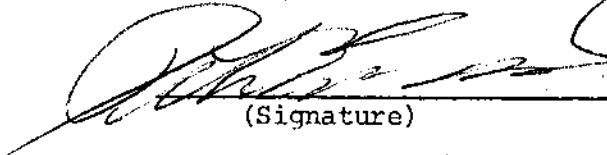


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Interview with
PETE EVANS
February 15, 1984
February 29, 1984
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Place of Interview: Duncanville, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

Pete Evans

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date of Interview: February 15, 1984

Place of Interview: Duncanville, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Pete Evans for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 15, 1984, in Duncanville, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Evans in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. More specifically, Mr. Evans was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, which was a Texas National Guard unit captured in Java in March of 1942, and which subsequently spent the rest of the war in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps in Asia and in Japan itself.

Mr. Evans, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born--things of nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Evans: I was born on August 30, 1923, in Taylor County, Texas, close to a town by the name of Hamby, a small town, which is not an incorporated town, in Taylor County, Texas, which is close to Abilene.

Mr. Evans: Tell me a little bit about your education.

Mr. Evans: I attended grammar school in a country school at Hamby and another school called New Hope, and then I went to Abilene High School for, I guess, two-and-a-half years. During that time, I joined the Texas National Guard, and we was drilling once a week. Of course, that was right during the Depression, and, of course, we got a little money for that. I also worked for the NYA, which was the National Youth Administration, and I worked on Saturdays. I assisted janitors. Of course, times was pretty rough during those times. I quit school in the early part of, I guess, 1940. I quit school. Then, of course, we were mobilized on November 25, 1940, under the emergency act of 1940.

Marcello: Let's go back a little bit and fill in with a few more details. How old were you when you joined the National Guard? Do you recall?

Evans: I was just a few days over sixteen. I was sixteen years old, and I joined, I guess, in the early part of 1939, which would make me about...I guess it was before I was sixteen. Then, of course, when I went to camp in 1940, I would have been about seventeen years old.

Marcello: What was the minimum age for getting into the National Guard?

Evans: Well, eighteen was the minimum age. I guess that officer looked the other way whenever he took me in. They was

needing bodies, I suppose. I never had to produce a birth certificate or nothing like that. Of course, my mother and father never did complain, and as a result, I guess I slipped through the crack.

Marcello: Did you have to falsify your date of birth?

Evans: I don't recall that. I don't even recall signing anything. I think I just went up there, and he told me to show up for drill. I don't recall even holding my hand up. I don't even really recall taking the oath of office all the time I was in the war. Of course, it was just an accepted fact that I was going to be an American, I suppose, and I was going to fight for my side, I guess. I don't recall signing anything, and I don't recall standing up in front of the flag or anything like that--no oath of office, as I recall.

As far as I know, I didn't falsify anything. I guess I acquiesced and allowed it to be falsified. They did the falsification if there was anything done. I don't think they'd send me to the penitentiary for it, not at this late date, anyway (chuckle). I'm sure the statute of limitations has run out on it by now (chuckle).

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the National Guard?

Evans: Well, some of my buddies was in there, and, of course, we was fixing to go to camp at that time--in 1940. I believe I joined the National Guard on December 18, 1939. It was

shortly after the war had broken out in Europe. I'm sure that's correct. I'm sure that's right. Then we went to Louisiana in 1940 as a unit, and that was in the summer of 1940. That's when we went to camp.

Marcello: What part did economics play in your decision to join the National Guard?

Evans: Well, we drew maybe a dollar or a dollar-and-a-half a drill, I believe it was, and, of course, back in those days, a dollar-and-a-half was as big as a wagon wheel. You could buy quite a bit for a dollar-and-a-half back in those days. My father was a blacksmith, and he was...of course, there wasn't anybody that had very much money back in those days. Only a few people in town, I guess, had the money. It would supplement our sort of meager existence, I guess. We wasn't poor, but we was poor. You know, there's a lot of difference between "poor" and "poor." People nowadays are "poor," but we was "poor" (chuckle).

Marcello: So from what you've said, then, I gather that economics perhaps played a part--that is, a chance to pick up a few extra bucks--plus the fact that the Guard at that time was ...well, I don't know if you can call it a social organization or not, but you did mention that your buddies were in it, and it was more or less a thing to do.

Evans: Well, of course, at that time, you know, Hitler had come to power, and he was romping through Europe at this particular

time. In September of 1939, he was going through Poland, and then there was a patriotic fervor in the country, I suppose. Then, too, some of my buddies had belonged or was belonging to the National Guard, and, of course, it was sort of a peer pressure thing. And besides that, a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old boy hasn't got much sense, anyway, and I guess I was typical of the time.

Marcello: Which battery was located at Abilene? Was that E Battery?

Evans: Yes. We had E Battery, and there was a Headquarters Battery there, which was the 1st Battalion Headquarters; and then there was several infantry units there as well from the 36th Division.

And I might add, also, that I'd never been out of the county, and, of course, to go down to Louisiana was going to be quite an adventure for me. That was basically, I suppose, the culmination of all of it and brought it all together, you know, and made my decision.

Marcello: Now when you went into the unit, what particular specialty or activity did you engage in?

Evans: Well, of course, the artillery consisted of a battery of four guns, which would be four French 75's. They were holdovers from World War I, and they were towed or propelled, I suppose, by 1934 Chevrolet trucks at that time. They had changed over, I guess, in about 1933 from horse-drawn artillery to motorized artillery. We still had some of the

old caissons that was holdovers from World War I. Of course, these trucks was 1934 models, and, of course, this was in 1939 or 1940, so they were six years old. Of course, we didn't get any new equipment until we were mobilized.

Marcello: So you did participate with one of the firing batteries?

Evans: Yes. Of course, you always started out as the low man on the totem pole. I believe we had, as I recall, cannoneers ...for a fieldpiece, you had the gunner corporal, which he did the aiming. In other words, he used the instruments on it, and then you had...well, let's see. To start out you had a gunner sergeant; and then you had the gunner corporal; then you had the number one cannoneer, which was the one that opened and closed the breech and fired the piece on command; then you had the number two man, who was the one that took the shell from the number three man and put it in breach; and then the number three man was the one that set what was called the corrector, which was a fuse-setting device. The number two man put the shell point down, and you twisted it for shrapnel; and you turned this shell to the right, which is what they called "cutting the fuse." Then you put it in the breech, and then, of course, the number three man was the one that set the corrector on the fuses, and the number four man was the one that brought the ammunition, and the number five man was the one that traversed the trail back and forth at the command of the corporal. In

other words, he used two aiming stakes out in front that you sighted on, and then from there you had what's called the executive officer, which was the officer that was in charge of all four guns. You had a sergeant in charge of each gun, and then you had an executive officer which used an aiming circle in order to get the proper deflection on how to aim the piece, in other words, to hit whatever you're shooting at.

I started out as the number five man, of course, and then worked myself up, and eventually I became the number one cannoneer in Louisiana. Subsequent to that, we were firing on the basis of map data, which we had fire direction centers with a fire direction computer. I used a slide rule and figured out map data--how to fire the fieldpiece with map data.

Marcello: Who was the battery commander?

Evans: Our battery commander was Thomas A. Dodson. Now I'm not sure whether Captain Dodson was a World War I veteran or not. When I first went in, our battery commander was a man by the name of Thomas ("Tom") Williams, and Dodson was the executive officer. Rubin Slone...yes, I believe it was Rubin Slone was...no, Dodson was the instrument officer, and Rubin Slone was the executive officer, I suppose. I'm not quite sure about that, but Dodson was the...subsequent to that, after we were mobilized, why, Captain Williams became a major and went to brigade headquarters, and First

Lieutenant Dodson became the captain. When I first went in, I believe the officer that enlisted me in the National Guard was a man by the name of Blankenship. I believe it was Walter Blankenship. I know he was a World War I veteran and was an officer. He did not go to camp with us because, I think, of age reasons.

Marcello: On November 25, 1940, the Texas National Guard was mobilized. First of all, what was your reaction when you heard that the unit had been mobilized?

