

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

NUMBER

98

Interview with  
Karl A. Bugbee  
December 8, 1971

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Terms of Use: Open

Approved: Karl A. Bugbee  
(Signature)

Date: 12-15-71

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Date on Cover Sheet should be December 15,  
1971

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
IN THE CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS**

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Oral History Collection

Mr. Karl A. Bugbee

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: December 15, 1971

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. Karl Bugbee for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 15, 1971, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Bugbee in order to get his reminiscences and impressions and experiences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Bugbee was captured by the Japanese on the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay. Mr. Bugbee, to begin this interview, would you very briefly give us a brief biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, would you tell us when you were born, where you were born, your education, things of this nature.

Mr. Bugbee: Well, I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, December 13, 1918. I attended all my grade school in New Orleans and went to Fortier High School. And I did not complete high school at the time. I went to work and later on I decided that I would join the Marine Corps, which I did in New Orleans.

Marcello: Why did you join the Marine Corps? First of all, I guess I should ask you when did you join the Marine Corps, and then, why did you join it.

Bugbee: In 1940, I decided to join the Marine Corps.

Marcello: Why did you join?

Bugbee: Well, about that time they would talk about drafting, and I truthfully have always had sort of an admiration for the Marine Corps. I wanted to be one because I thought that being a Marine was a little bit something extra than just being a draftee or even inducted into the Armed Service of any other branch.

Marcello: It's very interesting. People, of course, give all sorts of reasons when you ask them why they joined. Some say they liked the uniforms; some say they wanted to travel; others say they couldn't find a job. In 1940 we were just about out of the depression, but I suppose it might have been tough for some people to find a job. So there are a variety of reasons why people did enter the service at that time.

Bugbee: Well, back then in 1940 I was an assistant toy buyer at D. H. Holmes Toy Department, and I was making \$12.50 a week. And when I gave them my notice that I was going to leave, they were very distressed, and they wanted to increase my salary to \$15 a week. At that time it was just a little late because I had already told "Uncle,"

"I do."

Marcello: Did you have any idea at the time you joined that the nation might possibly soon be plunged into war with either Japan or Germany?

Bugbee: Well, there were rumbles going on, and, of course, we knew what was happening over in the European theatre. I don't think that I could very well see any more than anybody else because nobody had no idea what would happen to us with the Japanese when they did attack us like they did.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Bugbee: My boot camp was out in San Diego, California, and at the time it was a four month training period.

Marcello: I assume that you went from San Diego almost directly to the Philippine Islands.

Bugbee: Yes, it was just a matter of a few weeks after getting out of boot camp. Actually, I thought I was going to Shanghai. I volunteered to go to Shanghai because I had heard about the way of Marines and everybody that lived over in Shanghai.

Marcello: These would have been the North China Marines. Is that correct?

Bugbee: That's right.

Marcello: What did you think about going to the Philippines?

Bugbee: Well, the Philippines didn't even dawn on me until after we got aboard the ship, and they found out they had

enough Marines over in North China and over in the Shanghai area, so that our orders were to go to the Cavite Navy Yard there in the Philippine Islands instead of going on to Shanghai.

Marcello: What did you think about going to the Philippines?

Bugbee: Well, I was all for anything. I was always an adventurous individual, and it was something that I had never seen or heard of before.

Marcello: I assume that the Philippines in peacetime were considered pretty good duty.

Bugbee: Well, I'll tell you, a person could get awful lazy over in the Philippines during peacetime. I had special duty. I was what was known as a gun striker. Well, this came about a little bit later on, but . . .

Marcello: A gun striker?

Bugbee: Yeah. You see, as you well know, the Marine Corps is under the Navy's rules and regulations and the Army paybill, but it's sort of like, in the Navy, a gunner's mate. And when they took the four-inch fifties off of the Houston then they gave us the four-inch fifties for our anti-aircraft guns. We had three different anti-aircraft guns. We had three different anti-aircraft areas that were supposed to protect the Cavite Navy Yard.

Marcello: You were at the Cavite Navy Yard then.

Bugbee: We were at the Cavite. Well, when we first got over to the Philippine Islands, dysentery had broken out aboard the ship, the U.S.S. Henderson, which was the transport we went over on. So we were all taken up around Olongapo, where the rifle range was.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do when you got to Cavite?

Bugbee: Well, after I got to Cavite, then we worked regular guard duty around the Naval Base there. The Marine barracks were right adjacent almost to the Navy Yard, and then when I was made a gun striker, I went out to this little area just about thirty kilometers outside of Cavite, which was Benicayen, and that's where we had the gun implacements. We had the three-inch fifties, and it was my job to go out there and see that the gun covers were taken off and that the guns were kept in workable order.

Marcello: Was most of the training rather routine?

Bugbee: Oh, it was definitely routine. You'd fall out in the morning for your roll call, and you had your classes. In the morning you'd have classes, tearing down the rifles, and you were going on hikes, etc. in the afternoon. And then you would have your rest period, and then your liberty call would start, and while I was there I had liberty every night. And, of course, we had our own movies right on the base there, so we really didn't have to do anything, but sometimes some of the

guys were lucky enough to sit on their own bunks and look out the window and watch their movie. But it was a routine situation there at Cavite.

Marcello: Did you ever undertake any special training just in case there were a Japanese attack? In other words, did you ever prepare for a Japanese invasion of any sort?

Bugbee: Me, personally?

Marcello: Yes.

Bugbee: No, I did not make any special preparations in any way.

Marcello: What sort of equipment did you have? Was it modern equipment, or was it antiquated? Was there much of it?

Bugbee: Well, as far as a rifle soldier would be considered, I imagine we had as up-to-date equipment as they had at the time of the involvement. We were taught to use the Browning Automatic Rifle and the .45. And, of course, as everybody knows, the .45 was originally made or brought about, from what I can understand, back in the days of the Filipino Insurrection when there wasn't anything that they could shoot that would knock them down until they developed that .45. And that .45 would stop anything. As far as our small arm equipment was concerned, yes, I feel that we had modern arms. As far as large equipment was concerned--and I wasn't too familiar with

it--I would say that what we had was antiquated. Like I said, they took the four-inch fifties off of the Houston; when they put a pom pom on the Houston, they gave us the four-inch fifties. And I think that the latest aircraft we had over there, Army, etc., was the P-40, and the Jap Zeroes over there just . . .

Marcello: . . . ate them alive.

Bugbee: This is getting a little ahead of the time, but the Jap Zeroes just, like you say, they ate them alive, and we might as well have used our .45 pistols to shoot at those Jap Zeroes as those old four-inch fifties. The only time I ever remember seeing us hit one of them was due to machinegun fire where they were diving on us.

Marcello: About how long were you in the Philippines before the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor? Could you estimate?

Bugbee: I was over there approximately six or seven months.

Marcello: Do you recall what you were doing when you heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Bugbee: I'll go back just a little bit further than that--and I can't be exactly accurate--but it was about two or three weeks prior to the time that we were actually told that Pearl Harbor was hit that we were all put on guard that the Japanese fleet was on the move and that liberty was restricted, and at least half of the gun crew had to be there at all times.

Marcello: Now this was when they were watching the movements of the Japanese fleet, and all indications were that they were probably going to strike somewhere in Southeast Asia. The Dutch East Indies were considered to be a prime target.

Bugbee: We were all put on guard, and, of course, none of us had ever even anticipated that it would be us that drastically. But somebody knew.

Marcello: Well, I'm sure that they expected an attack to come in the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese would have to take the Philippines in order to protect their flank, I would assume, or their sea lanes.

Bugbee: That went on for a matter of at least two or three weeks and then kind of eased off. And then all of a sudden one morning which, of course, I think was December 8th over there--and it was quite early in the morning--the Colonel called us . . . and I had never saw a man that had aged so much so quickly. And, of course, he was unshaven, and his voice was shaking, and he told us that we were at war, and this was the real thing, and Pearl Harbor had been attacked.

Marcello: What did you do then?

Bugbee: There was a long moment of silence there while we tried to actually let it really ponder in. But then it wasn't too long after that that the Jap planes started coming

over us, and we knew it wasn't for play but that it was for real.

Marcello: Did you man your stations very shortly after you had heard the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

Bugbee: Yes, we manned our stations. In fact, our gun emplacement crews were instrumental in bringing back a couple of the American pilots that had been shot down that were out in the water right close to us, and . . .

Marcello: Can you describe some of the Japanese air attacks that took place over Cavite? Cavite was almost destroyed the first time, isn't that correct, the Naval Yard itself?

Bugbee: Well, of course, at the time of the attack I was out there at the base out at Benicayen which was approximately thirty kilometers from Cavite. But there were all kinds of tales floating around: one, that the Japs had gotten in one of the juke boxes in the Cavite commissary there, and the club had been wired so that they could come right on in, that they knew exactly where they were coming in. And one of the pilots that was rescued out there said that that was the whitest looking Jap he ever saw that shot him down.

Marcello: In other words, was there some speculation that these were Germans?

Bugbee: There was a lot of assumption that the squadron leaders were Germans that were leading the Japs into the attack.

Of course, this, like I say, I didn't actually see.

This was what I was told, and . . .

Marcello: What did Cavite look like after the attack? Obviously, you were not there when the attack took place. What did it look like when you saw it?

Bugbee: Well, I didn't get back to Cavite because when we evacuated they moved us to the farther end of the island. And, in fact, we were just across from Bataan, and we set up a gun emplacement there.

Marcello: In other words, you moved from Cavite right over to Corregidor.

