types of ailments and so on that were prevalent in the camp?

Permenter: In '43?

Marcello: Yes, let's say by the summer of '43.

Permenter: I don't know about '43. Maybe the latter part of '43 and into '44 a lot of people began to have . . . well, now diarrhea out there was one of the worst things that we had. There was no medicine. Charcoal was about the only thing that they had. Now they did get a little medicine in--I don't remember what year--maybe the latter part of '43 or '44. But really there was very little medicine then. If you got diarrhea, well, if you didn't get it stopped real fast, it'd turn into something else and kill you in a very short time.

Marcello: In other words, you would get dysentery.

Permenter: Dysentery. And that charcoal was about the only thing they had to give you.

Marcello: What sort of medical facilities did you have in either one of these camps--either at Woosung or at the Mount Fuji Project?

Permenter: Well, we had our own hospital, but they didn't have anything to do for you even if you were sick.

Marcello: There were simply no medicines available.

Permenter: There was no medicine available. I'll tell you why I know. After I got to be a "dog robber" in '44 . . . of course, I was Dr. Theissen's "dog robber." He and the colonel called me. He had his own little private

room and the colonel had his, and he was right next to the colonel. He called me in there one day, and I never will forget it. There were several cigarette cases. I didn't know it, but they had pulled a check on me to see if I'd been dealing . . . now we had people in there that was traitors. In fact, Mark Streeter got a bad conduct discharge from the Marine Corps way back yonder before the war, and he was one of the twenty most wanted men in Japan. They had moved him to Japan. He was writing articles and hanging them up in the halls against President Roosevelt and so forth and so on.

Marcello: I've run across Streeter's name on several occasions.

Permenter: Has anybody ever told you what happened to him? Did they ever catch him? Did they ever try him? I never did hear.

Marcello: I'm not sure exactly. I think they did. Streeter had a buddy, especially when they got to Japan, by the name of Provoo. Now Provoo was a traitor or a collaborator in the Philippines, and apparently they eventually got together in Japan. I think they were punished after the war in some way or another.

Permenter: I know on the ship that picked us up, they put out a little ship's paper, and on the list of the ten most

wanted men, I think he was on the list with Tojo and a bunch of them, and he was the seventh one on that list.

Marcello: What sort of things did Streeter do?

Permenter: Just writing articles and stuff like that against us, especially against President Roosevelt.

Marcello: Where did he stay? Apparently, they couldn't allow Streeter to be in with the rest of the prisoners.

Permenter: Well, he didn't stay too long in Shanghai after he got . . . what it was, Herman Wolfe was a sergeant in our outfit, the North China bunch, and he recognized Streeter after he'd been in camp there several months. See, Streeter was a civilian on Wake Island in defense work, and Herman Wolfe was a Jew from New York originally. He was a sergeant in the Marine Corps. And when Streeter got kicked out of the service, Wolfe was a prisoner chaser at that time. When they got kicked out, they gave them a suit of clothes and fifty dollars and carried them to the city limits and kicked them out. That's how they treated them way back then. And he was a prison chaser that guarded him, carrying him to the city limits, and he kept his mouth shut until he started writing these articles. Then Wolfe told us he was on that. The articles kept getting worse, and so the Japanese took him and shipped him to Japan,

and I understand that he went on radio over there.

Marcello: He did.

Permenter: He started making a lot of speeches against the United States.

Marcello: He did this. Were there any other collaborators?

Permenter: Yes, but I didn't know any of them--not in our bunch we didn't have, so far as I know.

Marcello: Getting back to the health of the prisoners and so on, I gather there were also several cases of tuberculosis at this Mount Fuji Project.

Permenter: Yes, we had several cases.

Marcello: I gather that by the time this project was finished, the men, like you point out, were virtually down to skin and bones.

Permenter: Oh, Lord! I suppose by the end of that project, we were probably down about as far . . . or as close to as far as we ever got because, boy, the hours were as long. In fact, we went on a ten-day week basis there at one time. The Japanese guards couldn't hold up. We were holding up better than the Japanese guards. See, the guards would have to go out there and guard us all day, come back in and do their duties, and maybe stand a four or six-hour guard duty at night.

Well, they were putting in more hours than we were, and they had to call the whole thing off because we were standing up better than the guards. They didn't have enough guards to go around. Now a lot of those guards were not Japanese; they were Taiwan boys from Taiwan. In each squad they had a Japanese over these boys.

Marcello: Were they usually rougher than the Japanese guards?

Permenter: Some of them were. Some of them were pretty nice, but some of them were worse than the Japanese guards. It was my understanding that they only done behind-line duty at that time.

Marcello: Incidentally, how did the quarters at the Mount Fuji Project compare with those at Woosung? Were they better? Were they worse?

Permenter: I'd say they were better. We had straw mattresses over there, and I'd say it was better, not a whole lot, but it was some better.

Marcello: Did the beatings and so on increase here? Did the rough treatment increase at the Mount Fuji Project?

Permenter: Yes. We had a bunch of people that was tortured over there in this trading thing. How many was involved, I don't know. But the guard house was right next to the main gate, and we came in one day and we knew that they'd caught a bunch of people and had them

locked up and tortured them. They gave them what we called the water treatment.

Marcello: What exactly was that water treatment?

Permenter: They'd tie you down on the floor with your hands and your feet stretched out, and they'd pour water down you until you'd just be filled with water, and they'd keep pouring it down you until you talked. A guy hollered out over the fence not to hold out any information because somebody had already talked. I don't know who. But they already knew who all was involved anyway.

Marcello: What were some of the other favorite types of torture that the Japanese used? That you observed?