Evans: Well, of course, we didn't have television back in those days, and we had very few radios, I suppose; but it had been rumored for several weeks that President Roosevelt was going to mobilize the National Guard for the... I believe it was called the "American defense" at that time. I believe we had possibly lost the Reuben James in there, and Hitler was marching all over Europe, you know. Of course, we could pretty well see the handwriting on the wall, that we was going to go to war. There wasn't no question about that, but it was just when. As I recall, we had had rumors or we were told pretty well that we was going to probably be mobilized. Of course, we didn't realize we was going to be taken out of school and that sort of thing, but I wasn't going to school. I'd already quit school at that particular time, so as a result, I believe I got a letter from the War Department or from whoever it was telling me to report at

a certain time, which I did.

Marcello: And where did you report?

Evans: I reported to the armory, and we were given a physical exam by the Army. There was some reserve Army units there, and a Doctor Adams, which was a World War I veteran, was the doctor. He and, I believe, a staff of people examined us. Then we were issued uniforms, and we were billeted in the old...I think the first night we were billeted at...well, it was fair park there in Abilene--the old fair park there off of...let's see...South Eighth Street, where the old fair park is there in Abilene. I believe the first night we stayed in some of those buildings there. In fact, all the National Guard were there. In fact, we stayed there from November 25, 1940, to January of 1941.

Marcello: When mobilization occurred, how long was it supposed to last?

Evans: A year. One year. As I recall, when my year was up, I went to my captain and told him that I wanted out, and he told me I could leave anytime I wanted to. Of course, at that time we was about four or five days at sea out of San Francisco. Of course, we were both joking. We had a little better relationship, I suppose, between our officers and men because we knew each other.

Of course, I wouldn't recommend going to war with a National Guard outfit because of the fact there was some brothers, and there was a lot of favoritism shown because

of the "buddy-buddy" system. Of course, that doesn't mean that there's not a "buddy-buddy" system in other places, but we had at least three brothers in our outfit, and two of them were sergeants, and as a result, why, there was a lot of favoritism shown. There was a lot of things that went on that wasn't quite "kosher," I would say. It was because of the fact that people knew one another, and they were buddies on the outside.

Marcello: What changes, if any, occurred in your training and so on after you were mobilized and while you were still there in Abilene? In other words, what did you do during that period between mobilization and the move to Camp Bowie?

Evans: Well, our day consisted, I suppose, of getting up in the morning and having breakfast. I guess we cooked on a field kitchen just like we was out in the wild. Of course, we had some special equipment that was made. We had some refrigerator trailers and...but as far as cooking, we had what they called a mess tent, and we had a mess sergeant. Of course, we had to serve KP and all that sort of thing. Our day consisted of getting up in the morning just like in the Army. You showered and shaved and ate breakfast and made up your bunk and policed the area and cleaned up --swept up and did all the housekeeping chores, I suppose. Then we had calisthenics, and, of course, we had sick call. The morning was pretty well took up with the close-order

drill, and then in the afternoon, why, we would take the fieldpieces out and clean them and polish them and play with them all the afternoon, you know, in sort of a mock training process. Then we were read the "Articles of War," and then we were lectured by the officers on what to expect and what they expected of us. Our time was pretty well taken care of. In the evening our time was pretty well our own. Of course, we had guard duty and KP duty, latrine orderly duty, and various and sundry other chores that was necessary--details that had to be done.

Marcello: Did you have to stay there in the evenings? In other words, was there any commuting being done?

Evans: Yes, there was some. The married men were able to commute back and forth to their homes, but us single guys were not. We weren't allowed to. We had to get passes just like everybody else. They were fairly liberal, as I recall, with the passes. I think we'd maybe get an afternoon pass and one at night maybe once in a while. Maybe once in a while, and particularly on the weekends, if you didn't have duty, why, then you could go home and visit with your parents and that sort of thing.

Marcello: If you can place yourself back to that time, how seriously was all this being taken by you and your buddies, that is, during that period of the initial mobilization?

Evans: Well, myself and others, I think we took more of a

lackadaisical attitude toward the thing. Quite honestly, I was just like a day-old bull yearling in a snowstorm. I really didn't know what was going on. The fact of the matter is, it was more like a lark than anything else, I suppose.

When we did get to go to town, why, most of us would all get drunk if we could. Of course, at that time Abilene was a dry town, and they had what they called...you could buy whiskey in the drugstore. You could get you a prescription. A prescription cost you fifteen cents, and then you'd get a pint of whiskey, I believe, for maybe...I don't recall ...maybe a dollar or a dollar-and-a-half, something like that. They had these old doctors there that were...they were still doctors, but they had passed their prime. Most of them were old men and probably alcoholics or whatever, drug addicts or whatever. They had lost their practice. They wrote the prescriptions, and you'd go in for a cold. If you was ten years old, you'd get a prescription from that doctor, and you'd get a pint of whiskey for a cold or whatever it was. When we'd got to town, that's the first thing we'd do--go down there and get a pint of whiskey. Everybody would get drunk, or they'd bring it back on payday, particularly on payday.

We got paid, I guess, maybe twice while we was in Abilene. Once would be, I guess, for the remainder of November, and

then it'd be December. As I recall, I went home for Christmas in 1940. I believe I did. Christmas of 1940 doesn't stick in my mind very vividly, I don't suppose.

But I guess that pretty well takes care of our general work and what we did there during that time.

Marcello: Now on several occasions in the interview thus far, you have mentioned the activities that were occurring in Europe. Is it safe to say, without asking you a leading question, that when you thought of the country getting into war at that time, your eyes were turned mainly toward Europe as opposed to toward the Far East?

Evans: Well, not necessarily, no.

Marcello: Is that right?

Evans: I was talking about Hitler. Of course, at that time Japan had invaded China, and one of our gunboats there in Shanghai or wherever it was had been sunk. The Japanese were running pretty hard in China. Of course, our sympathy, I suppose, was with China. Then, of course, we knew that the Philippines was there. We didn't realize at that time that we might get into it with Japan, but we did know that we were shipping a lot of scrap iron there. As a kid, you know, we used to pick up metal and that sort of thing, and they used to tell us, "Well, they're going to ship all that scrap iron over there to Japan, and they're going to shoot it back at us." There was more truth to that than there was poetry. It was

true. But we knew that our interests were being threatened on both sides of our border, in other words, in the Pacific as well as in Europe.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were about sixteen when mobilization occurred. If you could estimate the average age of the enlisted man in E Battery, or maybe even the gun crew of your particular piece, what would it be?

Evans: Now, of course, the sergeant would be the oldest, and then the corporal would probably be...I imagine the corporal would probably be less than twenty years old. The sergeant would be less than twenty-five, and then, of course, the rest of the gun crew could be, I imagine, anywhere from eighteen to...I was the youngest man in my outfit, as I recall. I'm not sure. I believe there was one man...he might have been two days younger than I was. But I think maybe that I was younger than he was. I was the youngest man in my outfit. Me and him used to have an argument. He's dead now. But I don't remember how old he was. I thought I was always the youngest.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that in January of 1941, the unit moved to Camp Bowie. I assume that you went there by truck.

Evans: Yes. As I recall, we arrived somewhere around the 10th of January. We went down the road just like any other, and we ate on the road and cooked on the road. As I remember, we got down there about one or two o'clock in

the afternoon or maybe just right after lunch. Maybe it was in the middle of the afternoon. I don't remember now. But it rained and we parked about...oh, gosh, I guess it must have been more than a quarter of a mile. I guess maybe it was nearly a half a mile from the bivouac, and we carried everything in there. We waded through the mud. Of course, they had built these pyramidal tent frames, you know, like the kind that Mr. Clements had the prisoners down at Huntsville stay in. They had built those frames, and we hauled those big pyramidal tents, which took about four men, I guess, to carry. They were very heavy. They were 16 x 16 tents, and a piece of canvas would weigh, I imagine, 300 pounds, and it took about four men, I guess, to carry it. We struggled and carried everything in there and out of those trucks and put those tents up that evening. We hauled all of our groceries in.

I never will forget this, Where our location was, there was a creek, and they had put big aqueducts underneath the place. As we came in, there was a bulldozer stuck right in the middle of the street. The streets were just ...they just tore the street...I mean, they just bulldozed a place through there for the streets--no curbs, no gutters. It was just mud. This bulldozer was stuck right in the middle of the street up to its seat. It couldn't move. We had to carry all this stuff--all of our equipment and

all of our gear--to the mess hall and to our tents by hand and wade all through the mud, as I remember.