Bugbee: Well, it wasn't to Corregidor. It was still on Bataan. We moved from Cavite Navy Yard over to Bataan and had a gun emplacement in a rice paddy there on Bataan.

Marcello: In other words--I'm trying to get some chronology here--very shortly after that initial Japanese attack on Cavite, the base was damaged to the point where it was no use to defend it anymore.

Bugbee: That's right. The base was damaged to the point that we didn't even go back. We had left everything that we owned that had been there, and we just took off, and we went to Bataan immediately to try to protect what we could with the anti-aircraft guns there at our place on Bataan. And here again, we had three of the four-inch fifties that were in this gun emplacement, and this

went on for a number of days, and, of course, like I said earlier, it was almost a futile cause trying to use those three-inch fifties against the Jap Zeroes. They could walk rings around us. However, the old fifty caliber, air-cooled machineguns that we had brought down a couple of the planes that had dived on us. There was one day that they came in over us one wave after the other, and, of course, we hit any foxhole or any hole that we could find. And I stuck my head up after things had quieted down a little bit, and all I could see was smoke and flames and dirt flying, and I said, "Oh, my God, I guess I'm the only one around here that's alive." But pretty soon heads began bobbing up here and there, and, of course, if you can look for it at times, sometimes you can find something humorous in anything that happens. There was one air raid that came over that . . . well, I would say that we were about a hundred yards from the water. There was a road and then the beach and then the water.

Marcello: This was the road that wound all the way around the peninsula?

Bugbee: Yes. And the Japs came over and bombed and strafed us, and their incendiary bombs set fire, of course, in a wooded area behind us, and the shock from the bombs that

fell into the water out there would kill the fish. So after the raid we just went and picked up the fish and had a big fish fry right after the Japs' bombing. (chuckle)

Marcello: I guess that helped quite a bit as time went on, did it not, when rations got a little short.

Bugbee: Well, rations got short immediately. That's one of the things that we griped about, but we felt that we understood because immediately "the old man" told us that we were going to be cut to two meals a day until relief supplies could be sent in. And that was understandable. We didn't question that a bit, and, of course, as everybody knows, we used to get dear old Tokyo Rose singing songs dedicated to the Marines waiting for ships that never came in, but that never bothered us any.

Marcello: Approximately how many of these Japanese attacks were you subjected to? Obviously, they were trying to knock out your gun emplacement, or were you protecting some other vital installation?

Bugbee: Well, they was trying to knock out not only the gun emplacement but probably the road which was being heavily traversed not only with military but with civilians moving back and forth.

Marcello: And your job was to try and keep that road open, in other words.

Bugbee: That's right, keep the road open, and here again, like

I said, there was a road, then there was beach, and, of course, along the beach was where they stored all the ammunition, and luckily they hadn't hit any of it.

Marcello: About how long were you in this rice paddy altogether?

Bugbee: Well, I would say that we were there . . .

Marcello: Was it a matter of days or months?

Bugbee: No, it was a matter of weeks because one day the colonel came by and told our commanding officer who was a first lieutenant that he wanted half of the gun crew to go up into what was called \_\_\_\_\_ Hill, that they had spotted some Japs up in there, and this was not too far a distance from where we were there on Bataan, and they said that some Japs had been spotted up there, and they wanted us to go up there. They said it would just be a matter of a couple hours, and we'd be back for supper. Well, when we got up to \_\_\_\_\_ Hill and got to facing the reality of things, we found that this was one of the places where the Japs had really been entrenched. In fact, it was probably long before the war because they had concrete bunkers and everything else that had been built there, and finally we were relieved by a company of Filipino Scouts before we ever got back to our gun emplacements.

Marcello: In other words, these concrete bunkers and so on the

Japanese had were not American bunkers. They had not been abandoned American bunkers.

Bugbee: No, in fact, they even had their own women and everything else over there. They had this established and were well ahead of the game long before I imagine the war ever actually was declared.

Marcello: Isn't it kind of surprising that they were ever able to construct these bunkers without ever having been found out?

Bugbee: Well, this is one of the things, too, that a lot of people questioned in their own minds. But this was quite obvious that they had been there for some time.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned the Filipino Scouts. What was your opinion of them as fighters? Did you ever have much contact with them?

Bugbee: I didn't have too much contact, but what contact I did have with them, I thought personally, from what I could see and what I heard, that they . . . I was proud to fight with them. They were good people. They had been abused, they knew that their families were being abused, and it just made it that much more of a reason why they should get in there and fight. I can remember a couple of stories that one of the Filipino Scouts told me about the Japanese. He said, "The Japanese, they crazy people." He said, "They jump off a cliff with their clothes and all." I said, "Yeah, at the point of that bayonet I guess you'd have jumped off of that cliff, too." (chuckle)

When they were taking a Jap prisoner, one of them would stick their foot out and the Jap would trip, and, of course, that would give them every excuse to go ahead and shoot him and say he was trying to escape. And, of course, while we were at the gun emplacement, we also found some Japanese. And, of course, the only way we could actually tell the Japanese was to make them strip because the Filipino was dark underneath his clothes as well as the outer portions of his body. But the Japanese, while he could have a good sun tan, would still be a lighter color under his clothing.

Marcello: I assume that your gun emplacement was somewhat back of the forward lines.

Bugbee: Yes, it was back of the lines.

Marcello: Now these Japanese that you're talking about, were they infiltrators or something? You were told to go up on this hill and apparently neutralize the Japanese on this hill. Had they in some way infiltrated through the lines, or had the battle lines come that far down into Bataan by that time?

Bugbee: I think they were working both ends to the middle is what I personally feel they were doing.

Marcello: Well, now they did try one or two amphibious assaults behind the lines, did they not? And I think most of those were wiped out.

- Bugbee: Well, the ones on Bataan never did materialize.
- Marcello: I think they wiped out those Japanese assaults.
- Bugbee: They held the lines up there. The front lines in Bataan held right up until almost the last minute.
- Marcello: And then I think, in fact, that it was that last tremendous artillery barrage that finally broke the lines in Bataan.
- Bugbee: That was the straw that broke the camel's back, and it was about that time that they came by and told us to destroy the guns and destroy the ammunition and get over to Corregidor the best way we could because the lines had broken, and I think that the last thing I remember they said was that if we didn't get our tails out of there, the Japs would be cooking our breakfast for us.
- Marcello: Let me ask you this. How bad did things get on Bataan while you were there? In other words, you mentioned that very shortly after you went on Bataan that you were put on short rations. Did things get progressively worse from that point on?
- Bugbee: Yes, things got progressively worse. The food was considerably less than what we would have liked to have had. I don't mean anything fancy, just stable food. And then we were having, like I say, two meals a day.
- Marcello: What were you finally down to eating?
- Bugbee: Well, we actually could still have regular GI chow, and it didn't get down that rough as far as we were concerned

because we were behind the lines actually. I don't know what the boys on the front line were getting, if anything, but we still had our own mess, and while we didn't get all we wanted or what we wanted, it hadn't deteriorated that greatly yet.

Marcello: How about disease . . .

Bugbee: There was an awful lot of sickness--the boys with malaria and dysentery--and it affected us pretty good. I mean, we were a little way from the drydock, not too far, but we were quite a way from the site of where the medical assistance would be by the Navy.

Marcello: How about your own physical condition?

Bugbee: Well, I had contracted malaria, but with the help of the quinine I was able to stay on my feet at the time. I never did really get down.

Marcello: So we can get some sort of a comparison, how much did you weigh when you got out of bootcamp? Do you recall offhand? Can you estimate?

Bugbee: Oh, I don't know. You know so many people squawk about their GI chow and everything. Of course, I've always liked all kinds of food, and I thought the food was real good. I probably gained weight when I was in boot camp because of the regulation of hours and regulation of eating meals. I would say I was around 175 or 180 pounds at the time I got out of boot camp.

Marcello: The reason I asked you this is because I'll probably

ask you later on what you weighed when you got out of the prisoner-of-war camp. Okay, finally then the lines broke on Bataan, and you were ordered to go over to Corregidor. How'd you get there?

Bugbee: Well, we were on the last boat that got from Bataan to Corregidor. After that a number of them tried to swim over, and very few of them made it in trying to swim, and the rest of them, I guess, were just . . . well, some of them just drowned, and some went back because they couldn't make it. But we did get over, and it was like going from the frying pan to the fire.

Marcello: It wasn't a very long distance from Bataan over to Corregidor, was it?

Bugbee: No, it was just a matter of a couple of hours, I think, on the boat. And, of course, that night they happened to have a full moon, and we were all praying that a cloud would come over the moon because the Japs had everything that they owned out there. It seemed like that after they broke the lines and everything. But we did get over to Corregidor.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen on the trip from Bataan to Corregidor that you can remember?

Bugbee: No, nothing eventful happened. Like I say, we were all sort of hoping that we would make it with the full moon and everything. We were just a sitting duck going over

but we did make it.

Marcello: Did you still have hopes yet that help was on its way and that you were going to be evacuated from the Philippines? Now, of course, this had been the original plan, was it not? In other words, this is why the Army had withdrawn into Bataan. They were supposed to fight a holding action until help came, either reinforcements or else until the Navy came to take you off the island. Were you still expecting help?

Bugbee: As far as I'm personally concerned, I don't think there was ever a time up until almost the actual surrender that we didn't think that help was on its way.

Marcello: Do you think that this was perhaps one of the things that kept morale up?

Bugbee: Yeah, because we had heard stories that one of the longest convoys ever known in the history of man was on its way from Pearl. Of course, none of us really knew the extent of damage that had been done at Pearl. They didn't elaborate on it too much.