Permenter: Oh, standing at attention, slapping you, and stuff like that. And using this judo on you, throwing you over their head, and stuff like that. They was always trying to pull that on you. If a guy knew how to use his leverage, they couldn't throw him because the Americans were much bigger than the Japanese. But it was best to always let them go ahead and do it and get it over with because eventually they were going to do it anyway, and it would make them that much madder if you didn't.

Marcello: Were there ever any escape attempts here at the Mount Fuji Project? Do you recall of any escapes that may have taken place here?

Permenter: I don't think so there. I think it was back over in the first camp. They had a few escapes over there.

Marcello: When did you realize that the tide of the war was beginning to change? Would it have been in the end of 1943, or would it have been in 1944?

Permenter: Well, I don't remember what year it was. I know the first fighter plane raid we had there in camp because it so happened that I was out that day. We had a big Japanese cavalry outfit right next to us, divided by an eight foot wall with three strands of hot wire on top, and we used to go over and get manure and haul it out for our garden. I was on a working detail that day out there, and I looked up and there were three fighter planes right above us. I couldn't believe it because we were right between two military airports.

Marcello: Now this is where the Mount Fuji Project was?

Permenter: Yes, the south airport was just southeast of that. We were real close to it from this Mount Fuji Project. The north airport was north of us. I looked up and there those three fighter planes were, and there was

a bomber that come off the north airport right over our camp. We got down in a ditch. And these three fighter planes were going right towards that bomber, and I couldn't understand. I said, "Well, now, American fighters, why don't you do something?" And all of a sudden the one on the left kind of tipped his wings like that, and he cut loose on that fighter, and he just started into the tail. We were close enough that you could see the impact of the bullets, and I guess he emptied everything he had into that plane because he just started into the tail and just worked right on up to the front. His left motor folded on him. He went back to the north airport and just before he got down to the ground, well, the whole plane exploded on him.

Marcello: I'm sure that did wonders for your morale when you saw that Japanese plane being shot down.

Permenter: Oh, boy! I mean it done it. Sixteen fighter planes come in that day, and we didn't find out till later on. They had some of the pilots, and they brought them in some months later. And they had enough gasoline . . . they had a 1,600 mile haul, that is from their base to Shanghai and back. MacArthur had ordered them in to get those bombers that was operating against our fleet

in those islands. We'd been counting those planes. They'd take off early in the morning loaded and come back in. Of course, we didn't know if they'd been shot down or diverted to some other base or something.

Marcello: Now these are Japanese planes you're talking about?

Permenter: Yes, Japanese bombers. MacArthur ordered those fighter planes in there to get those bombers. They sent sixteen fighter planes in there, and they had just enough fuel. They had it figured out; they could make one swipe at an airport and get back. They got in there and those bombers were just sitting out wide open, and they stayed there twenty minutes, and just one plane out of sixteen got back. They ran completely out of gas because they just stayed there and emptied everything they had into them. You could just see them just diving, just constantly diving. That went on for about, I don't know, three months. Two or three weeks later I was up at a radio station building some sod air raid shelter, and we had an air raid. I seen one fighter plane shoot down three Jap planes within five minutes. One of them was a transport and two trainers--late one afternoon, just zoom, zoom, zoom. He had all three of them there.

Marcello: Now was this your first evidence that the war had changed,

that the course of the war had changed, that is so far as actually seeing American planes and what have you?

Permenter: Well, I think that's when our hopes began to really build up there is when those fighter planes come in there. We had one B-29 raid there. It was a nuisance raid really.

Marcello: Now this was in 1944, I think, was it not?

Permenter: Yes, I think so.

Marcello: Incidentally, what was the reaction of the Japanese guards to this air raid activity?

Permenter: Oh, they were shooting their rifles at those planes and everything else, and you could imagine some kid out there shooting a .27 caliber rifle at a fighter plane, and him doing two or three hundred miles an hour. I seen two Zeroes try to get off from the south airport over there, and they just . . . Z O O M! Just like that! And that was the last of them.

Marcello: Well, I gather a lot of times when these raids did occur, they tried to get you inside the barracks so you couldn't see what was going on.

Permenter: Yes, cause they'd get real excited, those Japanese guards would. They got pretty excited when we had that B-29 raid there. They shot everything up in the air that they could point up in the air, and they didn't

have anything to reach them. They sent some Zeroes up, and, of course, they opened up on them, and those Zeroes got out of there. Of course, we was all whooping it up and hollering around there, and they'd warned us against it. They said, "How would you feel if you tried to shoot your enemy and couldn't reach him like that?" Of course, I mean it was true. I can imagine how they felt. There our planes was floating around up there, and they couldn't do nothing about it.

Marcello: Did the disposition of the guards take a turn for the worse after these raids?

Permenter: For a little while it did. Oh, I think really the average Japanese knew that they could never win that war in the end. You'd take an individual Japanese and get him off, 95 per cent of them would be pretty nice to you if you'd be pretty nice to him. But he was just like I was; he was a victim of circumstances. I'd got caught. I don't blame nobody for it; I don't blame the U. S. government. I don't blame the Japanese government. I volunteered to go in the service. I volunteered to go to China. Now a lot of people blamed the government; I don't. They didn't force me to go out there. The Japanese guards was just like I was.

You'd get him off to himself, and as a rule, the majority of them would be pretty nice to you. But now when you'd get him into a group, it was a different thing altogether. That's when you had to watch them, especially around their officers.

Marcello: In other words, they were trying to make a good impression in front of their officers?

Permenter: Yes, that's right, or around some more guards.