Marcello: Is it not true that you also had to complete some of the construction of the camp? It wasn't completely finished when you got there, was it?

Evans: Oh, no. When we first got there, it rained for several days, and when it finally dried up to where we could get around, why, they said, "Now we're going to get all these rocks...." We'd police up, and they'd say, "We're going to get all these rocks." Well, we'd get the rocks down to the size of your fist and pile them up, and then the next day they'd say, "We're going to get all those rocks," so then you'd keep working them down until you got them down to about the size of a pea, you know. There was no sidewalks, and we had to build our own sidewalks and sod your own grass. We took boards and went and hauled caliche and made our own sidewalks. I might say that when we left there in November of 1941, it was a pretty livable place.

Marcello: Describe what kind of training the unit underwent when it got to Camp Bowie.

Evans: Well, as I recall, somebody came up with a manual for horse-drawn artillery. Of course, by that time we started getting newer equipment. We started to get trucks, as I remember. Some of them were Dodges. I believe they were Dodge trucks and command cars and that sort of thing. They were just starting to get those new vehicles. Somebody came up with

this manual for horse-drawn artillery, and we'd have to crawl in those trucks under the command of the cannoneer's mount, you know, and that sort of thing...cannoneer dismount and that sort of thing. Of course, we would go out in the field and see how quickly you could set up a firing battery.

When we were in camp, generally it was basically the same. We would get up in the morning and take a shower, shave, have mess call, and then we would have sick call, commander's call, all these other various and sundry...I suppose they were housekeeping details. Then we would go and have battalion calisthenics on the parking lots. Then we would unlimber--uncanvas--these guns and clean them and polish them up and generally take care of those, and then we would dry fire those guns every morning. Then we'd have close-order drills. Maybe these things were not in that order, but that's basically what we would do.

Marcello: When did you fire those guns?

Evans: Well, we would fire them at specified times. They had different times that they would...we'd go on maneuvers, and we would fire them for training purposes. I think we used a firing range maybe twice during the year. They had what was called a sub-caliber. It was a 37-millimeter, and it was mounted on the tube of a 75-millimeter. I guess the tube on them was about two-and-a-half to three feet long, and they fired a 37-millimeter shell. They were clamped

on the tube of the 75-millimeter, and they were what they called bore-sighted. They were bore-sighted. You could use the instruments on the 75-millimeter to aim the 37-millimeter. As a result, they could fire much more cheaply than they could the 75-millimeter. As I recall, we fired those quite often, but we didn't fire the 75's because of economical reasons, I guess. It's a shame that the Pentagon don't do the same thing nowadays. But economics was one of the reasons that they used those smaller calibers.

Marcello: In the summer of 1941, the unit once more took part in maneuvers being held in Louisiana. As I recall, this involved a great many troops. In fact, I think these were the 3rd Army maneuvers.

Evans: Yes, I think at that time we had better than half a million men west of the Mississippi River, I would say, from Lake Charles, Louisiana, all the way up close to Shreveport. They sent in people, and they leased all that land in there for so much an acre for maneuvers, and all those piney woods in there was leased out to the Army. We roamed all over that, I think, for about a month or six weeks. I don't recall now just how long it was. But it was quite a show down there. They had umpires, and it was regular maneuvers. They had the Blue Army and the Red Army.

Marcello: Now did you get to fire your pieces there?

Evans: I believe we did. I believe we went to the range one time

there. I think that's correct. I don't recall...I wouldn't swear to it, but I believe we did. At that time Camp Polk, Louisiana, was near a place called Leesville, Louisiana. Leesville, Louisiana, was the main place. When we got down there, as I remember, they had one barracks building--one headquarters building--that had been built at Camp Polk, and, as I remember, we went through Camp Polk. As I remember, we had the 1st Armored Divisions...we seen the armored divisions there at that time...the 3rd Armored Division, 1st Armored Division, 2nd Armored Division. The 1st Infantry Division was there, as I remember. I remember seeing those young, young officers--some of them didn't look over seventeen or eighteen years old--running those tanks around. They were those light tanks and had the radial airplane engines in them.

That was the first time I saw General George Patton. I saw him there. Well, I saw him several times. In fact, I even had a conversation with him, as I remember. We had a truck stuck in the middle of the road, and he had...he was a very flamboyant man, you know, and his tank was one of the little ol' cracker boxes that wasn't much bigger than a Toyota, I suppose, now. I think he had a driver and one man--one man and a driver. I believe that was all there was. They were light tanks. He drove up in his tank, and we had this truck stuck in the middle of the road.

He was standing up in this thing, and he hollered at us. I remember, he said, "Get that goddamned truck out of there, and let an army through here!" I hollered back at him, and I told him, "By God, this is an army!" He turned around and drove off and didn't say anymore to us. I guess maybe that's what he wanted to hear. That's basically the only conversation I ever had with him, which is, I guess, more than some people had ever had with him or can brag about.

Marcello: When the unit returned from those maneuvers, there are several things that occurred, and I want to get your thoughts on them. First, it was around this time that the Army underwent a reorganization from the square to the triangular divisions. What do you remember about that?

Evans: Well, yes, I remember we had...during the maneuvers, I was taken from the firing battery, and I was put in what they called a battalion fire direction center. My job was to transmit or to...I was given a telephone to my battery. We had a battalion commander and a battalion fire direction officer and four fire direction computers. In other words, we used these slide rules--they were like a general...like a slide rule--and they had range on them and...I don't remember now what it was all about, but we used, I guess, logarithms in order to...we could look on a map...they could scale a map, and we could take this data and transmit it or relay it down on the telephone to the battery, which

then they put that on the guns, and they could shoot a certain coordinate. The reason for that was...of course, you may recall that the umpires would then say we killed so many because we fired on a certain place, you know. These umpires was the ones that would say that so many of these people are dead.

As I recall, there was a story there that went around about this woman who wanted to go across this bridge, and they had this umpire there. He said, "Lady, you can't go across that bridge!" He said, "It's blown up!" (chuckle) It was simulated as having been blown up, you know, and he said, "It's blown up!" She said, "Well, it looks perfectly all right to me!" He said, "I don't care what it looks like! It's been blown up by the Army!" He said, "You can't go through there!" She looked over there at the other guy--a guy sitting over there--and said, "Does that bridge look blown up to you?" And he said, "Hell, lady, don't ask me! I've been dead for three days!" (chuckle) But, anyway, these umpires would come in.

At that time they had the Ben Lear incident. I don't know whether you remember that or not. He was a general. These guys came by this golf course and hollered, "Yoo hoo" at some of the...whistled at some of the girls there on the golf course, and Ben Lear came out. General Ben Lear got hold of the commander of the column and made them all walk,

I think, about fifteen miles to camp because of that. As a result, he was kicked out of the Army, and they called him "Yoo hoo" Lear. It wasn't none of my bunch, but that was what had happened during that time. General Patton was with our group, and Ben Lear was with the other group.

We was the Blue Army, and I believe we defended against the Red Army. We come to find out that General Patton, in order to win on his side, he cheated a little bit. He used some of his own money to buy gasoline to keep his trucks running, you see, so that's the way he won down there. He wasn't quite honest about it, I understand.

Anyway, to answer your question, after we came back from those maneuvers in 1941, we had officers that were over-age. In other words, we had some battery commanders that were about fifty years old, and they were from World War I, I'm sure. They were all given discharges, as I recall. At that time, we were what they called a square division. We had two battalions of light artillery and one battalion of heavy artillery, which was the 131st, 132nd, and 133rd. The 133rd, as I understand, was 155-millimeter howitzers. The 131st and 132nd had 75-millimeters. Then we had, I guess, maybe four battalions of infantry. Then you had the 101st Engineers, and I don't remember how many special troops we had. We had the 113th Cavalry, I believe, there. What they did was, they took one battalion

out, which we were rated to be the best in the group or at least that's what they told us. They took one battalion of us, and we were slated to go to a place called PLUM. Of course, we subsequently knew that was going to be the Philippines. I guess we left there somewhere...