Marcello: I'm sure that there were all sorts of rumors floating around in this situation.

Bugbee: Yeah. And, of course, like I said, our good friend, Tokyo Rose, she kept dedicating a song to us for waiting on the ships never came in, but we always just laughed at her because we knew that the ships were on the way.

We knew that relief was on the way.

Marcello: I gather that Tokyo Rose and the Japanese propaganda had very little effect on the morale of the troops.

Bugbee: Very little, truthfully. I mean, it was almost like listening . . . it was a joke to us because . . . well, let's be truthful. I guess it was our propaganda that had us to where we just thought their propaganda was nothing. There wasn't a one of us that had any idea that it would be more than just a small time and just a little action to overtake the Japanese with what we had compared to what they had.

Marcello: In other words, you were still under the impression that man-for-man the Americans could take any Japanese soldier any day of the week.

Bugbee: Well, what was this "Mickey Mouse" outfit? (chuckle) It was just that we were caught unaware, and as soon as the "Big Brother" woke up and got back over there, this thing would all be over. Of course, as we learned, it didn't happen that way. (chuckle)

Marcello: I have one more question before we talk about actual events on Corregidor itself. What was your opinion of General MacArthur? I think that everybody that fought on Bataan or Corregidor had some sort of an opinion of General MacArthur, a very strong opinion one way or the other.

Bugbee: I've had a long time to think about it. First of all, MacArthur was a military man and MacArthur followed orders, and the only thing that I could criticize was the fact that he still had his wife and children and their personal servants with them when all the other military officers and people had to have their dependents sent home. Well, this is a part that I felt that he could be criticized on because when he left his family left with him, his servants left with him, and some of their personal gear left with them, where there were military people, nurses, that could have left but were left on Corregidor. But as far as him leaving Corregidor, I'm sure he left under orders, and if there was ever a man that knew the Oriental mind, I think that General MacArthur knew the Oriental better than anybody else that we had or still have today, really.

Marcello: Some of the troops criticized him because he apparently had made only one appearance on Bataan during all the fighting there. Did you ever know about this or have any feelings toward it?

Bugbee: No, truthfully I didn't have; I mean, after all we weren't looking for any prima donnas to come around. We were looking for a foxhole when those bombers came over, and you get to the point where it doesn't make a whole helluva lot of difference to you whether a general comes

by or not because, I mean, those shells don't stop because a general's coming by.

Marcello: What did you do after you got to Corregidor?

Bugbee: After we got over to Corregidor, we, which was . . . let's see, Bataan fell on April 9, I believe, if I remember correctly, the 9th or 10th, and, of course, we were . . . Corregidor, as you well know, was strictly an Army garrison. And we were told, here again by our propaganda, that Corregidor had been fixed, and the barracks, etc. on Corregidor had been erected so that the air currents made it almost a physical impossibility to bomb Corregidor. The air currents would throw the bombs all out of Kilter. But the Japs didn't believe it, and their bombs didn't believe it. (chuckle) They came pretty straight!

Marcello: In other words, at the time you got to Corregidor there had not been a whole lot of damage done there yet?

Bugbee: We hadn't noticed because, of course, you know there were two or three tunnels--Malinta Tunnel and the Navy Tunnel--and the way that the island is situated and everything, they really hadn't got too much of it over on Corregidor at the time we got over there that was noticeable to me.

Marcello: So what did you do then after you got there?

Bugbee: Well, we were stationed on the outside, I say the outside

because we weren't in the barracks or weren't in the tunnels or anything. We were stationed along the beaches.

Marcello: You slept in trenches for the most part then.

Bugbee: We slept in trenches. And here's where the food began to worsen because the chow truck would come by--if they weren't shelling and bombing, it would come by--and you would get your mess kit with the rations for the day. There was no seconds, regardless, and they also left you some bread, two pieces of bread and a couple of pieces of bacon which you were supposed to put away for your next meal. So the chow truck only came once a day if it wasn't during a shelling or bombing or something.

Marcello: I assume that the Japanese opened up on Corregidor just as soon as they had cleaned things up on Bataan.

Bugbee: Yes, they soon got us. They came in from the China Sea over there, and they came in with the ships where they could just lower the boom to us with the big guns off the ships. And then they got the gun emplacements on Bataan so that . . . if I'm not mistaken, there's some holiday that comes in between the time of Bataan falling and . . . I don't know whether it was the Emperor's birthday or something. But anyhow, it was relentless; they just didn't let up.

Marcello: I assume that you were subjected to daily bombardments, both from land and from air.

Bugbee: From air and land. Right, at the time we were there, and . . .

Marcello: I know they were both bad, but which one did you consider the worst--the artillery or the bombing?

Bugbee: I think the artillery because we had no idea really where it was coming from. The bombs, we knew where they were coming from, but the artillery had so many angles they could come at us on the thing that you just really had no idea where they were coming from.

Marcello: And I gather that there was very little that the personnel on Bataan could do about the artillery. As I recall, just about all the heavy weapons on Bataan were Naval rifles which fired on a flat trajectory. There were no howitzers to reach over the hills and get at those Japanese.

Bugbee: None. And then, of course, like I say, I did not get involved in that part of it, but there were rumors that they weren't even able to get ammunition; even though we had ammunition, there was some reluctance to give them the ammunition to use. I heard many times that they had spotters and everything, but they were unable to get the ammunition at the time, and, of course, we didn't realize whether it was fact or not until after the actual fall of Corregidor when we loaded all that

ammunition on the Japanese ships. We know that there was quite a bit left.

Marcello: Did most of the people on Corregidor feel pretty secure? Did you feel that Corregidor could hold out and that help would eventually come? In other words, you could take anything that the Japanese threw against you. Was this the general feeling of the people on Corregidor?

Bugbee: Yeah, as far as I was concerned, the people I was around consistently felt that help was on its way and that all we had to do was withstand the storm for a few times and that help would be there, and it would all be over.

Marcello: Suppose the Japanese attacked. Were you pretty confident that you could beat off such an attack?

Bugbee: Well, we did beat off a number of waves before the actual surrender. And it just got progressively worse, and then, as you and everybody knows, it was about the time that General Wainwright decided that he would surrender.

Marcello: What'd it feel like being subjected to a constant bombardment day-in and day-out? What does it do to a person?

Bugbee: Well, you're scared all the time or you're either a liar or you're crazy you've got to be scared because you never know . . . they say, of course, the one you hear will never hit you; it's already passed over you. But the sounds they make, I mean, that doesn't help your feelings any at all (chuckle). I honestly wasn't afraid of dying.

I was afraid of how I might not die. I didn't want to come back maimed, and I think this was a more constant fear than actually . . . not that I didn't want to live, and it wasn't the fact of being brave and not caring whether I died. That's not true. I just was not actually afraid of dying but was afraid of maybe, you know, having a leg cut off or something. That worried me more than anything else did.

Marcello: Did you ever get a chance to see any of the tunnels, more specifically, Malinta Tunnel?

Bugbee: Yeah, I went in Malinta Tunnel. I also went in the Navy Tunnel, and I believe, if I'm not mistaken, I can't remember which one of the tunnels was the one where they had all the money. Right before they surrendered, they had all this United States currency over there, and it looked like a carpet over there where they were just cutting it up and trying to deface it so it couldn't possibly be used by the Japanese. I guess that just about at that time they had made up their mind that this was going to be about the end of the stand at Corregidor.

Marcello: I gather those tunnels were something to behold, especially Malinta Tunnel, which was quite big.

Bugbee: It was quite big, and, of course, if I'm not mistaken, in the Navy Tunnel was where they had the hospital with the corpsmen and the nurses in it.

Marcello: What was your physical condition like on Corregidor?  
Were things a little bit better there?

Bugbee: No. Well, I mean, the medical attention could have been better, but we didn't have time. There was just no time for anything.

Marcello: In other words, I gather that any time you showed your head where you were you were a likely target. Is that correct?

Bugbee: Well, it was fairly close to that, yes.

Marcello: In other words, when you came out of those holes in daylight, anyhow, you didn't walk from one place to the next.

Bugbee: No, you didn't play volleyball on the beach or anything like that (chuckle).

Marcello: Describe the events leading up to the fall of Corregidor, the day that Corregidor fell. Is that a pretty vivid picture in your mind?

Bugbee: Well, the most vivid thing in my mind was, of course, when the word was passed, and they told us to destroy our small arms and not to do anything with anything else, that we had surrendered.

Marcello: In other words, up to this time you had not personally come into contact with the Japanese, is that correct?

Bugbee: No, I hadn't had any personal contact with them.

Marcello: In other words, when they landed, they did not land in your sector of the beach?

Bugbee: No. And we were told to destroy our small arms and to congregate over in an area and that the Japanese would be over. And, of course, I don't guess there was an eye in there that didn't have tears in it when we saw the Stars and Stripes go down and the Rising Sun go up.

Marcello: What were your own feelings when you were told to surrender?

Bugbee: We had a lot of--I say we, I know I did myself--an awful lot of apprehension because we knew some things that we had been told about how the Japanese used prisoners-of-war for bayonet practice, and it was a proven fact that they had used the Chinese, and that . . . well, we just didn't know how long we would be alive. I mean, we just felt that when the Japs came we didn't know what to expect.

Marcello: Some people have also said that when the surrender did come something strange happened on the island. For the first time things were quiet. And some people kind of felt that this was rather strange after the constant bombardment. And then all of a sudden things quieted down, and this quiet seemed strange to many people. Did you notice this?