Marcello: Well, fortunately, in May of 1945 you finally got out of there. You'd been there for almost two years. And this was the beginning of a rather long trip which eventually took you up through North China, through Manchuria, eventually down to Pusan in Korea, and then, of course, across to Japan itself. Now your first leg of that journey was from the Mount Fuji Project to a place called Fengtai, which is near Peking.

Permenter: Yes, right outside of Peking--in big warehouses.

Marcello: Now this was a rather long trip, was it not?

Permenter: Yes, we were in these boxcars, and you had just enough room to sit down with your back to the wall and your feet stretched out in front of you. There were no toilet facilities whatsoever in there. If you urinated, it was between somebody's head and a piece of cardboard, and the doctors ordered us to at least go once a day.

Just to get down to bare facts, sometimes a guy would have to get behind you for a cup of tea and pour it from one cup to the other. You'd try to get the poison out of your system. And once we got to outside of Peking, it was pretty rough there because we had . . . they issued us plain flour, as best I can remember. They'd take this flour and mix it with water. There was a barbed wire fence. They rolled this out and cut it into noodles and would hang it on the fence to dry, then boil it. That's what we had to eat as best as I can remember for a time. I don't remember how long we were outside of Peking there at Fengtai.

Marcello: It was a 700 mile trip from the Mount Fuji Project to Peking, and I think it took about five days.

Permenter: Yes, somewhere in there.

Marcello: As I recall, there were about fifty enlisted men to each boxcar. Like you say, they were crowded in pretty well.

Permenter: We got one good meal on the way.

Marcello: I gather that camp at Fengtai was the worst of all so far. It was worse than Mount Fuji, and it was worse than Woosung.

Permenter: I mean, boy! There were no toilet facilities, no water, no nothing! It was just a big warehouse they

had us in, and that was it.

Marcello: Did you do anything while you were at Fengtai?

Permenter: We had some work details, but I don't remember anything other than just what we had to eat more than anything else. We didn't stay there but about three weeks or a month to the best of my recollection. We didn't stay there too long.

Marcello: In other words, it was just a transit point. They were going to ship you on to some other place. They had no intention of keeping you there permanently.

Permenter: Now when we left Shanghai, we knew that Germany had quit. We knew that Germany had surrendered, and we knew that they were closing in on Japan through this radio that they had hooked up. And getting back to that, this buddy of mine was telling me what was going on, and I finally one day asked him a question. I said, "How much of this is true?" He said, "From whatever they say, subtract 50 per cent from it."

Marcello: You mean whatever the Japanese told you?

Permenter: No. This broadcast that they were picking up from Chungking, if they said that if they sunk ten Jap ships, that is the radio, they said twenty. They put it out twenty in our camp. He told me, "Anything that's said that comes from that, subtract half from

that, and it would be right." He was in on it. I wasn't. And we knew that Germany had quit. Of course, Hitler had quit before they had. We didn't know how far they'd got with Japan. We knew that the B-29's had them beat down pretty well. We didn't know how much of our forces they were going to have to move from Germany to the Pacific, and we knew that if they had to move our forces from Germany to the Pacific, it would take them at least a year to get everything in position where they could really hit Japan. When we left Shanghai, they were already cutting the highways. They were already cutting them maybe a hundred yards on each side right up to it and getting ready to what we called "tank trap"--cut the rest of it where tanks couldn't go through there and so forth. We felt like that the Japanese thought they were going to land there around Shanghai someplace. We didn't know, and they started moving us out.

Marcello: Incidentally, it was during this trip from Mount Fuji to Fengtai that a couple of the prisoners actually escaped.

Permenter: That's right.

Marcello: It was during this period.

Permenter: One of them was a Flying Tiger. They shot all Flying

Tigers as they caught them, and he had fooled them. This same guy that they'd brought into camp was so weak. He had lived . . . I believe it was either seven or nine months off of two teacups of rice a day. He was so weak when they brought him into camp that they had to bring him in there on a stretcher, and he stuck to his story that he was, I believe, a Navy pilot because the Flying Tigers, they shot them as they caught them. He fooled them, and he knew where all these . . . they had airports . . . these planes . . . fighter planes that came in, they had, I understand, across China they had fifty airports. That is, they were rice paddies. Well, "Chancre Jack" had his guerrillas in there, and they had this gasoline stored in there, and if these fighter pilots ran out of gas, they could land on there and refuel and fly back. Or they'd camouflage the plane and fly it back later. They also had a deal going on out there . . . the aviators had these cards, and the Chinese made a racket out of it. If they'd pick up a pilot and get him back to the base, they'd get \$500 U. S. cash and no questions asked. And this guy, when we left Shanghai to go back to North China, he escaped and they . . .

Marcello: He and four other guys. I think there were five of them altogether that escaped.

Permenter: I don't remember how many, but they made it, I understand. I was told later.

Marcello: They did. They were picked up by communist guerrillas and made it back to Allied lines.

Permenter: Wasn't a guy by the name of Storney in that bunch? Or was he in the original bunch?

Marcello: The men were McAlister, Kinney, Huizenga, McBrayer, and Bishop. I think most of them were officers, I believe. Did you ever know how they got away?

Permenter: Yes, they climbed out the window in the boxcar, but when we left Peking to go through Manchuria and so forth, they raised these windows and welded them up there to where you couldn't get your head out. The officers fixed them a toilet up back there over a window some way in this boxcar, and on the way, they went out through that. The doors of the boxcar, they had barbed wire across it and a guard stationed, and some way they got in there.

Marcello: That's exactly right. You remember it quite well. What happened was, they said that when they went to this toilet they needed to have some privacy. So the Japanese let them put a blanket up around the toilet.