Marcello: I believe you left on...was it November 11, 1941?

Evans: November 11, 1941, something like that. We caught the train. Of course, it took us a long time to prepare everything we had. We were issued a new type of gun, which...we were supposed to get the 105-millimeter howitzers, but they issued us split-trail gun carriages with 75-millimeter tubes on them--the same kind of tubes as were on the old ones. We turned those in, and we got those. We packed everything and got ready to go, and we were shipped out right there--a train right there at Camp Bowie. It was a Santa Fe train. I remember. we left late one night. The next morning we went from there to Sweetwater, Texas, and then got the Texas and Pacific at Sweetwater and went into El Paso. From El Paso we went all the way into California and then to San Francisco.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the reorganization. You mentioned that some of the older men were taken out of the unit. Who replaced them?

Evans: Well, what they did was, they took the younger men from the other batteries--the 132nd, I believe it was.

Marcello: And this would have been A, B, and C Batteries, isn't that correct?

Evans: Yes, that's right. They took all the married men that wanted to get out, and they transferred them into the 1st Battalion-- 131st--or wherever. I don't remember what happened to them, but they were taken out. Then they reorganized them and brought in guys from 132nd to fill those vacancies. As a result, we had a hodge-podge of 131st, 2nd Battalion and 132nd, 1st Battalion, as I remember. Whatever happened to these other people...I know that they went over to Europe, and some of them were even discharged. At that time the year was about up, and some of those men got discharges and were released about that time.

Marcello: So the unit is still a Texas unit?

Evans: That's correct, yes. Some of them were from Corsicana and Mexia, but most of them were from Corsicana, as I remember.

Marcello: That is, those that came into E Battery?

Evans: Yes. We were receiving them, and as a result they were from Corsicana down in Navarro County.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen on that train trip from Camp Bowie to San Francisco that you think we need to get here as part of the record?

Evans: Well...

Marcello: I guess this was as far away from home as you had ever been.

Evans: Oh, yes. God, yes, that's the farthest I'd ever been. Man, I never thought about that. As I remember, we had stopped the train...and we had a mess car, and we ate on the train. They'd stop the train in the morning, and we would get out and do calisthenics, as I remember it. And I remember stopping at a place called Pyote...no, I take that back. It wasn't Pyote. It was Toyah. That's about twenty-seven miles west or a little over twenty miles west of Pecos. You can't hardly get farther west than that. We marched up and down, and I remember...the first morning...maybe the first morning out...I don't remember. Maybe it was the second morning out. I guess a dang train could travel that far in a day. Early that next morning, we did calisthenics and ate breakfast, as I recall, at Toyah. Of course, when I used to go to El Paso--drive out there--you'd stop by at Toyah all the time. That's very vivid in my memory. Of course, on the train we all gambled a lot. We played poker and shot dice, I guess. I used to like to shoot dice and play poker. In fact, that's about as good a recreation you can have, I guess.

Marcello: Okay, so when you get to San Francisco, I guess you go to Fort McDowell over at Angel Island. Is that correct?

Evans: Yes. We were taken off the train there at Fisherman's... I guess at the pier there. I guess that's Fisherman's Wharf--whatever it is--there in San Francisco, and we were

taken over to Angel Island. All of our equipment was left on the train. We carried what we called a ditty bag and our personal stuff. We were taken over on the deck of a... I don't know what kind of a boat it was. I'm trying to think. Well, what kind of boats are they that they use in the harbor to shove ships around?

Marcello: Tugboats.

Evans: Tugboats. The name of it was the Slocum. We were taken to Angel Island. Of course, the first thing we saw was Alcatraz. At that time Angel Island was right close to the Alcatraz. Of course, everybody pointed out Alcatraz. I was sort of expecting to see James Cagney or Humphrey Bogart come across there anytime, you know.

But we were on Angel Island. We had the biggest mess hall I ever saw in the world, I guess, up to that time. While we were on Angel Island, we had to pull KP, and we had guard duty. We were there about, well, until Thanksgiving. We spent Thanksgiving there. I didn't know it was Fort McDowell. All I knew was that they called it Angel Island. I didn't realize until later that it was Fort McDowell. And I didn't realize until later years it was an immigration station, too, where the Chinese were brought into the country. They were incarcerated there for months and months and months before they were allowed to come into the country. That's where they brought in

the Chinese to build the railroads. I didn't realize that until later years. But, anyway, while we were there, I thought San Francisco was the coldest place in the world. Of course, we had to pull guard duty there, and, of course, there was fog and all that. They had them fog horns going all the time.

I pulled guard duty, and some of the other guys had to pull KP. The mess sergeant there...they'd brought him out of retirement, and he was in charge of this mess hall. What impressed me was that they had a coffee urn there that had a motor on it--had a pump on the side of it. It was a big...I guess the damn thing was twenty feet tall. They figured they fed 5,000 men a day there at that mess hall, and when they'd get through feeding...a guy that worked in KP said that when you get through feeding breakfast, why, then you started feeding dinner; and then when you were through feeding dinner, you started feeding supper. Then sometimes it would be eleven or twelve o'clock before they'd get out of the mess hall at night. It was quite an operation.

I remember one guy...this mess sergeant caught him eating some cake or something, you know, and he made him clean out a grease trap--a big ol' grease trap. It was about ten foot square, and they'd give them buckets, and they had to get down in that dang grease trap and clean

it out.

Of course, we always had a saying: "Every day in the Army is like Sunday on the farm," you know. Of course, we ate well. One thing about the Army is that they fed us well. While we was in Camp Bowie, we had some problems with the mess sergeant. We had some mess sergeants there, and I think they wasn't quite as honest as they should have been, and before we left Camp Bowie there, they nearly had us about starved to death. I know what he was doing. He was taking that food home, and we was having... and, of course, they changed mess sergeants quite frequently until we finally got a good mess sergeant, and all that stopped. But as I remember in the early part of our stay in Camp Bowie, why, we didn't eat very well. We didn't eat as well as the Army expected us to. But they finally got that ironed out. I don't know what happened, but I do know that there was some problems with the mess sergeants. But when we got to Angel Island there, they fed us real well.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were mentioning that this whole operation was code-named PLUM, and the rumor going around was that PLUM represented the Philippine Islands.

Evans: Well, we kind of figured it out that the "P" stood for the Philippines, the "L" stood for Luzon, and I don't remember what the "U" stood for, but "M" was Manilla; so that's

what we kind of figured out. That's what, I guess, the best "guesstimation" was, anyway.

Marcello: But you had not been officially told that you were going to the Philippines?

Evans: No, no, no. No, we were not.

Marcello: Okay, so I think it was on November 21, 1941, that you boarded the United States Army Transport Republic for the trip across the Pacific.

Evans: I was thinking it was later than that because it was after Thanksgiving. It was a day or two after Thanksgiving day-- whenever Thanksgiving was. I think at that time maybe we were celebrating the Roosevelt Thanksgiving.

Marcello: Is there anything eventful that you remember from your first day or two on the Republic?

Evans: Well, as I remember..of course, that's the first time...when I first saw that big ol' boat, I thought, "My God, that's the biggest damn thing I ever saw." Of course, even to climb up there was...we carried our barracks bags and all that aboard. Then we went down in the bowels of that ship, you know, way down in there. They issued us life jackets, and we had to wear them all the time.

The first evening out, everybody got seasick. What impressed me mostly was going by the galley on board that ship. They cooked cabbage all the time. I never really got seasick until, I guess, I was going down this gangway

there, and the ol' boy right ahead of me upchucked right there in front of God and everybody; and with the smell of that cabbage cooking, that's the closest I got to losing my cookies.

The first night out, I stayed out on deck. As I remember, there was a guy standing out there and looking up, you know, and a seagull came by, and that damn thing...he had his mouth open, and the damn seagull specked in his mouth. And God knows, he spit...and from then on, all the way across the water, we'd holler, "Watch that bird!" That ol' boy, he'd get mad. Everytime we'd see him, we'd say, "Watch that bird!" Goddam, he wanted to fight everytime. I don't remember who he was now. He wasn't in our outfit. But everybody picked up the deal and started saying, "Watch that bird!" We gave that guy a hell of a bad time all the way across the Pacific.