Bugbee: Well, the quiet, I guess, was our own real disbelief that it really could have happened to us. There's just no way to express an individual's feelings when he sees his country's flag come down and the enemy flag go up.

Not knowing not having been familiar with Japanese people other than what you had heard, there wasn't any room for anybody to . . . you just stopped and meditated and pondered what was going to happen next.

Marcello: Had you ever talked very much about the thought of surrendering prior to the surrender itself? Had the thought ever crossed your mind?

Bugbee: No, I really never at any time thought that we weren't going to have relief, and then the whole war would be over. It was a matter of time that it would be . . . I mean, it would look just like the Boy Scouts attacking the Army or something and that when the kids got through, the soldiers would come in and end the situation.

Marcello: Well, describe your first contact with the Japanese. Now you were told to surrender, and you were ordered to congregate at a certain point. Was this the garage area? Eventually, they put all of you in that garage area, did they not?

Bugbee: Yes, but they put us into various points along there, and one thing that we did do, we tried to eat as much food as we could hold. In fact, we got very annoyed with one of the American officers because we had gotten some of these big cans of pineapples, and, of course, being hungry and everything that pineapple's sweet, and you can't eat too much of it. But we ate what we could of it,

and we started playing ring toss with the other because there wasn't too much use in worrying about it.

Marcello: This was when you were waiting for the Japanese to come?

Bugbee: Waiting for the Japanese to actually come take us. And the officer very sternly reprimanded us and told us that we had no business doing that because that did not belong to us anymore. It belonged to the Japanese government. We told him where he could go. That was about the only time, I think, that a lot of us lost our respect for the senior officer; I say, for that individual, due to the statement he had made. As far as we were concerned, I'd have liked to have seen everything destroyed. So we sat there and huddled in our own apprehension of what was coming next. And when the Japanese did come, they were actually the fighting troops. Now here again, there's a certain amount of love between thieves, so to speak. The actual Japanese fighting men had more compassion for our military men than some of the home guard did after we were actually taken off of Corregidor. They made it known in no uncertain terms that they were victorious, and then, of course, they were dying for sweets. Apparently they had been rationed on any kind of sugar or stuff, and when they saw that canned pineapple, with the bayonet they'd go "Pineapple! Pineapple!" They wouldn't say it that distinctly, but that's what they wanted, and they were just going hog wild over especially

anything that was sweet. And apparently, like I said, they had been starved for sweets. Of course, the Japs loved sweets anyhow.

Marcello: Apparently, they had a pretty rough time on Bataan themselves so far as disease and food and so on was concerned.

Bugbee: Yes, and, of course, the boys that fought on Bataan gave them one hell of a fight.

Marcello: Well, it took them a lot longer to conquer the Philippines than what they thought it would.

Bugbee: Yeah, you see, the war started in December, and it was April before Bataan fell and then approximately a month later before Corregidor fell. That gave a lot of time for reinforcements to build up to combat the situation. But then after they did take us and while we were still on Corregidor, they put us in work parties. We loaded food and ammunition from Corregidor onto the Japanese ships to be taken back. I would imagine we did this for three or four days, and then they started taking us over to the mainland.

Marcello: Now at this time had they roughed you up any at all yet?

Bugbee: As far as I was concerned, they had not roughed me up, and I hadn't seen . . . like I say, these were fighting troops, and they felt a soldier's compassion for a soldier, and actually some of the Japanese could speak

better English than I can.

Marcello: Did they allow you to sample some of the food that you were loading?

Bugbee: No! No, they were strict about that part of it. No, they didn't give us any privileges at all, but as far as I personally was concerned, I didn't get any severe mistreatment or be roughed up by the capturing forces.

Marcello: You said then that you were taken from Corregidor to Manila just a couple of days later.

Bugbee: A few days later we were taken over to Manila, and we were put in the Bilibid Prison there in Manila.

Marcello: Now where is Bilibid Prison located in relationship to the docks, the dock area where you would have landed? Is it some distance inside the town?

Bugbee: It's a little ways inside the town. It wasn't too great a distance, but . . .

Marcello: Did they march you from the docks to Bilibid?

Bugbee: We marched to Bilibid.

Marcello: Did they try and humiliate you in any way before the Filipino people?

Bugbee: No, not to my remembrance. I don't remember that being done in any way. Of course, we were already humiliated in our own eyes, and . . .

Marcello: Did many Filipinos show up on the streets to watch the Americans marching from the docks to Bilibid?

Bugbee: There were Filipinos lining the street, but they tried to give us signs of encouragement. They had to watch because they couldn't take too many chances with the Japanese, being freshly captured and everything as all of us were.

Marcello: Did some of them flash the "V" sign?

Bugbee: But they did. Some of them did. "Hi, Joe," you know, that was their famous expression over there, "Hi, Joe." And as far as my remembrance is concerned, I don't remember anything where the Japs actually tried to cause us any more embarrassment than we already had.

Marcello: What was Bilibid Prison like?

Bugbee: Well, it was just a regular prison over there, and, of course, when you figure if they cram a cell full of people where one or two people might have been, it was sort of miserable until things got squared away. And it didn't get squared away too long because we didn't stay in Bilibid too long, and they boarded us aboard a train in cattle cars . . .

Marcello: Was it a matter of days that you were at Bilibid?

Bugbee: Yeah, I imagine we were at Bilibid for about a week or so.

Marcello: Would you say that mainly it was a type of . . . transit area where they were going to send you on to some other place?

Bugbee: That's true, yeah. You see, the civilians were at Santo Tomas, and that's where they had the civilian internees, as I later learned, and they used the Bilibid Prison for the military.

Marcello: I assume things were rather uneventful there. They didn't have many work details for you to go on. They just more or less were keeping you there until they sent you on.

Bugbee: It was just a staging area until they could figure out what they were going to do with us.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen to you at Bilibid that you recall?

Bugbee: No, not a thing. It was just one day passing into another.

Marcello: Okay, so they loaded you on the cattle cars then, and I assume that they were taking you to Cabanatuan, is that correct?

Bugbee: We went to Cabanatuan from . . .

Marcello: Which one--Cabanatuan I or Cabanatuan II?

Bugbee: To the best of my memory we went to one of them, and then it wasn't complete, or they had to separate us because you . . . they tried to put the Navy and Marines in one section and the Army in another section. I wound up in Cabanatuan I.

Marcello: What was the trip like from Bilibid to Cabanatuan? You

mentioned that they loaded you on cattle cars.

Bugbee: Yeah, it was a miserable ride, and we rode for a certain length of time and then, of course, we had to walk after we got off the train. We had to walk and there were any number of stories. I didn't visually see some of them, but you had to stay on your feet. They weren't catering to anybody. If you collapsed or anything, the Japs would just as soon run a bayonet in you.

Marcello: Did you ever see this?

Bugbee: I didn't actually see that. The only thing I did actually see was that when we got into Cabanatuan there were three prisoners that had been made to dig their own grave, and they were executed in front of us when we got there.

Marcello: Were these prisoners who had tried to escape?

Bugbee: They had escaped, and, of course, according to the Geneva Conference which the Japanese never paid a whole lot of attention to, I mean, at all to really, they had been recaptured, and theoretically they should not have been given the death penalty. But I think they were trying to put a little sand in the shoes for the rest of the prisoners, and it was shortly after that that they put us in squads of ten with the threat that if anyone escaped the other nine would be executed regardless.

Marcello: And I would assume that everybody in that squad of ten was

looking at those other nine to make sure that nobody did escape.

Bugbee: It made you stop and think a whole lot. For another thing, I remember also that there were a number of civilian workmen that were with us. They'd been captured with the military, and they were not put in with the civilians; they were kept in the military camp. And one old boy had married a Filipino girl, and he lived over in the Philippine Islands, and he knew the Philippine area. He knew it about like the back of your hand, and I asked him one time, "With your family and everything here and the cover you would have, how come you've never tried to escape?" And he said, "Well, first of all, our color's against us, and secondly, you can't trust your next-door neighbor." He said, "I could get out. I could escape. But then I might just cause more trouble for my wife and my family by escaping than if I were to stay here." And he said, "If the neighbors next door were hungry or anything or wanted to get into good grace with the Japs, they might turn me in or something. Because it was happening. That was another factor that put sand in my shoes about thinking about escaping or trying to escape.

Marcello: You mentioned that train trip awhile ago. Did you lose very many people as a result of that strenuous train trip?

Bugbee: Well, I don't really know how many people we lost along the way, but I do know that when we got over to Cabanatuan that we had burial parties. The burial parties at that time were running somewhere close to 100 a day. We were burying that many on an average.

Marcello: Were you ever on any of those burial parties?

Bugbee: I was on a burial party, and . . .

Marcello: Would you care to describe what one of them was like?

Bugbee: Well, actually all we did was dig a long ditch, and it was just like placing sticks. You would put in the bodies, and, of course, they were extremely dissipated and emaciated. It was almost just like skin and bones that you were just placing into it. And then we'd just lay them in this one ditch whose size depended upon the number that were buried that day, and then we just put mud over them. And, of course, all the dogs in the area had reverted back to their wild stage of their life because they'd get in there, and the dogs would go dig up the graves and try to get to them. And the next day we'd have to go back and rebury or recover the graves.

Marcello: Now I gather there were no markers of any sort. This was simply a mass grave.

Bugbee: It was just a mass grave, no markings of any kind on it at all.

Marcello: And I gather that the depth of the grave was dependent upon the patience of the Japanese soldier. If he thought you had dug long enough, that's where you would stop digging, whether it was four feet or six feet or whatever it was.