And, of course, they'd go behind there and eventually what happened was, like you say, they were able to climb out through the window. They escaped that way, and that's exactly what happened. They all made it back. They were picked up by these communist guerrillas, and they made it back behind the American lines. Of course, you know the communist guerrillas were fighting the Japanese, too, at that particular time. So that was a rather eventful trip in a way, but fortunately, like you say, you didn't stay there at Peking too long. And then they put you back on another train.

Permenter: That's right.

Marcello: And this was the one that eventually ended up at Pusan in Korea on June 19, 1945.

Permenter: I don't remember the date, but that was . . .

Marcello: It was another boxcar trip.

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: I think it took about four days. Do you remember anything about this trip?

Permenter: Except that it was a long one. I remember one thing. We were way up in Manchuria someplace, and we hadn't been able to go to the bathroom for a couple of days. I don't know if you know how big Oak Cliff is. I'm assuming that that town was about as big as Oak Cliff.

This train pulled right into the main station. And this included prisoners, guards, and all. We all went to the bathroom right there on the sidewalk right there in the station.

Marcello: Right out in public.

Permenter: Right out in public.

Marcello: In front of God and all his people.

Permenter: I mean, it was no shame. It was either that or else.

(Chuckle) I don't remember how many minutes we stayed there--not too long--but that was a long trip up through there.

Marcello: I gather that things weren't too pleasant once you got to Pusan either. As I recall, when you got off the train, it was raining "cats and dogs."

Permenter: I mean! We had to go through one of these . . . I don't know what you'd call it--some kind of a customs official, Japanese customs officials. They stripped us off and put all our clothes into one of these big, old steam-disinfectant things. We was all in there together, and you take two or three hundred people, and you can imagine what it all looked like. We were all dirty, filthy, hungry, and this, that, and the other. And they liked to have starved us to death there. The

ship that we was supposed to have went on never did get there for some reason.

Marcello: Incidentally, what kind of food did they provide on this train trip?

Permenter: We had hardtack. Occasionally, they would feed us. We got one good meal, I can remember, in Chinwangtao. We had about twenty-something Marines down there. It was on the coast where the ship pulled in. We pulled in there at night and I was one of those in our boxcar who went to get the food. The only thing I could ever figure out . . . we got the same rations as the Japanese . . . that they didn't know that we were prisoners, and they run us in there where they dished this food out. You could tell they were real surprised, these Japanese, that we were American. We just grabbed them buckets and shoved off, and we got a fairly good meal of rice that night. It was fried rice.

Marcello: Now you mentioned Chinwangtao. When did you get to Chinwangtao?

Permenter: That was after we'd left this town right outside of Peking.

Marcello: I see. You went from there to Chinwangtao and then up through Manchuria and down into Korea. Well, anyhow, you get into Pusan in Korea, and, like you say, you had

to walk through this ankle-deep mud to get to your quarters. I think it was about a three-mile hike.

Permenter: Boy! Rain! You have never seen it rain, rain, rain! Now things got pretty rough there.

Marcello: Well, in fact, according to Devereux, he said that things were worse there than at any other place--even worse than at Fengtai.

Permenter: They was. Well, you couldn't call it fish soup. It just smelt like fish; you didn't see any fish. It was just water that had a smell to it and a little rice. I don't remember how many days. It was five or six days or longer that we stayed there.

Marcello: I understand flies were a problem here also.

Permenter: Well, they were a problem anyplace.

Marcello: And dysentery.

Permenter: Yes.

Marcello: In fact, this is perhaps where dysentery may have been its worst.

Permenter: I would imagine it was right there.

Marcello: Well, fortunately, I think you only stayed there three days. Where did they quarter you while you were there?

Permenter: As best I can remember, it was some big warehouse, but, man, it was just about standing room only.

Marcello: As a matter of fact, you did do some work there in those three days, did you not?

Permenter: Some of the people did; I didn't. I understand some of them went down and unloaded something off of some ships while they were there.

Marcello: Well, after three days, then, they put you aboard a steamer, did they not?

Permenter: Yes, well, an old troop transport. It had rats on there that long (gesture). Man, they were . . . where they'd been hauling Japanese troops. Now they hauled them like cattle, just as long as they could poke one in there.

Marcello: And they hauled you like cattle, too?

Permenter: Boy, you'd better believe it! We like to have starved to death for water on there. That's the first time I ever got down and drunk water out of a gutter. They let us up one day for air. They'd let a few of us up. It just so happened we got up, and it come a real hard shower, and everybody just laid down and drank right out of the gutter because we was all just about pooped out because we hadn't had no water in two or three days.

Marcello: Well, fortunately, this trip only took twelve hours. It wasn't a matter of days, I think, to get from Pusan over to . . . Honshu, I think, was the island where you landed.

Permenter: We landed on an island. Well, I guess there was a

village there, was about all.

Marcello: Incidentally, from the beginning of this trip at Shanghai all the way through Pusan and across to Japan, had you lost very many people on this trip?

Permenter: Not in our group, we hadn't. I don't know about the rest of them. See, in our group we hadn't lost any from the time we left Shanghai. Now some of the other groups may have lost some. I don't know. By the time we got to Japan, they began to break us up into smaller groups, and we began to get separated. In fact, they broke our group up after we got to Japan. About July 2nd or the 3rd we got into Tokyo. I remember one night it was under a railroad trestle someplace. They were keeping us out of the main part of town as best as I can remember. I woke up sometime during the night. I don't know what woke me up, but I looked out across the bay over there, and it looked like the whole side of the town was on fire. I guess the B-29's had hit it. I didn't hear any bombs or any planes or anything. But we pulled into Tokyo, and I was sitting behind the doctor and the colonel. Of course, in Japanese seats the first two seats were just about as wide as this thing. It was just about daylight that morning, and I don't know when the planes had been in

there, but, boy, the smell . . . you've never smelled . . . if you've ever smelled human flesh . . . and the doctor pulled this curtain . . . they had the curtains on the train pulled.