Marcello: Now there were more units than just the 131st on this ship.

Evans: Yes, there was about, as I remember, 5,500 men on board there. It was a pretty good-sized...it was a USAT--a United States Army Transport Republic, and it had other troops on there. I don't recall now just who they were. I think some were from New Mexico, and I think there was the 22nd Bombardment Group, which was an Air Force outfit, and I don't remember just who else was on there.

Marcello: Wasn't the 26th Brigade on there? An Illinois unit or

something like that?

Evans: I don't recall. I don't really recall. All I know is that since we were in the artillery, we manned the guns on board. We manned the machine guns on board, and we stood watch, as I remember.

Marcello: Now there was a brief stopover in Honolulu.

Evans: Yes. Yes, there was. As I remember, we stopped in Honolulu, and what impressed me at first...when we got close to Diamond Head--coming around Diamond Head there--those land swells would make that ship roll, and that's the first time I learned how to get my sea legs. I saw some sailors on board--chief petty officers on board--and I watched them to see how they could adjust their feet, and I learned how to keep from falling down walking, you know. As I remember, the ship swayed so that, boy, you could just reach nearly over the side and dip up a cup of water, it would go so far.

We docked there in Honolulu. We were given liberty. At that time...in fact, when we were at Angel Island, we saw the Clipper ship that landed and brought Kurusu...and what was that other guy's name?

Marcello: Nomura.

Evans: ...Nomura to the United States. I saw the plane land there in San Francisco. It landed right there close to Angel Island. Nomura and Kurusu were going to Washington

at that time, and that was in November. The peace talks were going on at the time we were in...I believe we got there about the first or second of December.

I got liberty, and we went into town. I remember I went into town. I don't recall now what I did. I guess we did what soldiers generally do. We went to the "tenderloin" district of the country. Wherever they told us it was off limits, that was the first place we went. But there was lots of soldiers and lots of sailors in Honolulu--just walking the streets--aimlessly walking the streets--trying to pick up girls, drinking as a general rule. At the railroads...there was a railroad station there in Honolulu, and the Marines was guarding that railroad station with riot guns, which was an 1897-model Winchester shotgun with bayonets on it--the same as that gun right there (gesture), that top gun. It was sawed off. Trench guns, they were called. They were guarding the railraod station at that time. There didn't seem to be any panic going on there, just other than the press of the crowd. There was lots of people there.

Marcello: You guys didn't have very much money at that time, did you?

Evans: No, we hadn't been paid. We hadn't been paid since, I guess, the first of November, and, of course, by the time we got to Honolulu, our money had pretty well run out. Then as I remember, we was only there one night, and we got back

on board ship and headed out again.

Those of us that smoked had run out of cigarettes, and the Navy wouldn't let us have any cigarettes, so we had it pretty rough there for a while. They could buy different kinds of cigarettes. I remember Beechnut cigarettes, which, I think, was about six cents a package. I believe you could get them for six cents a package, that is, in the Navy store. Of course, when they were in port, they were higher because they had to collect a tax on them. But at sea, I think Chesterfields, Lucky Strikes, Camels--the leading brands of the day--couldn't have been over ten cents a package, as I remember. In fact, I know they weren't. I think they were about seven cents a package, and the off-brand kind, Beechnut and Chelseas, and Piedmonts and Elephants--they had all sorts of different kinds of cigarettes--were around four or five cents a package, I believe. Of course, they had other various and sundry other articles there for sale, but I couldn't buy it because I didn't have any money. But we were just lucky to keep ourselves in cigarettes.

We hadn't gotten paid on the first of December. In fact, I don't think we got paid until we got to Australia, which was the latter part of December. As I remember, our captain...I think he either floated a loan or signed a check or something and got some money and got people some cigarettes. When we got on board that ship, why, after

that first day or two out, we started, I guess, running low of food.

But anyway, we didn't realize we was going to go as far south as we did. We was out about four or five days, I guess--about four days--and they had bombed Pearl Harbor right behind us. We didn't believe it at first. We couldn't visualize that they had bombed Pearl Harbor. We didn't really believe it. We thought it was just a fake or something.

Marcello: Describe how you got the news.

Evans: Well, I was standing on deck, and it came over the PA system. They said that Pearl Harbor had been bombed and that hostilities had broken out between Japan and the United States and that we should not smoke on deck. It seemed to me like it was about six o'clock in the evening, I guess. I don't remember just what time of day it was, but...no, I don't guess it was. It must have been in the early morning--the early morning. We had a convoy, and we had one ship about the size of ours, I guess it was, which was a Matson liner, and then we had the Pensacola, which was a cruiser, and then we had some destroyers, I remember...well, maybe not. I don't remember, but, anyway, I remember they'd come by, and the sailors had white uniforms on, as I remember. Of course, after the war broke out, they dyed those white clothes in coffee, as I remember now. They dyed them. Of course, those ships had the big United States flag on the side

for protective reasons or to signify neutrality, and they lowered men over the side of the boat, and they painted out those flags on the sides of those boats while they was underway.

Of course, we tightened security on board. We started standing watch right around-the-clock. We had, I guess, one 5-inch gun on the back of that transport, and then we had antiaircraft machine guns-- .50-caliber, twin .50-caliber machine guns, on board. We had some turrets of them. I recall I stood watch. We stood four on and eight off all the way across the Pacific.

Marcello: What was the general reaction of you and your buddies when you heard about the attack at Pearl Harbor?

Evans: Well, we were rather surprised. I guess that would be a mild word for it. It made us, I guess, mad. I suppose we was trying to get wherever it was the war was going to start, you know. I wasn't too happy about the fact that I was on a ship, you know. Of course, once that ship goes, there ain't much place to stand out there in that water. But, anyway, in going over our rations were cut quite considerably, and then, of course, we weren't allowed to bathe. I think we were allowed to bathe once a week in freshwater.

The rest of the time we...but first, let me say this, that we had a ceremony on the 5th, I guess it was. On the

5th of December, we crossed the equator. We crossed the equator and the 180th meridian at the same time, and, of course, they had the shellback ceremonies, and they used that steam cylinder oil, they showed us. They'd shock you with those damn shocking devices, and they used slappers on us and cut our hair a little bit--about halfway up, you know. Then they took steamcylinder oil. These steam reciprocating engines on board that ship...they used oil to...and what would happen, the oil would get mixed up with that steam, and it was called steam cylinder oil. They'd slap that on you, you know, for after shave lotion--whatever it was--shampoo, whatever they played like it was. Anyway, we got the initiation, and for the record I'm a shellback, I guess (chuckle).

Marcello: How long was this war going to last?

Evans: Oh, they told us the war wouldn't last but about six months. They told us that the Japanese didn't have any dairy products in their diet, and they couldn't see very good; and they weren't good pilots because of the fact that their mother carried them on their back like an Indian, and that made them pigeon-toed. They couldn't fly an airplane very good, and they couldn't see very well, and they were small people. As a result, why, they just knew we could whip them in about six months. They couldn't shoot very good. Because we were from Texas and we'd been raised up

with guns all of our lives, we were expert marksmen. We knew what to do, and the Japanese were an inferior race of people. They felt sure that we could win the war in about six months. As I recall, they used to tell us about those guns that we had--that they could adjust those and that we could shoot a mile-and-a-half or two miles, whatever it was, and that when those shells hit the ground, they'd destroy everything within so many yards radius, and what a beautiful piece of machinery they were. Of course, they didn't tell us that the opposition would have a gun that would shoot farther and tear up more stuff and that they were going to shoot back at us. They never did tell us...we were never told that we was going to be shot back at. Of course, I guess that's a military secret. That's the way they keep you wanting to win all the time.

Marcello: How does Frank Fujita figure into all this? I mean, Frank was in your unit. He was in E Battery.

Evans: Yes. Well, when I first knew Frank, he was a corporal, I believe he was, and he finally became a sergeant. Frank is a good friend of mine. I don't know whether he was in the instruments section or whether he was...I believe he was in the gun battery. I believe he was a gunner sergeant. I believe he was, but I'm not sure. Of course, you're asking me to go back forty years, and that's kind of hard to do. But I believe he was a gunner sergeant. I believe he was.