Bugbee: Just as long as they could be placed and covered. That was all they . . .

Marcello: Did you ever have to carry any of the dead to those pits?

Bugbee: Yes, that was part of it. We had to carry them over upon a stretcher-like deal. We'd just take them and . . . it'd get to a point where it wasn't a body anymore. You would just dump it into the pit and that was it.

Marcello: I gather a couple of people had the rather distasteful job of having to get down in that pit and stacking those bodies.

Bugbee: Yes, they had to put them in there. I never did get that part of the detail. But this went on and this was one of the reasons, I feel, that the Japanese never really acknowledged us as prisoners-of-war until . . . well, it was sometime late in the beginning of the following year before my family got notified that I was assumed to be a prisoner-of-war. They never knew because even . . . the Japs are stupid like a fox. They knew that they would have to make an accounting, and

if they turned in "X" number of names of prisoners-of-war, and when the war did end that they had just a very minor number compared to the number they'd turned in, they'd have to make some accounting for that. So after the death rate had dropped . . .

Marcello: And I would assume that as time went on, and as the weak were . . . I don't want to use the word "weeded out," but as the weak died the death rate did drop quite a bit.

Bugbee: The death rate eventually dropped, and it was about that time, I guess, that the Japanese actually acknowledged the fact that we were prisoners-of-war. Actually, I guess, in all reality you couldn't blame them with the way that the Filipinos and Americans were both dying at the time, and . . .

Marcello: What was Cabanatuan itself like? From a physical standpoint, could you describe the camp?

Bugbee: Well, my first impression of Cabanatuan was nothing except that it was a big old field with nothing but old bull grass in it. And the Japs had bivouacked and built themselves some barracks where their guards were going to stay and their troops would stay. And we had some shack houses over on the prisoner-of-war side. But then we had to go out from there and almost start from scratch into building up a farm. And here again, they

did everything they could. I mean, if you needed a shovel, they'd give you a pick--just anything to make your work that much more difficult in trying to do something. Well, we finally cleared the land, and they made farmers out of us, and we had corn and potatoes. I know we used to get in those rows of corn, and while nobody was looking we'd eat that raw corn and the potatoes that we would grow. The Japs would take the potatoes, and we would get the leaves to cook for our meals. And we were given rice originally. Of course, the main diet was rice. There were so many of our boys that the only time they had ever seen rice was in a cereal or a rice pudding or something. And, of course, being an old "booger" from Louisiana, I'd eaten rice all my life. So they didn't throw anything different at me except for the fact that every now and then they had a little something crawling in it. And every now and then, right at the first part of the time, it sort of disgusts you a little bit, but then after that, when you really got hungry, you wouldn't even look to see what was in there. It was just something added to it.

Marcello: Now I gather the Japanese weren't deliberately starving you. Is this correct? Did they assume that they were giving you the same amount of food perhaps that the Japanese soldier in the field was getting, or was it something less than that?

Bugbee: I would say that it was something less. We didn't get any of the added things. And if a carabao died or something, then we would get a meat ration to go along with the rice. But here again, of course, this gets way ahead of my situation. When people ask me about my animosity toward Japs, I can't really have a whole lot of animosity because the Japs actually treated their own people almost like they treated us.

Marcello: You mean the relationship between the Japanese noncommissioned officer and the Japanese soldier was practically the same as the relationship that their soldiers had toward the prisoners.

Bugbee: Yeah, I mean, like you talked earlier about being manhandled. The only time that I actually really was physically manhandled was when one of the Japanese sergeants saw one of the guards give me a cigarette. And he worked over the guard; he worked me over; and then he worked the guard over again. The guard got worked over twice to my once.

Marcello: How did the Japanese sergeant work you over? With his gun butt, with his fists?

Butbee: Well, they had sticks that they were carrying around with them out there in the field as we were working, and he just worked me over with his stick pretty good. It didn't really do too much physical harm. But, like I say, the Jap guard got it twice to my once because

he had given me a cigarette. They invariably told us--the ones that could speak English--tried to tell us we were their friends, their tomodachi. They hated Roosevelt. Roosevelt was their main reason for the war, and as far as we were concerned we were their friends. And I'd say, "Yeah, some friend." What we did, we cleared these fields there at Cabanatuan and went on work details every day.

Marcello: How long did a workday last?

Bugbee: We'd go out in the mornings, and, of course . . . see, the Japanese do things a little bit different than we do. If we sent a detail of prisoners out, we'd have probably as many guards as we had prisoners. But they'd send a detail of ten men or twelve men out, and they'd only have maybe one guard watching ten or twelve men. And we'd goof off. Let's face it. I mean, hell, we weren't getting anything from the Japs, and we weren't going to do anything we didn't have to do. We made up nicknames from the Japs that were around.

Marcello: I'm sure that all the Japanese guards had nicknames. What were some of these nicknames?

Bugbee: Oh, we named one of them "Air Raid," and we named one of them "Mickey Mouse," and we named another one of them "Donald Duck."

Marcello: Why did he get the name "Donald Duck."

Bugbee: Well, when we were out in the field and we were goofing

off or we were trying to swipe some corn off the stalks or something, sitting there in the middle, and that would be a way of letting the guys know that the Jap guard was coming. We'd say, "'Donald Duck's' coming" or something like that, and we'd stop what we were doing and get busy working. Or "Air Raid," and that meant that one of the other guards was coming.

Marcello: In other words, these guys didn't particularly get these names because of any physical characteristics or anything like that.

Bugbee: No, it was just a warning that we were able to pass among ourselves so that we could do what we wanted to do and try not to get caught.

Marcello: Incidentally, these three names are pretty familiar. I don't know if the same guards had these names or not or whether other prisoners used these same words for other Japanese guards. But "Donald Duck," "Air Raid," and "Mickey Mouse" were all rather common names.

Bugbee: And, of course, the one we called "Donald Duck" was a character. And he wanted to know why we called him "Donald Duck" because he could speak a little English. And, of course, we told him old "Donald Duck" was a big movie star back in the United States. So he got a liberty one weekend and went to Manila and saw a Donald Duck cartoon, and we had to change his name pretty quickly when he got back. (chuckle)

Marcello: Did you ever get very familiar with any of the guards?

Bugbee: No, they . . . like I say, there were any number of them that tried to tell us that they weren't mad at us, and, of course, their propaganda said that Roosevelt had to use his coffee grounds over and over again because coffee was scarce in the United States and that the Japs had landed on the California coast. While I was in Cabanatuan, I did a little conniving and had a little money. And now when I say a little money, it was just a little bit of money.

Marcello: Were the Japanese paying you so much a day at this time, or didn't this take place until you go to Japan?

Bugbee: The Japanese paid us nothing. I guess they figured our room and board was all we got over there. But I had a few dollars and while we didn't fraternize with the Jap guards, every now and then the Jap guards would let us buy something from the Filipinos when we were out on a work detail, such as some bananas or some sugar or rice and coffee. I went into an enterprising project, and I'd roll out the rice and make flour out of the rice and take a little sugar and make rice cookies and coffee, and then I'd sell them to the guys who didn't have much money. They'd have a few nickels or so, and I'd sell them coffee and rice cake. And this way I was able to eat a little bit better myself and to get things from

the Filipinos when I was out, and also I was able to take care of some of my buddies and send some stuff over to the guys across the road in the hospital. When we had our free time, they didn't bother us too much.

Marcello: What did you usually work--six days and rest one? Or was it a seven day work week?

Bugbee: It'd all depend. In the beginning we were consistently working until they got the farm situated. And then, like I say, it was tough sledding because we didn't have the proper equipment to do anything with. We were captured on May 6. And there was a whole gang of us that . . . well, hell, we knew that we'd be home by July the Fourth. And when July the Fourth came and went, we all knew we'd be home for Thanksgiving. And when that came and went, we knew we'd be home for Christmas.

Marcello: In other words, you lived on these hopes. You had to, I suppose.

Bugbee: And then a bunch of us that were from the Louisiana and around the New Orleans area already had it all formulated as to where we were going to meet to have our reunion--Mardi Gras Day down at New Orleans. And that went one year to the other, and I think that this was one of the things that kept us going. And, of course, regardless, I'm not what you would call a religious man, but I do

believe that the "Man Upstairs" has our numbers, and regardless of what we do, when our time's up, it's going to be that way. We can do things to make our existence a little bit more comfortable on Earth, but my feelings are that you can't extend your life any. So with the help of the Lord, I made up my mind I was going to do anything I could to get back. I was criticized one time by our lieutenant for digging in the garbage cans. And I told him, I said "Lieutenant, I'm sorry. I may be a Marine, and I may be disgracing the Marines as far as you're concerned, but I made up my mind I'm going back with the will of the Lord any way I can. And I'm hungry, and I'm going to try to find something to eat." And I used to work for the officers and get extra rations.

Marcello: This was for the Japanese officers?

Bugbee: No, this was the Americans. You see, only the higher ranking officers were not anywhere in a separate camp. They were in separate areas, but they were right there with us.

Marcello: Now other prisoners mentioned various ways that they went about supplementing their diet. Some of them ate snakes, lizards, dogs, or cats, and things of this nature. Was this done by you and the people around you also?

Bugbee: Oh yeah, anything that came by. The only thing that I

could not bring myself to eat was a piece of dog meat. I don't know why because I was hungry enough. But I just couldn't. They had monkey one time. I ate a piece of their monkey. And then snakes, they had snakes. But anything we could get to supplement we would because . . . well, let's face it, you know, a person can be hungry from one meal to the next, but when you're constantly hungry from one day to the next, then there's nothing on your mind except food.