Marcello: I think you were not supposed to look out.

Permenter: Right. And this doctor reached over there and pulled it. He caught the guards' back to us and pulled it out, and I was sitting next to the aisle, and I stuck my head over and looked out. It looked like about a twenty-block area had been completely wiped out. It was still burning. I guess it was a residential or a factory that they hit. Boy, you have never smelled anything in your life! And the colonel asked the doctor what that was he smelled, and he said, "Why, I'm surprised at you!" He said, "You were in World War I and don't recognize that." He said, "That's human flesh burning." And we stayed around there in Tokyo one night, I guess.

Marcello: Incidentally, I gather that there were occasions when the civilians gave you quite a bit of trouble, too, was there not?

Permenter: We stayed down . . . I believe we were once down in a basement, a baggage compartment, in a train station. We come in on one side, and evidently the train station

didn't go across. We had to go across on streetcars on July 4, 1945. They were bringing us up in groups. I remember when Dallas had what I call short streetcars. It wasn't the long ones. They were about as long as these city buses now. They were running us up in groups, and I was in the third group to come out. We got up, and I've often wondered if I could have done what the Japanese guards were doing. Now when a Japanese guard got an order to do something, he done it or died--or they'd kill him. I've thought about this a lot. Well, they'd take one group up. Then they'd have another group standing by to come up the steps. Well, this group would get on this streetcar and shove off. Then the other group would go up. Well, I heard all this commotion going on upstairs, and we got up and the civilians were trying to mob us. Well, there was these Japanese guards out there. They had those civilians down; they were stomping them; they were beating them with rifle butts. The guards had their sabers out beating them. Well, I got through without getting hurt, got on this streetcar, and went right down the main part of Tokyo, Japan, on July 4, 1945. And several groups behind me . . . the

civilians finally got smart, and they got bricks and started to throwing them over the guards' heads. They tore up a bunch of them, I understand. I didn't see them, but I heard later that they really hurt a bunch of them.

Marcello: A little amusing incident also happened here. I recall one of the prisoners telling me that as they were marching along one of these civilians spat on him.

Permenter: That I don't doubt.

Marcello: And, anyhow, when the guard wasn't looking, this prisoner apparently popped this civilian a good one, and he got right back in line again and kept right on going.

Permenter: Well, there were a lot of things like that pulled. Back in Shanghai, we went through a couple of small villages. Man, if a chicken would go through that bunch, he didn't have a chance. PHISSST!!! And he was gone. The Jap guards would never hear him, boy. It was just too bad if he run into our bunch. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Well, anyhow, after you got to Japan, you gradually made your way north by train.

Permenter: Right.

Marcello: And where did you end up at your first stop when you went north? Do you recall?

Permenter: After we left Tokyo?

Marcello: Right.

Permenter: I don't remember what town, but this same ferry sunk several years after we'd gone across that. There was a bunch of civilians on it. They carried us from the island at Tokyo--I don't remember which--over to Hokkaido.

Marcello: Oh, they took you over to Hokkaido, and the place where you landed was Hakodate, wasn't it?

Permenter: Yes. And that ferry that carried us over sunk several years later with a whole bunch of Japanese civilians on it.

Marcello: Did you go directly from Tokyo by train over to Hakodate?

Permenter: Well, we went up as far as the train went, but then we got on a ferry and went over to the other island.

Marcello: Right. Okay, what happened when you got to Hokkaido? Where did they take you?

Permenter: Well, they carried us up into the mountains. Well, they divided us up. That's when they split us up. I had the doctor's bag--I never will forget that--and he was in one end of the barracks, and I was in the other. We finally had to figure it out how I was going to get his bag to him. Behind the guard, some guy took it and threw that bag all the way across the walkway through there to the other side over there

and got it to him. That's when they started splitting us up into real small groups there.

Marcello: And where did you eventually end up?

Permenter: I don't remember what village, but it was in a small village up there. It was right up in the mountains. It was about as high up as you could get.

Marcello: What did they have you doing?

Permenter: Well, at first we went up on the side of the mountain and cleared out . . . they said for garden space. And then, I'd say ten or twelve days later, or two weeks later, we were in the coal mines. We mined coal for around a month.

Marcello: What sort of quarters did they provide here at this camp on Hokkaido?

Permenter: Oh, boy, it was terrible! We had a hard floor, and I had one or two blankets and that was it. I mean just a hardwood floor like under this carpet here. That's what you had to sleep on.

Marcello: Now, fortunately, at this time I assume it was still relatively mild so far as climate was concerned.

Permenter: Yes, but it was cold as the devil at night up there! We were lucky that . . . and, of course, I had my Marine Corps overcoat. But they'd also sent enough overcoats into Shanghai that each person personally

had a civilian overcoat. We also had a kind of toboggan cap that we pulled down, and it had eyes cut out to your nose and mouth, and it come on down on your neck, which was real good. The Red Cross had gotten this in to us. And we had those.

Marcello: Were bedbugs and lice a problem?