He was a first gunner corporal, and then he became a gunner sergeant. I believe that's correct. I think he got a promotion shortly before we left to go overseas.

Marcello: What sort of reaction, if we can call it that, did the guys have toward him as a result of the attack?

Evans: Oh, because he was Japanese?

Marcello: Yes.

Evans: Oh, well, there was no animosity.

Marcello: Did he have to come in for a lot of good-natured kidding perhaps?

Evans: No, as I recall, it never was even mentioned. Of course, I'd known Frank for many years, and I never even gave it any thought, really, to be honest about it. Of course, I knew he was half-Japanese. I knew his sisters. In fact, my wife worked with his sister during the war. Frank's daddy was raised in Nagasaki, and Frank's grandmother and granddaddy was in Nagasaki at the time he was a prisoner there. As I remember, he got some Red Cross--they said Red Cross--parcels from the Japanese Red Cross. I didn't know of any Japanese Red Cross, and we always thought it might have been his grandmother and grandfather there in Nagasaki. We all knew his father. His father was a sign painter and a neon technician. He made neon signs there in Abilene, and then he moved to Oklahoma, as I understand. Frank's mother was Indian, I think, and Mr. Fujita and

Mrs. Fujita had separated or divorced. I went to school with Frank.

As far as I know, there was never anything said. There was never any discrimination or even anything thought about it. I mean, it never even crossed our minds, as far as I know, of even thinking anything about Frank being Japanese. In fact, we protected him all the time. When we were first captured...maybe I better not go into that right now, but when we were first captured, they asked him what his name was, and he said, "Fujita." They asked him if he was Japanese, whether he was Nippon, and he said, no, he was Spanish. He told them he was Spanish. As I remember, Frank and I were captured together. Frank and I were captured directly together and went through the war together. But as far as thinking anything about him being Japanese, it never even crossed my mind, nor anyone else's, as far as I know.

Marcello: What kind of functions or duties did the artillery people perform in the aftermath of the attack? What did you do aboard the Republic?

Evans: Well, as I say, they farmed us out to the Navy, I guess. No, that was the Army. It was an Army transport, and I guess they had Navy personnel on board. I guess. I don't know. But we had people in our group that had had naval experience, and some of them had been merchant marines.

As a result, they helped run the ship. As I said a moment ago, we stood watch--stood watch night and day--on board that ship looking out for submarines and airplanes and other ships. Then some worked in the mess--in the galley--and we cleaned the ship, swept the ship, swabbed the decks. They made life useful for us.

As I said, when we started overseas and we got so far out, our rations got short. They started issuing meal tickets. If you didn't have a meal ticket, you couldn't eat. We had one or two storms, I remember.

We put in to the Fiji Islands. The Fijis was a British colony at that time, and we replenished our stock of food, I guess.

Marcello: Nobody got off the ship there, did they?

Evans: No, we were not allowed off. I think one or two of them jumped ship--got off the ship and went downtown. The British had those native policemen, and they were big men. They stood up bigger than six feet. They was better than six feet tall--big, huge guys--and they had those...of course, we didn't know what...we didn't call them "Afros" in those days, but they had "Afro" haircuts. They wore skirts not unlike a woman, you know, and they wore British Army tunics. I'm not sure, but I believe they were red tunics. I won't be for positive. But their skirts that they wore like a sarong, and they were barefooted. The hems on them were

like a...instead of being square and straight around, they were cut like a saw blade. They were notched like a saw blade.

As I recall, one of the guys--and I don't know just who it was--whether it was a sailor or whoever, decided they wanted to try one of them guys on--try him in the ring on there--and this ol' boy gathered him up, and I think he just held him and brought him aboard ship. He just manhandled him and brought him aboard just like you would a sack of potatoes, as I remember.

We didn't get off the boat there. We spent one night there, I guess, and left out the next morning. Then we went to Australia. As I remember, we got pretty close to Australia, and we saw these ships. These ships came up over the horizon, and, of course, the Pensacola went out and challenged them. And we come to find out it was the Australian Navy. It was the Perth, and I forget now what the other ships were, but they were the ships of the Australian Navy.

Then they escorted us into Brisbane. We stayed out in the outer harbor there, I guess, oh, for a day-and-a-half, a day, or two days, and they brought a Norwegian tanker out there, and they pumped oil off of this ship. We were drawing about thirty-six feet of water, and we couldn't get up this river or whatever it was up in the harbor where

we was going to dock. They pumped oil off of that ship for, oh, I guess, a good day into this tanker. Then we started up this bay up to the harbor. They made all of us get out on the top of the ship, up on top, and when this boat would drag, why, they would make us go to the opposite side to balance the ship--the stern or whichever it was. We finally got up.

On the way up there, of course, they had these captain's gigs from the navy ships plying the harbor there, and there was a sailboat turned over. This captain's gig went out there and took those people on board. This sailboat tacked into the wind, and as a result, it blew it over, and those people were floundering in the water out there. Then here come the navy dashing up there and saved them from a watery grave. At least that's a good story, anyway.

But, anyway, when we first got into Brisbane, we docked and got our gear, and we went to a racetrack. As I remember, we got there just in time for supper. Now you've got to bear in mind that we was on pretty skimpy rations. The Australian Army fed us, and they thought they was feeding us the best in the world. They fed us mutton, you know, and, of course, us being from Texas...I'd never eaten a piece of mutton in my life. But they fed us mutton and potatoes and carrots, as I remember. They had this big army bread...they had this army bread and strawberry jam.

Australia had what they called "preserved butter." It was in buckets, and they would slice that bread off real thick--it had a real thick crust on it--and I think I made my meal out on that bread and some jam and butter. Of course, they knew we were coffee drinkers--that we weren't tea drinkers--and they made us some coffee. What they had done, they had made this coffee and put cream and sugar in it and boiled it all up. It looked like dishwater, and I'm sure it didn't taste much better than dishwater to us at that particular time. But we went ahead...there wasn't much complaining going on, I'll say that.

We slept at this race course called Ascot Race Course there in Brisbane. We slept up on the bleachers there. We stayed there for several days as I remember. Of course, it wasn't long until we got into a gambling match with the Australian Army. We got paid, as I remember, and got to gambling with those people, playing "one-up," I believe. I don't know whether you ever heard of "one-up" or not, but "one-up" is...they take three coins and put it on a paddle, and you take heads or tails. They take three pennies, and they throw those coins up in the air. I bet heads and you bet tails, and whichever one it comes down--heads or tails--why, that's the way you win, you know. Of course, they first did it with their fingers. We finally figured out that they could cheat a little bit that way, so we made

them put it on a paddle, which we got tipped off on that pretty well. Some of the guys, I guess...we all went downtown and got mixed up with some of the girls there, as I recall. I don't remember...I was supposed to meet a girl the day we shipped out to go to Darwin, but I never did go out with her. But we stayed there--I don't know--several days.

Marcello: Let me ask you just a few questions about that brief stay in Australia. Some of the men have expressed their amazement over the fact that there weren't very many young men--men their own age--in Brisbane. Did you notice that, too?

Evans: Well, yes. Most of them were in Northern Africa. It wasn't hard to figure out. They had all those men over in Northern Africa because they'd been fighting over there in Tobruk for, gosh, at least two years, and then they were fighting in Singapore at that time or in Malaya. I was just an ol' dumb country boy. I didn't know where Singapore was. I knew where North Africa was, but as far as Singapore, I never even thought of where it was. There weren't many young men there. There were older men, and quite a few.

I went to one house party there where there were quite a few people there. They had a lot of drinking--drinking a lot of beer. At that time, the pubs only could stay open to a certain period of time, and we stayed in this pub with the mayor of Brisbane. The lord mayor of Brisbane was here

in this pub with us, and he wouldn't let them close down. They closed the front doors, but he made them sell us beer, as I remember, even though it was against the law. I remember these bartenders would holler, "Time, gentlemen, please! Time, gentlemen, please!" And they closed the doors. You had to drink up your beer. In fact, I don't think they drank but maybe one or two hours a day at certain times. I don't remember now. You had to drink in a hurry, as I remember.