Marcello: I was going to mention the fact that probably this was on your mind more than anything else--food.

Bugbee: It got to a point where we didn't think about home anymore. Of course, periodically, when a new prisoner was brought in and we would hear them griping and bellyaching about the powdered eggs they had to eat, we'd tell them, "Just wait till you're here a few weeks, buddy. You'll wish you had some of those powdered eggs." (chuckle) But we were consistently hungry all the time. For myself, I used to try to think back at the old ten-cent store, and all I could see was the candy case with that great big block of chocolate in that candy case. And I wondered if that ever really was real or if it was something that I had dreamed about. And we were always thinking of . . . well, like I say, being hungry

all the time, it didn't give us a chance to do much thinking of anything else really. And then, here again, the boys, some of them would swap their rice ball off for a cigarette. And, like I said earlier, it was my own belief that I don't think that you can do anything about extending your life, but they got more peace of mind out of having a cigarette to smoke than they did out of a rice ball, and I never criticized them for what they did. And you got to a point where you let some of the guys--I say some of them--we had one in particular that used to wait until everybody else had finished, and he'd sit down there and wait, and then he'd eat his rice almost like one grain at a time. (chuckle). Sometimes they'd put out the menu. If you looked at the menu, my Lord, you'd think, well, boy, those guys were eating real good. But if you broke down the menu and found out what we actually got, it was pretty sorry. And in the early parts of our capture over at Cabanatuan, we know the Japs were eating better--not much better--than we were. But to answer your other question about fraternizing with the Japanese, there was very little of any. We didn't try to antagonize them because if we'd get outside of the camp on a work detail and had any money, we'd like to buy something to supplement our food with.

Marcello: What were the medical facilities like on Cabanatuan?

Bugbee: Well, I went to sick call a couple of times on Cabanatuan but the hospital situation across the road . . . and from stories I heard . . . I never got over, thank God. I didn't have to go over to that, but . . .

Marcello: I've heard that if somebody was so sick that they had to go to the hospital, that was the next step to the grave, or the step before the grave really.

Bugbee: There were stories that filtered back that if you went over to the hospital with a ring or a gold tooth or a watch or anything, you'd very seldom ever come back. And, here again, this was some of our people, not only the Japs. It was our people over there that were doing some of these things.

Marcello: I would assume that medicine of all sorts was in short supply.

Bugbee: It was in short supply, and here again, all of us had reverted back to the "beast of man," I'll say. I mean, "the survival of the fittest." I will never forget one time I asked a chaplain if he would take some bananas over to a buddy of mine that was in the hospital, and he said, "The only way I'll take them over there is if I can have half of them." And there was another time that I saw one of the "men of the cloth," get a little extra food, and he ran into one of the huts and gobbled

it down so nobody would see him have it (chuckle). But these are things you can't criticize people for. I'm not a Mason myself, but I think that the members of the Masonic Order actually maintained more closeness of fellowship to Man among themselves than any religion or anything else while we were in the prison camp. And we all reverted. It got to a point of the "survival of the fittest," I mean, let's face it . . .

Marcello: In other words, generally speaking, it did get to the point where it was "every man for himself," more or less.

Bugbee: That's right. It was "every man for himself," and yet you didn't criticize people. You didn't have time to criticize even. You were out trying to see what you could do for yourself.

Marcello: What was your own physical condition like at this time in Cabanatuan?

Bugbee: Well, in Cabanatuan I got along pretty good.

Marcello: Did you ever have any of your attacks of malaria?

Bugbee: I didn't, no. Not in Cabanatuan.

Marcello: The reason I asked that was because I would have gathered that by this time the quinine had given out.

Bugbee: Well, the quinine had given out, but I had apparently had what would be considered a light case of malaria over on Bataan because I didn't have any reoccurrences at that time.

Marcello: You never had dysentery or beriberi or pellagra?

Bugbee: Not until I got over to Japan proper. That's when the beriberi got to me. Well, we all wanted to stay as much as possible in the Philippines.

Marcello: You dreaded going to Japan.

Bugbee: Yeah, because we knew that when our forces did come back that they would certainly liberate the Philippine Islands before they struck Japan proper. And I personally did everything I could to stay in the Philippines, but then it reached the point where the Japanese would issue ultimatums that . . .

Marcello: What could you do to stay in the Philippines?

Bugbee: Actually nothing other than I was working with the officers and doing their laundry and things like that just trying to . . . let's face it, whether anybody wants to admit it or not, the officers were going to take care of themselves first, and they also knew they would rather stay in the Philippines than go to Japan. And when the orders came down, of course, the orders went to the privates and the others before the officers themselves had to be physically moved over. And I did everything in my power to stay for as long as I could, and then, of course, the orders came out that every physical man had to be moved to Japan. And, of course, if you'll recall back--and I don't remember the month or

year--the island of Japan was almost wiped out with the dysentery that they had, and they were deathly afraid of dysentery.

Marcello: About how long were you at Cabanatuan altogether?

Bugbee: I would venture to say it was about two years.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that it had reached a point where it was "survival of the fittest" and so on. Did you ever see any evidence of collaboration by American prisoners in order to get favors from the Japanese? In other words, were there ever any informers who would tell about some of the activities that were going on?

Bugbee: Well, you see at that point collaboration would have meant nothing. We had been on the Philippines. They had everything in the Philippines. We didn't know what was going on back in the states. We had no information on that, so we had nothing that we could collaborate with them about. To answer your question, no, because I don't know of anything that anybody would have had any information about unless it would have been somebody that would go up and inform them about somebody that was going to make a break or something. And, of course, you stop to think a long time before you put nine men's lives in danger, thinking that you might get something yourself. Nobody knew whether the Japs would

actually execute the other nine, but nobody wanted to be the one to experiment to see if they would.

Marcello: Did you ever witness any of the alleged brutalities committed by the Japanese? You'd mentioned earlier, of course, that in one instance when the Japanese guard had given you a cigarette that you were roughed up a little bit. Did you ever witness any other prisoners being roughed up?

Bugbee: I saw one boy that had gotten caught stealing an ear of corn, and they just took his arm and broke it over a rifle. They just took it and bashed it right over the rifle and broke his arm just to set an example for the rest of us.

Marcello: I assume there was quite a bit of working over with gun butts and things of that nature, head slapping and that sort of thing.

Bugbee: There was quite a bit of it, and earlier there were reports of various things. But truthfully, I did not personally witness a lot of the brutality because they didn't do these things out in public where some of these boys would be taken, and they'd drive bamboo in their fingernails and light the bamboo. The bamboo smolders. And they'd hang them by their thumbs so their thumbs almost got the size of oranges.

Marcello: They did do these things, but you just didn't witness it.

Bugbee: They did do the things, but I did not actually witness them and see them actually carry it out.

Marcello: You saw the end results?

Bugbee: Right, but the end results were there, yeah.

Marcello: And the message came through loud and clear, I gather?

Bugbee: That it did! If you kept your nose clean, you could stay out of trouble, and it holds true in most any respect. You can look for trouble; you can find it anyway you want it. If you wanted to find trouble in a prison camp, you could find it.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were on Cabanatuan for two years. This was a relatively long time, was it not, compared to what most prisoners spent at Cabanatuan?

Bugbee? Well, we, our group was there. And, like I say, I, they took work details, and I did everything humanly possible in my power to stay there as long as I could. And I don't actually recall the date, but I dreaded the day that I was put aboard ship and sent to Japan.

Marcello: I gather that you received the word that you were to go to Japan sometime in 1944 then. Is that correct?

Bugbee: I think it was somewhere in that neighborhood, well, in the year of '44.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you were told that you were going to have to go to Japan? You had mentioned awhile

ago that you were dreading the thought of having to go to Japan because you figured that it would be the last area that would be liberated.

Bugbee: Right, I hated it, but I didn't have much choice. In fact, I had no choice, let's face it. I mean, the orders came out and it was that. We were just marched on out of the camp and sent down and put aboard a ship.

Marcello: How long a march was it from Cabanatuan to the docks of Manila?

Bugbee: Well, of course, they went to the railroad station. We didn't go all the way from Cabanatuan to the docks of Manila by foot.

Marcello: In other words, you went mainly by railroad.

Bugbee: By rail to where we boarded the boat.

Marcello: Was this a very eventful trip from Cabanatuan to Manila on board the cars? Were you crowded again?

Bugbee: It was another jam session, so to speak. But we were just herded in like a bunch of cattle.

Marcello: Did you lose any people on this trip?

Bugbee: No.

Marcello: Well, by this time, I guess, the strong had survived and would continue to somehow hang on.

Bugbee: Yeah, at this time that was one of the reasons who this group was chosen because it was only the fit that were going to be transferred over to Japan. Anybody who had any ailments of any kind or had lost any member

of their body or anything were left behind. And this was the last of the enlisted group that was sent to Japan.

Marcello: Describe the trip to Japan.

Bugbee: Well, we were herded aboard this ship, which was down in the hold of the ship, and I've often threatened that I was going to write a book called Three Hundred Men in a Hold which I never did get around to doing. But the ship was not marked in any way to show that prisoners-of-war were being carried on it. This used to worry the daylights out of us, too.

Marcello: You were afraid of a submarine attack or an air attack.

Bugbee: Very definitely. We'd just hate like hell to think that our own troops would send us down to the bottom, but they had no way of knowing. And, of course, we weren't allowed up topside. They would send the food down in buckets.

Marcello: You were kept down in the hold throughout this trip to Japan.

Bugbee: That's right. Throughout the trip to Japan we were kept down in the hold of the ship.