Permenter: Boy, I want to tell you something. When we built our first fire in that thing, you have never in your life seen as many bugs from every direction and every kind! The only way you could sleep in that place after we built the first fire was just take your blanket and take you a couple of cans of this powder and just make it completely white and just roll up in it. Man, they'd just eat you up alive. It was an old Japanese barracks, I guess. Man, I have never seen as many bugs in my life! And it was cold up there at night.

Marcello: What sort of shower facilities and things like that did they provide here?

Permenter: Cold water. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Was it rationed or did you have as much as you wanted?

Permenter: I don't remember. We may have had a little warm water up there, but I doubt it. As best as I can remember, it was cold water.

Marcello: What was the food like here?

Permenter: Well, that's when it was really rough. We got . . . I'm not talking about a cup like we have. I'm talking about a Japanese teacup. Now this is where it really started to getting rough--going into that mine. We couldn't even walk out of that thing without having to stop and rest two or three minutes, or two or three times, on the way out. We were so weak. We'd get three-quarters of a teacup of rice in the morning and seaweed soup. At noon we got a teacup with two bites of fish, and at night we got the same ration we had in the morning. I knew then that if that war didn't end . . . and we'd passed a camp on the way up there, and a guy had stuck his head out and hollered and told us to hold onto every rag of clothes we had. He said the snow got waist deep up there in the wintertime. But I knew if it got very cold up there that on those rations we'd never make it if that war didn't end. Of course, fortunately, the war ended when it did, and we got out of there.

Marcello: What was work like in the coal mine?

Permenter: Oh, man! That was my first coal mine and I hope that it is the last one. It was terrible! The crew that I was in . . . and the Japanese who was in charge of us, really, he was pretty nice. I mean he didn't monkey

with us; we didn't monkey with him. If a cave-in started, he would run us out, and he would do the shoring up or propping up, whatever you'd call it. Then we'd start mining.

Marcello: I would assume safety precautions were at a minimum in these coal mines.

Permenter: I mean, it was. There just wasn't no safety precautions at all in there.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do in the mine?

Permenter: I started out . . . we had a crew that would rotate on the jackhammer and load it onto this car. I couldn't hammer a jackhammer because I was weak, and there was a boy that took this coal and dumped it into a chute, and somebody had to stay down in this chute and keep it unstopped. But dusty, boy, it was something else down in there! But there was one good thing about it. You didn't have to do anything down there unless it got stopped up. He asked me to help him one day. He said to the other guy . . . I don't know what had happened. He said, "Boy, you don't have to do nothing down here but just every once in awhile." And I took him up on it--if you could stand the dust. But, man, you'd come out of there at night, you couldn't tell whether you were black or white--and no soap, just plain water.

Marcello: And I gather you couldn't get that black dirt off you.

Permenter: No, it would just stick with you.

Marcello: Were there ever any cave-ins while you were there?

Permenter: Yes, there was a lot of them.

Marcello: Were there very many men lost?

Permenter: Not in my crew and not in our camp, I'll put it that way. Well, it was soft coal and that stuff was constantly caving in.

Marcello: Now I gather there were some Koreans working in these mines, too, were there not?

Permenter: Yes, and there was a big barracks right up above us. I didn't . . . or our camp . . . maybe some of the guys had some contact with them before the war was over. But they did make contact after the war was over. I know that because some of them went up and visited after it was over with.

Marcello: What sort of a workday did you have to put into these mines?

Permenter: As best as I can remember, it was about an eight-hour day. We had two shifts--the day shift and the night shift--on that.

Marcello: Now did the guards harass you very much at this camp, or did they more or less leave you alone?

Permenter: They were about as bad as they ever got to be there in that camp. I mean, boy, they were strict there!

Marcello: Was this mainly because the war was going so badly for them, do you think?

Permenter: That and plus the guards they had there were all rejects from the Army. Most of them were crippled in one way or the other.

Marcello: In other words, they'd been shot up or something in battle.

Permenter: Well, I don't know whether they'd been shot up or whether they were just born with these defects, and they couldn't go in the Army. That was a kind of duty, and they were mad. You know they'd been shooting that propaganda at them for so long and this, that, and the other. They were the worst of the whole lot that we'd ever had there. They wouldn't hesitate to beat up on you or anything else.

Marcello: Did you personally ever get beat very much?

Permenter: Only once there. A guy hit me over the head with a rifle as I lay on my bunk one day. Oh, I've been slapped several times, kicked, things like that over . . .

Marcello: I guess after awhile that sort of thing becomes rather routine, does it not?

Permenter: Right.

Marcello: Well, let's talk then about the events that led up to your release from captivity. Let me start it by asking this particular question. As the end approached, were you afraid that the Japanese might possibly kill you?

Permenter: Well, at that time I don't think it made a whole lot of difference. We were all so weak by that time . . . we had, I believe, it was two guys that escaped.

Marcello: Where'd they escape to?

Permenter: Well, that was just it. I couldn't see no point of it. I mean, you was on an island. One day there we had twenty-seven air raids. Incidentally, I used to work with a man who was with the fleet that pulled up down there on the coast and shelled a steel town down there. It was the 27th day of July, I believe, or the latter part of July, that part of the fleet pulled in. These two guys that escaped, they brought them in later. They had them locked up someplace down there. They knew that they were shelling; they could hear the shells. They stole a Japanese sampan and got within sight of the fleet. But all of a sudden they just quit firing and shoved off. Of course, when they come back to shore, they caught them. But I don't know where they was going. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Well, describe the day of the surrender. Exactly what happened? Let's start with the morning of the day of the surrender.

Permenter: Well, let's start back a little bit before that.

Marcello: Okay.