Marcello: I know that some of the men were lucky enough to have Christmas dinner in the homes of various Australian families. How about you?

Evans: No, I didn't. I wasn't fortunate enough. In fact, I think I was on KP. I wasn't a very good soldier, to be honest about it. I was sort of a nonconformist. This Army business never did set too good with me. I would lots rather socialize than soldier. As a result, I always got in trouble, and my name was very easy to remember. Nearly everybody could remember Pete, you know. Like I told them, I said, "I've been 'Ol' Pete all my life." If they said, "Who done that?" somebody would say, "Ol' Pete done it." Even when I was five years old...I've been called "Ol' Pete" all my life. Everybody can remember my name quite easily, and it wasn't hard for them to keep me on...I was on the list most of the time.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what kind of a reception did you receive from the Australian population?

Evans: Well, they were very hospitable and very...in fact, I guess we were the first people that had been in there since 1926, I think. I think they sent some Navy ships down there back in 1926, and we were the first Army or first Americans that ever landed there in possibly all that time. They were very hospitable to us, and they liked to talk to us. In fact, the Australians, I always thought, were kind of like West Texans. Actually, they were far behind...I mean, as far as the country is concerned, it was about like...I guess they was thirty or forty years behind us as far as--we thought--civilization. Of course, we always thought they were kind of like West Texans, you know.

As I remember, they used to call us Yanks, and it'd make us mad because we'd tell them we weren't Yanks, that we was from the South, you know. Of course, now it wouldn't make a heck of a lot of difference to us, but back then... my grandfather...in fact, my grandmother...I can remember her telling about seeing Atlanta burn as a young girl. I can reach back...my grandfather could remember the Civil War. He was nine years old at the end of the Civil War. If you say Yankee to him, it makes him mad. Of course, that gravitated to me. I didn't like to be called Yankee, either.

Marcello: But I guess this was the beginning of a very close relationship

that gradually developed between the Australians and the Americans.

Evans: Yes. The Australians liked us better than they did the English. I'll say that for them. We called the English limeys. The Australians called them pommies, and that's sort of a scurrilous use of the word, I guess. Maybe limey would be a scurrilous word. I'm not sure. But I know pommy was a scurrilous connotation to the English. Anyway, the Australians and the Americans got along famously, except for the fact that they called us all Yanks, you know. That was the only thing that we didn't particularly like.

Marcello: According to my records, on December 28, 1941, you boarded a Dutch motor transport called the Bloemfontein, and you were on your way to Java.

Evans: That's right.

Marcello: Describe the journey from Brisbane to your eventual destination, which was Java.

Evans: Well, as I recall, we got out, and we went down the coast. We went behind what's called the Great Barrier Reef and past whatever that island is there, and after we got out from behind that, we were escorted into Darwin harbor by some four-stack destroyers. Now I'm not sure, but I believe the Marblehead and the Pensacola and maybe one or two of the Australian cruisers was with us. They brought that flotilla up there. We went into Darwin, and we stayed

there overnight. That was Port Darwin. I don't know what we was doing there, but we stayed...maybe we stayed there two or three days. It seemed to me like they was debating whether or not to put us off the ship there. I don't recall exactly.

Marcello: I understand that people weren't too impressed with Darwin from what you could see of it.

Evans: Well, it was just like any other jungle town. It was just like any of the tropical country. It was just tropical. It's hot and muggy and has a very, very heavily tropical climate. I remember it like to sweated us all down there.

We took our guns and put them on board our ship on the weather deck. We took all our guns and mounted them on the decks of the ship where I guess we could shoot them. I don't know whether they'd hit anything or not, but at least it'd give us some kind of security. We got machine guns and put them on board this ship. They had one 3-, 4-, or 5-inch gun. I don't remember now. The Dutch had one on there. This motor ship would stay right up with those destroyers. It'd run 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 knots--just right along with them. It was quite an impressive boat.

Marcello: Some people remember a submarine scare on the way over to Java. Do you recall this?

Evans: Yes, there were the rubber boat that got sunk just right out of Bali, and there was a submarine scare. I never

could see it. Hell, when somebody said they saw it, I think they was seeing things. They claim that there was some depth charges dropped, but I never did hear any and never did know about them if they did. I think they was just seeing things.

Marcello: You would have probably spent New Year's Eve aboard the Bloemfontein on your trip up to Java.

Evans: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Was there any sort of a celebration on New Year's Eve?

Evans: No, I don't remember. At least I didn't celebrate. There might have been, but I didn't celebrate. The officers might have celebrated, but I didn't.

Marcello: Okay, according to the record, you get into Surabaya sometime around January 11, 1942, and, of course, you were just really passing through Surabaya.

Evans: We were put on board this train. We were taken off the ship and put on the train, and it was pulled by a steam locomotive. It was a Mikado steam engine, I remember. In fact, I got a picture of the engine in here somewhere. We were taken...the shades were drawn. We weren't allowed to look out of the train, and we went up to Malang, Java, to the...it was an old cavalry post there called Singosari. We were billeted in some horse stalls.

Marcello: Describe what those billets were like. Take me on a tour of your quarters there.

Evans: Well, on one side it had a hall--corridor--that had rings and places where you hitch horses, and on the other side it had the stalls. The stalls with the gates and all were taken out, and we were billeted in there. I would say it was quite comfortable. It wasn't uncomfortable at all. The floors were brick floors. And the barn--I guess the barn--was made out of brick. The cubicles were brick, and each one had a high window in it where a horse could look out.

Marcello: How many men were billeted in each one of these cubicles?

Evans: I believe there were four. I believe that's correct. I may or may not be sure. We had a nice mess hall, and they had steam kettles. It was a well-built place.

Then at that time, that airdrome was up there, and they put us to work. Of course, we did all of our usual military duties--policing up, cleaning up, sweeping up, standing guard duty, KP duty--and then we worked on that airfield there--that Malang airfield.

Marcello: Now let me ask you this. When you arrived there, was the 19th Bomb Group already there, or did they come in shortly after you got there?

Evans: I believe they were there because I remember guarding a prisoner that had deserted from Hickam Field or the Army, whichever one it was. What's the name of that...

Marcello: Scofield Barracks is the big Army base there, and Hickam

Field had the Air Corps.

Evans: Yes, Scofield Barracks. He had deserted there and gotten on a British transport, and he was captured, and the British turned him over there in Java. We had him guarded there. In fact, he thought he was going to be shot, and I kept telling him that they wasn't going to shoot him. I can't remember what his name was now, but I remember I guarded him all the time. I took him food. He was there in the stockade.

Marcello: What did you do with your fieldpieces when you got to Singosari?

Evans: Well, they were stacked out there with a bunch of British guns. We had a bunch of British guns. As I remember, we had about three or four acres of barbed wire that we stacked up, and we had a bunch of ammunition there. We had some British 75-millimeter guns there. We didn't use them, of course, until later on.

We was working with the 19th Bombardment Group. They trained me how to put detonators in bombs. When they'd crank those bombs up in those B-17's, I would arm them-- gauge the cordite out and gauge the TNT out and then put those detonators in there. Then when they would fly off on their mission, we would clean machine guns and belt machine gun ammunition to get ready for the next sortie, I guess, for the next day.

Marcello: So as far as you were personally concerned, then, you were more or less serving as support personnel for the Air Corps?

Evans: That's correct--ground personnel. That's correct. In other words, what I did was...when the planes were in, we had crews that would go out and refuel them, and they had electricians...of course, the 19th Bombardment Group had some electricians and sheet metal people and all those that would make repairs on the airplanes. We would refuel them and crank the bombs up in the bomb bays, put the detonators in them, and get them ready for when they dropped out. Then they would take off real early the next morning. What we would do, also, is put ammunition...re-arm those machine guns. When they would go fly off, why, then in the afternoon, after we'd get our chores done, why, then we would go belt the ammunition in belts--.50-caliber ammunition in belts--and get it ready for the next sortie.

Marcello: That was a grass and dirt runway, wasn't it? Or was it concrete?

Evans: No.

Marcello: I didn't think it was.