Marcello: I assume things were crowded there too.

Bugbee: They were not only crowded, but the stench got pretty bad down there.

Marcello: A lot of people had dysentery?

Bugbee: And it began to get sickening . . .

Marcello: Were there any toilet facilities?

Bugbee: No, just the buckets that they sent the rice down in. We'd keep those down there for us to use, and then every now and then they'd let us dump that out. But the trip over there seemed like it would never end. Of course, they did most of their running, I guess, at night.

Marcello: How long of a trip was it?

Bugbee: I think, if I'm not mistaken, it took us twenty-eight days to get over to the Japanese Islands.

Marcello: That was a pretty long time, was it not?

Bugbee: It seemed to me it was. And, of course, it wasn't one of their best ships, let's face it. If my memory serves me correctly, it took us twenty-eight days to get from Manila to where we docked there at Tokyo.

Marcello: Did you go straight from the Philippines to Tokyo?

Bugbee: Well, I think it took us twenty-eight days because of the course we took. Of course, we never were told what course we were taking.

Marcello: And you never got above deck?

Bugbee: No, so we wouldn't have known anyhow as to what was going on.

Marcello: Did you lose anybody on this trip over to Japan?

Bugbee: There were two boys that died that I know of.

Marcello: What did they do with them?

Bugbee: They just stayed there until we got there.

Marcello: They stayed . . .

Bugbee: In the hold.

Marcello: In the hold for twenty-eight days.

Bugbee: Yeah, the whole time they were there. Well, they didn't die immediately, but I can't recall how many days from the time that they did die, but they didn't do anything with them.

Marcello: I'm surprised they didn't throw them overboard.

Bugbee: Well, I don't think they actually knew that they were dead because of being down in there, we didn't know ourselves half the time what was going on.

Marcello: You couldn't tell one stench from another in other words. Well, what happened when you got to Japan?

Bugbee: Well, when we got to Japan we were put aboard a train, and this time it was a nice train, a passenger train.

Marcello: Were you able to observe any of the Japanese scenery?

Bugbee: No, because as we were put aboard the train the Jap guards came down and made sure that the shades were all pulled down.

Marcello: Had the air raids started by this time?

Bugbee: No, not to my knowledge they hadn't began in Japan proper.

But the trip that we made--I say Tokyo--from where we landed to where we were taken aboard the train, at all times the shades were kept pulled down. And I was taken in one of the groups to a place called Ashio. And this was approximately thirty miles--it may be a little farther than that--northeast of Tokyo. Actually, the area that we were taken to was a copper mine area. At one time it had been operated by the Anaconda Copper Company, and they had figured that they had gotten all that they could get out of it and condemned the mine. And, of course, the Japs, desperate for anything they could get in the way of metal, had reopened the mine. So that was to become my new project after getting over into the camp there at Ashio. We became miners.

Marcello: What was the camp itself like from a physical standpoint?

Bugbee: It was just long rows of bamboo that we used but where we slept. The food was rice to start off with, and every now and then the Japanese, when we got over there, would give us one--here again, we had squads of ten for working details and things--they would give us one strawberry for ten men. This was part of their mental torture to let us know that these things still existed. Or they'd give us one egg to split among ten men. And we all agreed we'd always give the little oddity to whoever was the sickest. It wouldn't do anybody any good any other

way. And they used to have what they called toshi ban, where we'd do an extra day's work for the emperor and get an extra rice ball or something. Earlier in our talk, you talked about the morale and what kept us going. This was one of the things that the Japanese could never understand about the Americans. No matter how rough they treated us, how many times they slapped anybody around, we always came up laughing. And this did more to demoralize the Japanese than it did to demoralize us. Of course, in the camp we had a number of British, and . . .

Marcello: How did you get along with the British troops?

Bugbee: Individually, they have some very fine people. Collectively, I think they weren't too hot, let's put it that way.

Marcello: What did you find to criticize the British?

Bugbee: Their air of superiority was one of the things that seemed to bug everybody. I'm not talking about the Canadians or the Australians or anything. They were just as different as day and night to the actual British people.

Marcello: This is what I think most of the other prisoners have mentioned, also. Now while you were at this camp, were you still under military supervision, or were you under civilian supervision by this time?

Bugbee: We were under military supervision at the camp. However,

the majority of the townspeople were nothing but slave labor, Koreans. And, of course, the guards marched us to the mines.

Marcello: Were the guards Japanese, or were they Koreans?

Bugbee: The guards were Japanese. In the summertime we used to run like the devil to get to the mines because it was cooler in the mine than it was outside, and vice-versa in the wintertime. It used to be warmer in the mine than it was outside. And, of course, we had to stop at the entrance of the mine. They had a little Buddha with the altar there, and we had to stop there and make our little sashe' with the Buddha, asking him sort of to take care of us while we were in the mine. Of course, that wasn't exactly what we said, and after we got through with the day's work we had to thank him for taking care of us while we were down in the mine. And, here again, the Japanese have one day--I forget now what it is--but they're supposed to put food on their altars because the spirit is supposed to come down, and they put all these fancy foods and things out. Of course, needless to say, the food on the altar for Buddha didn't stay there very long, and they didn't like that too much. (chuckle)

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with the Japanese civilians? Were the Japanese civilians your immediate work supervisors perhaps?

Bugbee: In the mines, they worked there. They were not Japanese civilians; they were actually Koreans, not the Japanese. Most of them were just Koreans.

Marcello: You had some Korean bosses, also?

Bugbee: In the mines.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship existed between the prisoners and these Korean supervisors?

Bugbee: Well, they were pretty well brainwashed that they had to get the job done. You see, as I said, the Anaconda Copper Company had condemned the mine. They figured that they had scraped all that they could scrape out of it, and then the Japs went back and reopened it to scrape anything else out. And, of course, they had no way of getting any replacement parts because they were all manufactured state-side. So we were given instructions as to how big a piece of ore we could put in these ore cars. And they gave us two instruments that we worked with. They called them a katusa and a kanambe. What it looked like was an oversized dustpan and one of these things that looks like a long, thin hoe. And you'd scrape the ore into the dustpan deal and then drop it into the car.

Marcello: Did you have a certain quota per day? Did you have to fill so much cars?

- Bugbee: Yes, we had so many cars that we had to fill before we could go, and, here again, when the guard or supervisor or the overseer weren't looking . . .
- Marcello: In would go some rocks.
- Bugbee: We would go and dig the biggest rock that we could pick up, and we'd quickly cover it up. And, of course, we Americans worked and tried to avoid any hardships that we could, but we were not working for the Japanese. There was a little trick when you got down to the end of the run with the mine car so that when you'd hit the thing it just tilts and trips the ore, and then the ore falls into the shaft. But somehow or another, it was hard as hell for us to understand how to do it, and so many times the mining car got stuck in the shaft. We don't know how it happened. And every now and then there'd be an awful lot of dust and dirt that got into the wheel of the car so that the wheel would have to be taken off and everything before you could move it.
- Marcello: In other words, you did all sorts of things to sabotage the work, but at the same time sabotage it in such a way that you could perhaps avoid any sort of punishment.
- Bugbee: That hit the nail on the head. And, like I say, they'd come with these toshi ban deals or come with these bonus deals that they'd give us extra food. I think one time

they promised us a sugar ration, and if you've ever seen these little fancy salt shakers, well not shakers, but these little salt containers that they have at these dinner parties and things like that, just a small little like-silver spoon, well, that was the amount of sugar that you got for your extra hard work. So we let the British and the rest of them that wanted to do all the hard work and win all the prizes. We weren't too interested in that extra little dash of sugar (chuckle). And, like I say, they did have a toshi ban every now and then, which was loading an extra car or two for the emperor and get an extra rice ball. But that didn't send us too great at the time either.

Marcello: How did you fair at the hands of the Japanese winter? It gets rather cold over there at wintertime.

Bugbee: Well, being from the south like I was, and New Orleans particularly, I'd seen a freak snow. That was the first snow I'd really ever seen, and it was right there in Japan. And, of course, we had those stupid rubber shoes with your toe sticking out one end and the rest of your foot going in the other end of the thing, and our clothing was very thin, almost like sackcloth, that they issued to us.

Marcello: What sort of blankets did they give you?

Bugbee: Well, we had one blanket. Of course, you know, after awhile you do things--people today'll cringe--but we

used to make a game out of who could pop the bugs the loudest that we'd pick off of each other, the bedbugs. We'd yell, "Oh, boy, somebody blew chow call. Here come the bedbugs." And if you didn't make a game out of it, you'd just go stark-raving mad. And, like I say, in the wintertime when it was real cold, we'd hustle like the devil to get into the mine because it was warmer in the mine than it was outside. And as time went on the food got increasingly worse, but we had one visit from the Red Cross while I was in Japan proper, and the old man sent us out on a work party. We went into town, and when we got back the first-aid area that was run by . . . and this was a British soldier that was a corpsman, and he was one individual that was very nice. But then we had more first aid supplies than you could shake a stick at. They were stacked up, and there were blankets, clean blankets, and everything laid out. And, of course, we were issued orders that we'd better not talk to the Red Cross representative in any way. And, of course, immediately after he paraded through the camp, then the carts came right back after him, and all that stuff was loaded in carts and brought back into town (chuckle).

Marcello: I would assume that you didn't get many of the Red Cross packages which were sent to Japan.