Permenter: I was on the day shift, and when we came out, the night shift was supposed to be lined up in the compound facing us, and they would go out. We come out, and they weren't lined up, and we went in to ask them what was the trouble. They said the machinery's broke down. Well, they didn't have no machinery--an old horse down there that pulled the cart and a bunch of broke-down POW's. That's all they had. Well, of course, everybody was tired, and when you did get a chance that they'd leave you alone, you would lay down and sleep or everybody would die. The next day I don't think anything happened. It was the second day or the third that one of the cooks, a guy by the name of Benton or Benison, or something come in and said, "The war's over!" We said, "Why?" He said, "I passed the guard out there, and I didn't salute him, and he just ignored me!" Well, in thirty minutes everybody and his brother was out there just running all over them guards just to see what they

would do--just to try them out. They just ignored you. Well, we knew then that something had happened because for about two or three days they hadn't bothered us, they hadn't said no work, no nothing. Oh, it must have been . . . I don't know how many days it was before they finally came in and told us that the war was over then. They told us about those two atomic bombs being dropped, and we thought they were lying. There wasn't no such thing as that that would wipe two cities completely off the map like that.

MacArthur ordered us to stay in camp, and the Army sent in trucks or ambulances and got the real sick out and carried them out and told us to stay out. And B-29's would drop us food. Well, in each camp they made the Japanese take big tarps with yellow paint and put POW Camp Number So-and-so on that and put it out there right by our camp. Well, the day that they was supposed to drop this food . . . actually, it was two or three days after they had surrendered. We woke up that morning, and it was cloudy. The clouds was right at the top of these mountains. At nine o'clock there were three B-29's up there, and they were trying to dip down, and they'd see them mountains, and they'd go back up. They knew where we was at, but

they couldn't get down to drop us the food. We woke up the next morning . . . well, they come back that afternoon. And Bob Lee up there, he helped load those planes over on one of those islands--the guy that I work with--that brought all that food in there. We woke up the next morning. That afternoon was cloudy. They come back the next morning at nine o'clock--still cloudy. That afternoon they was back--still cloudy. Man, we was really getting disgusted! In the meantime, some of our people in camp went over there and got that lieutenant and told him, "We're going down the coast and we're going to get some food." And he said, "You're getting all the food that's coming in here." "We don't have the food." "You're getting everything that we've got." And they said, "Well, we're going down there anyway." And they carried him down, and I understand that they searched seven warehouses, and they come back empty-handed. They said there wasn't a grain of nothing down there. The third morning we looked out, and it was fair, and that was the day that heaven really opened its doors to us. For instance, they tied or spot-welded two sixty-gallon drums together. They had soup in one end and cocoa in the other with one parachute on it. That thing hit the ground.

PSHEEEW!!! Soup went one way, and cocoa went the other!!

(Chuckle) They'd tie 250 pairs of shoes together.

What it was, we was watching these parachutes, and each guy would take off to a parachute to keep the Japanese from getting it. They'd tie one parachute to 250 pairs of shoes, and it just so happened that it was my turn to go for this parachute. I went over there, and these pilots was dropping these right on these Jap houses. They didn't care where they was dropping them. Well, 250 pairs of shoes, they just went right through the roof, floor, and all, boy! And there I was--250 pairs of shoes tied together! They dropped so much food in there. I believe it was three B-29's that . . . and the Navy . . . we stayed there after we got food, of course. We only had washpots to cook this stuff in. We got cigarettes, food, candy bars--you name it, they dropped it to us--clothes . . .

Marcello: Did you get sick from all that rich food?

Permenter: Oh, did we get sick! It was going in one end and out the other. You'd poke it one end, and it was going out the other. It was the grease. We hadn't had no . . . and the only way they had to fix it was just make a goulash out of it. The kitchen stayed open twenty-four hours; they had a cook. We just had a

big old three-gallon bucket to bring it in. If it'd get cold, somebody would go over there and pour that in a pot, and they'd get some hot and bring it back. We ate around the clock. You'd eat and go to the toilet, eat and go to the toilet.

Marcello: What happened to the Japanese by this time? Had they left?

Permenter: Well, I was in on this group. We took these parachutes and we made a flag. You'd really be surprised, including myself, at the people . . . we'd forgot where the red . . . to start with the red or the white. So we made this flag out of these parachutes, stars and all. There was about four or five of us. Somebody-- I don't know who it was--had a camera and took pictures of that. I never did get one. But at the time there was a funny incident that happened then. At the very time, we didn't tell the Japanese what we was going to do at the flagpole out there. They'd pulled their flag. We went out and lined up, and everybody in the camp knew what we'd done. So we went out and gathered around this flagpole, and we started to raising our flag. But a few minutes before that there was a messenger that come in, and they'd ordered all Army

guards off of our camp. These were regular Japanese Army guards, and they was bringing policemen in to guard us.

Marcello: These were Japanese policemen?

Permenter: Yes. And just as we started to pull our own flag up, homemade flag, the Japanese started to falling out of that guardhouse and took off. We thought it was because we'd raised that American flag, but they'd got orders to get out of there and leave us alone.

Marcello: Did you ever have any thoughts of revenge? Were there certain Japanese that you were ready to . . .

Permenter: I didn't.

Marcello: . . . take out some sort of revenge on?

Permenter: I personally didn't.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you heard that the war was over?

Permenter: Man, I was happy! I mean (chuckle) I was happy! I just wanted to eat and get back home. I was homesick. I wanted to get it all over with.

Marcello: As you look back on your three-and-a-half, almost four, years in captivity, what do you see as being the key to your survival?

Permenter: Hope--knowing that there was a better life than what I had there because I knew once I got out of that

place, there was a better place back here in America than that place. Anything could beat that. Now if I'd had no hope . . . if I had had what the Japanese would have looked forward to, I don't think I'd have ever survived. That one thing--hope. And the feeling that the United States was going to win that war. I knew we was going to win that war in the end. There wasn't ever any doubt in my mind, but it was just going to take time to win that war. You couldn't fight two fronts at the same time--that one they'd have to contain and the other one fight. And we knew after the first year that they was going to fight Germany first and contain Japan. That's what they done, of course. We were hoping that they'd fight Japan first and contain Germany, but it didn't work out that way.

Marcello: At the time of your release were you bitter toward the Japanese?

Permenter: Not really, no. I would probably under the same circumstance . . . and like I said, there in Tokyo, I've often wondered if I could stomp my own people like they did theirs guarding prisoners after the war had been lost, and seeing the destruction of going through those towns. Ships . . . we were down on the

docks--ships burned out, bombed out, and things like that. Warehouses all bombed out--nothing left down there. I've wondered about that a lot of times. Could I have stomped my own people like he did?

Marcello: One final question: Did you have very much trouble adjusting after you got back to the States?

Permenter: Well, everything was different. Of course, I'd been gone for almost five years, and everything was different. Not a whole lot. I drank a little bit when I got back. I got mixed up and drank a little bit. Then I met Nadine, and she didn't drink, so I quit. We got married and have lived here happily ever afterwards. We had a funny thing after we were released. We were sent down to this Hokkaido Airport or Sapporo. They got us over Yokohama or someplace down there, and that typhoon was coming in, and we couldn't land. They had to bring us back. There was a U. S. Army captain and an Australian captain there. They said, "We've got to move your people. We've got so many coming in a day. We've got to move you." And this Australian captain said, "I was talking to a British destroyer this morning. If I can raise him up, I'm going to order him back in to move you people to Yokohama." So anyway, he got in

contact, and they put us on a train and moved us down to the coast. I don't remember how far it was. But it was after dark when we got on this British destroyer. Man, there was just standing-room only on that thing. Of course, we had sea rations. Man, we looked like a bunch of packrats. We'd packed that food out that these B-29's had dropped. We got on this British destroyer, and they served us cold cuts, and that made everybody mad. A buddy of mine--I was down on the second deck--come running down there. The ship was trying to back out, and it'd backed into some ship out there. They had that tug pushing that destroyer around, British destroyer. He come down there and said, "Get up on deck!" I went up there and I said, "What's going on?" And he said, "Look sitting off out yonder. It's a big aircraft carrier. When this tug cuts loose, we're going to take it. We're going out there to that aircraft carrier." I said, "Okay!" I don't know who it was, but he got this destroyer out in the channel, and that old boy jumped over and grabbed that Jap on that tug and held him there. It was just standing-room only on that tug going out to that aircraft carrier. We didn't

have any idea who it was. We just knew it had to be British or American or somebody.

Marcello: And it had more room than that destroyer had.

Permenter: It had to be. Anyway, we pulled up to that thing, and this gangplank or ever what you called it going up the side of the ship. We told them to hold on to that Jap down there and not let that tug get away. This fellow said, "You've got to throw everything you've got overboard!" We told him, "Bull corn, boy!" We had sea rations in there. We wasn't about to throw that stuff away! Man, you talk about a bunch of packrats! That's what we looked like--dirty, nasty. They said, "Well, you don't understand. We've got plenty of food and clothes onboard this ship. We're going to take you aboard." We still didn't believe them. They said, "Well, you see them sailors that's lined up. We're going to run you down through there, and we're going to give you clean clothes. The cooks are up; they're cooking stuff right now." That was about . . . it must have been midnight or one o'clock. So we finally agreed that we'd throw everything we had overboard because they didn't want us to bring all them lice and bugs and everything. Sure enough, they gave us clean clothes. We went through there and

they served us ham and eggs that morning. That was the first hot American meal we had. We stayed down in the galley all night long down there eating, just talking that night. The next day, I'll never forget it! They said, "All POW's lay down" in such-and-such a place. The sailors carried us down there, and they said, "Everybody sit down." They was just tearing tops off cartons of cigarettes and just setting them out. They set a bunch of bowls down on the end of the table. I don't remember how many there was on there--POW's. They opened up them ice cream freezers, and they said, "All right, eat all the ice cream you want." I'm telling you, we was like a bunch of pigs eating that ice cream on that ship there. We had a ball on there. Those people was really good to us on there, and they gave us two dollars. Of course, we didn't have no razors; we didn't have anything. So I went up to the PX, and I told that guy in there, "Now, I've only got two bucks." He said, "Well, what do you need?" And I said, "Sailor, I ain't got nothing!" (Chuckle) I said, "You stop me when I get to this two dollars." He said, "Well, you just tell me what you need." So I kept telling him, "Well, feller, I've just got two bucks and that's

it!" He said, "Well, you just tell me what you need." Well, what we didn't know was that the sailors had all got together and told the PX to give us razors, blades, shaving cream, shaving lotion, toothpaste, you know, toothbrush and stuff like that, and said, "Give us the bill, and we'll pay for it." So I started to give him the two dollars, and he wouldn't take it. I said, "Well, what do you mean?" Well, they finally had to tell me what they'd done there on that. But, boy, those people, they were really good to us' And they carried us back to Yokohama and showed us all the war films on that. They pulled out to sea a little ways and pulled this target behind us, and those fighter planes . . . it was a converted American aircraft carrier, and these planes flew up and dived at that target and set those rockets off at that thing at that time, and, boy, we thought that was really something! (Chuckle)