- Bugbee: I received one Red Cross package in about the 3 1/2 years that I was a prisoner.
- Marcello: And then I understand a lot of times the Japanese would even go through those packages and take out what they wanted before they gave them to the prisoners.
- Bugbee: Well, this one package that we got, the one time that we got it, it apparently was complete because it didn't look like anything had been tampered with.
- Marcello: Had you received any sort of mail while you were a prisoner? Obviously, you didn't when you were at Cabanatuan. How about when you were in Japan?
- Bugbee: One time I received seven letters, and they all came at one time. And this was when I realized that my mother had passed away because I had had a couple of letters from my father and a couple of letters from my two sisters, and a letter from my aunt. And there wasn't a word in there about my mother, and I had no letter from my mother, and knowing my mother like I did, when my brother was going to LSU, she was writing him every night, and I knew something had happened. But that was all the mail that I had received.
- Marcello: What sort of a feeling was that to get letters from home?
- Bugbee: Well, I read them and reread them. I kept them; in fact, I still have the letters. I brought them back with me.

It made us realize that we really had to live a different life than we were living right then. (chuckle)

Marcello: Did you ever witness any of the air raids?

Bugbee: No, we had a couple of air raids warnings and we had to secure, but I did not witness any.

Marcello: As Japan was subjected to air raids, obviously some of your guards, some of the civilian workers, probably had members of the family who had been killed. Did you notice any change in the attitudes of either the soldiers or the civilians as a result of these air raids? In other words, did they take out their grief perhaps on the prisoners?

Bugbee: Not to my knowledge, until later on towards the close of the war. I say toward the close of the war; I know that now but I didn't know it at the time. But there was one time there that the commanding officer had called all the Jap guards in. He left just two at the gate, and they were all standing there with their heads bowed and crying. You could see through at them in the window. And, of course, the first thing we thought of, "Oh, my God, they bombed them and they killed the damned emperor, and we'll catch it from now or something." They never did actually come out and tell us the war was over. But that was when the bomb had been dropped at Hiroshima.

Marcello: By this time, in some ways were you dreading the end

of the war? What I'm trying to say is, did the Japanese ever say that if the Americans invaded the home islands, the prisoners would be killed?

Bugbee: No. But we followed the course of the war to a degree by their propaganda because they would come out with their propaganda about how many planes had been shot down, how many battleships had been sunk. And if you just followed the progress island by island, you could see that the war was getting closer and closer to the mainland of Japan, and, hell, if we were losing all these planes and warships we wouldn't have a chance of coming that close. (chuckle) So actually through their own propaganda we were able to keep a little visual idea of how the war was actually progressing. And the food got increasingly worse. They ran out of rice there, and they started feeding us maize or some kind of stuff they used to feed their chickens, I think. And towards the end it really got rough. We went out on parties and picked grass, and we had grass soup until the real last stages before the actual end of the war. But we were never actually threatened to my knowledge of an American invasion. I mean, they would have never admitted that there was even a possibility that the Americans could come on the island. I mean, that was their attitude as far as I could interpret. I don't

think that at any time they would have even acknowledged to themselves that there was any possibility. I guess their propaganda had them like our propaganda had us because we figured that it would just be a matter of weeks before we would be liberated and that was it.

Marcello: Describe the steps leading up to your liberation. In other words, what I'm trying to say is, could you perhaps recall when you heard the news that the war was over and what your feelings were and what happened next.

Bugbee: Right prior to the time that they actually came out and had to tell us that the war was over . . . this was shortly after the incident that I told you about the old man calling all the guards in and their having their heads bowed and crying. Then shortly after that the interpreter said that we had done such a good job that the emperor was going to give us all a holiday. Well, we knew that was a bunch of malarkey because they didn't know what a holiday was. And then all kind of speculation started at that time as to what really was going on.

Marcello: The rumors started again.

Bugbee: The rumors started flying again. And then it was a few days after that, I guess, that our commanding officer

came out and told us that the war was over. He reminded us that we were still prisoners-of-war, and if we got out of line in any way, the Japs had a perfect right to punish us in any way they saw fit, and he said it was rather foolish after all we had been through to think about starting any kind of foolishness, that always just be patient and that we would soon be liberated by our own troops. And then some Navy planes flew over, and the boys dropped their seabags with their own personal gear in it along with various little goodies that we hadn't seen in some time.

Marcello: Did the bombers come over and drop the big oil drums full of food yet?

Bugbee: No, they were preceded by the carrier aircraft that came over. As I said, there was a lot of personal things that were dropped because I saw a book or two that had in it "Please return to Lieutenant So-and-so." They had their own personal gear that they dropped to us. And then the B-29's came over and made a couple of swipes, and then those bomb bay doors opened and that big raft came floating down with all these multicolored parachutes, and we made up our minds that we weren't going to give the Japs a damned thing.

Marcello: Did you have any scores to settle with any individual Japanese soldiers or civilians? In other words, was there

anybody that you wanted to get even with when the war was over?

Bugbee: Well, let's put it this way, not any more than that damned drill sergeant that I had in boot camp. I thought I'd like to tear him apart when I got out of boot camp, and after I got out of boot camp it was all forgotten. And like I said earlier, to me it was extremely hard to build up a whole lot of animosity because the Japanese treated their own people and the Korean people almost as bad as they treated us. It was nothing for a Jap sergeant to pull his saber out and slap a Japanese private across the face with his saber.

Marcello: You saw this on many an occasion?

Bugbee: I saw that. And their food towards the end was no better than ours. And when I got back and came back to what we have here, and they had to stay there with what they still had, I couldn't truthfully . . . now, I was supposed to go back on this war crimes deal, and I decided to get married and I begged off of it. This friend of mine did go back, and he was killed in a taxicab accident over there in Japan.

Marcello: Were you able to prevent the Japanese from getting any of this food that was dropped out of the bombers?

Bugbee: Well, you know you say these things, but we gave one of the guards a plug of Brown Mule chewing tobacco and told him it was candy. He was about the sickest individual you ever saw! (chuckle)

Marcello: The guards didn't disappear when the surrender came then. A lot of prisoners were told by the Japanese that Japan had surrendered, and then the guards just kind of disappeared, headed for the hills.

Bugbee: No, this is one of the things where our commanding officer made it quite clear to us that we were still prisoners until our troops came in.

Marcello: Now, this was the ranking American officer.

Bugbee: The ranking American officer. The only thing that we did was that we went up and we got our pictures out of that book that they had there. And the American troops actually never did come to our camp and liberate us. The Japanese took us to Tokyo and turned us over to the American forces.

Marcello: What were your own feelings when you heard about the surrender?

Bugbee: Oh, it was glorious. I know that when we got off the train in Tokyo and saw all these American Red Cross girls, I almost got back on the train. (chuckle) I was scared! (chuckle) And, of course, they took us in-- not the girls--they took us in and deloused us and ran us through the DDT and showers, and, of course, the Red

Cross girls gave us a ditty bag with some shaving soap and everything. And we got clean clothes.

Marcello: You had a lot of back pay coming, too, I'm sure.

Bugbee: Yeah. I was scheduled to fly back to the United States, but the Marine Corps over there had given a party in our honor, and we were over there having a steak dinner when my number came up. And I missed my flight, and I came back on a LST.

Marcello: It took considerably longer, I assume.

Bugbee: Considerably longer. And, of course, the old man had been issued orders to feed us six meals a day, but that didn't last the first day because the boys were getting sick trying to get too much butter and this and that. And, of course, we reverted back to the three meals a day, but we went back on the LST. We stopped off at Guam, and, of course, Guam looked completely different than what it looked like when we went over--the seabees and the roads and everything. And we stayed at Guam, I guess, on the way back we stayed there about a week I guess it was. And, of course, we did nothing but eat and sleep, and when we went to the mess hall for breakfast, somebody would come by and leave cigarettes and cookies or something on our bunks. I mean, they treated us royally, and instead of getting two beer

chits, I think each one of us prisoners-of-war got four beer chits (chuckle). And we were the only ones that could get all the butter we wanted. And they went out of their way while we were at the hospital there on Guam.

Marcello: As you look back on your tenure as a prisoner-of-war, what do you think pulled you through perhaps more than anything else? What was the key to your own personal survival as you see it?

Bugbee: Well, outside of the Lord, like I said, I went from period to period such as from the Fourth of July to Thanksgiving. I thought that I had capitulated once, and I was going to do everything within my power not to capitulate again. I was going to come back, come "hell or high water," anyway I could. But being that I was still in fair shape although I had various things like beriberi. Going backwards a little ways back still there in the Japanese prison camp in Ashio, they used to burn us with this punk. I have three places on me.

Marcello: They would do this deliberately? They would burn you with this punk?

Bugbee: Well, they'd take little pieces of punk and put it in three places on each of my legs and then on my stomach, and they'd light it.

Marcello: What did they do this for?

Bugbee: That was supposed to drive out the beriberi, I guess.

Marcello: I see.

Bugbee: Just like the boy with dysentery, they'd shave a piece of the top of his head and burn him on the top of his head. This was supposed to drive out the dysentery. I reported for sick call one time, and they put me on light duty and sent me out working with the women. I said, "To hell with that." I went back to regular duty. Those women would kill you, those Japanese women. They'd work out there, and they'd swing a pick eight hours a day without even thinking about it. But the thing you would worry about was whether you were going to slip on the gangplank when you got into San Francisco and break your neck. (chuckle) But I came back in good shape.

Marcello: In other words, it was strictly the will to live as much as anything else that was the key to your survival. I'm sure that you saw people who simply had given up and who laid down and died.

Bugbee: Oh, there were some all right that gave up. I think you hit the nail on the head. It's the will to live, and like you said, I had made up my mind that I was going to come back one way or the other, the best way I could.