Evans: I think it was gravel more or less. They were lengthening it--trying to get it lengthened. It was a short runway, as I remember. A B-17 could just barely have enough room to stop on it. In fact, we had several to go off over the

end, and we lost several planes--one or two planes--that way. We had one to blow up, as I remember, and then the Japanese shot down one. We lost, I think, one or two men on board.

Marcello: You've brought up an interesting point. It is true, is it not, that just a handful of the 131st people did volunteer and subsequently flew on some of the missions that these planes...

Evans: No, no...

Marcello: Oh, no?

Evans: ...no, they did not. What was happening, they had repaired this plane, and they was going to take it up--to try it out. These guys had worked on it, and so they asked to go. That's what happened. As a result, they got up and run into...the Japanese was coming to bomb and strafe that runway, and they run right into that squadron of Japanese planes, and they got shot down. As far as I know, I don't believe any of our bunch was ever crewman on aboard, but these guys just went up for the kick of it, you know, just to say they'd been up in a B-17.

Marcello: It's interesting that you mention that because I had seen that some of the men did get killed there at Singosari, and it was never indicated how or why, that is, concerning what happened. I'm glad you mentioned what you did.

Evans: That's how they got killed. In fact, the bombing didn't

kill anybody. Our cooks, as I remember...the first air raid we was in...it's interesting that the natives had a warning system. They beat those logs, you know. The Dutch Air Force had a warning system which used radar, and the natives warning system was better than our warning system was.

Marcello: In other words, when you heard those logs, you knew when an air raid was coming.

Evans: Yes. They were logs that had been sawed out, had had slits in them. I don't know whether you've ever seen one or not, but each village had those logs. I think they were tied in a tree--I believe they were--and hung down like a glockenspiel. They'd hit those, and it would carry quite long distances. It's my understanding that they could send messages to one another with it. I don't know. I don't know that to be true or not, but I know that in Africa they've got what they call "talking drums." They can drum up what they want to do. I'm sure that they could communicate with one another.

Marcello: Before we start talking about the Japanese air raids--and that is the next topic we want to get into--I need to ask you this. You're on Java. Has anybody ever told you why you were on Java?

Evans: No. No, nobody ever told us, other than the fact that it was just a matter of simple deduction--we was there to help

that bombardment group. Of course, during that time they said that Singapore had fallen, as I remember, and, hell, I didn't know where Singapore was. For all I knew, it was on the other side of the world. I didn't really realize that Singapore was as close as it was. There wouldn't have been much I could've done even if I'd have known where it was.

Marcello: I assume that most of you felt that you really wouldn't be on Java too long perhaps, that you'd be taken off there by the Navy or somebody else?

Evans: Well, quite honestly, we was kept as busy as a new bride around there working, so as a result I didn't have much time to even contemplate what was in the future.

Marcello: Did you ever get a chance to get into Malang on liberty?

Evans: Yes. Oh, yes, we got into Malang. There was a place there called Toko-Oeun. We used to go in there and drink Anchor and Heineken beer. That's the first time I ever drank any Heineken beer there. It was a place where you could go in there and get beefsteak, and we thought it was rather odd that if you ordered beefsteak, you had to order...if you wanted bread, you had to order bread with it. In other words, they wouldn't feed bread. You had to order a separate order of bread because the Dutch didn't eat bread with steak when they had potatoes. When they eat potatoes, they don't eat bread. Of course, they were

the first Europeans I'd ever been around. As I remember, we used to go in there and drink Heinekens and Anchor beer. That was where we all hung out. I think it was run by the Chinese. I believe it was. I believe the Chinese run it. I'm not sure.

Marcello: At this stage I'm going to turn over the tape.

Evans: Okay.

Marcello: What kind of a relationship developed between the Dutch and the Americans here at Singosari or in Malang during this period?

Evans: Well, as I recall, they were rather helpful to us. Of course, they didn't like the way we conducted ourselves around the natives because the Americans got out with the native women. And they didn't like the way we spent our money because we pushed the price of everything up, you know. We would tip the taxi drivers more money than what the Dutch thought we should. Of course, you've got to bear in mind that the Dutch paid those natives less than fifteen cents a day to work, and if you give them more than fifteen cents a day--give them a quarter--they'd quit because they'd got rich, you know. In fact, I was put on latrine orderly there, I guess as some sort of a--I forget now--some sort of punishment, I guess. I'd give this native ten cents, and he'd clean the latrines for me. That's ten cents in Dutch money, which would have been about a nickel in American

money. See, the guilder was about fifty-five cents, I think, and then their cent would be...in other words, ten cents would be about a nickel. He'd work all day. I remember I gave the first guy twenty-five cents, and he worked all day, and he didn't show up the next day. And that was what it was. You give them that money, and they won't come back.

Marcello: Now the first Japanese air raid occurred in early February, 1942. My records indicate it was February 3, 1942. I don't know if that's the precise date or not. Describe your experiences during that first air raid as best you can remember it.

Evans: Well, as I recall, I was on KP that day.

Marcello: Screwed up again, huh?

Evans: Well (chuckle), I guess so. You could call it that. Anyway, I was on KP that day, and our mess sergeant was a man by the name of Donald Heleman. He was our mess sergeant. Since we had permanent galley facilities, they all dressed in whites. Of course, I'm sure that they weren't white. They weren't spotless white, but I'm sure they were white. They were dirty white, I guess.

Well, we didn't realize that...the siren went off, and ...they'd had a practice a day or two before that, and they told us that this was a practice. So this siren went off--the air raid signal went off--and we didn't think much about it. But then when the planes come over and started shooting,

well, we run into the jungle. As I remember, we went down in this draw close to a rice paddy, and they was shooting down through there. I had my helmet, and I was telling Donald Heleman and them guys in cook's whites, "Get the hell away from me!" I didn't want them around me (chuckle) because the Japs could see them better.

But they dropped those anti-personnel bombs, which would just knock a little small hole out of the ground, and then those fragmentation bombs would just skim across the top of the ground, you know. They hit that barbed wire, and they hit those guns and just burned holes under them like you took...it looked like they took an acetylene torch and cut holes in them. But, anyway, it ruined several of those British guns. I think we had maybe forty or fifty of them there, and it ruined one of our guns that I recall. When we went into action down around Surabaya, why, we took one of those English guns.

Marcello: Now what kind of Japanese planes took part in this first raid? Were there both strafers and bombers?

Evans: Well, yes, there were some Zeros, and then there were some of those Bettys, I believe they were called. Of course, we didn't know the names of them. They strafed us, and then they bombed us, too, and we lost several planes. I think we lost about twenty-some-odd B-17's in the first raid. I believe that's right. They bombed the camp, which was

about, I guess, two miles from the field itself.

Marcello: What were your own emotions or feelings when having come under an air attack for the first time in your life?

Evans: Well, it was rather scary, of course. You never get used to anything like that, you know, when your life's in jeopardy. You suddenly realize, "My God, they're trying to kill me!" (Chuckle) You soon realize that you're not one of them good ol' boys. They're trying to kill you, and if you don't do something about it, they're going to do it. So that's kind of the way it...but it's rather frightening because you don't...you feel like you're about the size of an eighty-acre farm whenever those bombs start dropping. You can see those bombs come out of those bomb bay doors, and, of course, not knowing anything about surveying or trajectory or anything else, you don't really know...by looking up there, you don't really know where in the hell they're going to hit, so you feel like you're about the size of a big eighty-acre farm, and you just know that ol' bomb...you can feel that that bomb's going to hit you right behind the ears. I would say that's about the feeling that you have.

Marcello: Now the base is subjected to more of these raids as time goes on.

Evans: Yes.

Marcello: Without pinning you down as to the number of raids, can you

see a steady deterioration in the effectiveness and operation of the airfield and the camp itself?

Evans: Well, the way we realized that the Japanese were getting closer and closer was because they could raid earlier and earlier. We knew they were getting closer to us. Of course, we didn't know how close, and we weren't told anything.

Marcello: What kind of resistance could you put up there at the base?

Evans: Well, we mounted machine guns, and we took our fieldpieces and set them out at the end there where we could shoot at them with shrapnel. They said we shot down one or two planes. I never did see it. But I did see a belly tank from one of those Zeros that somebody had dragged up there. I do remember seeing that. It had Japanese writing on it. So far as I know, we never did shoot one down. If we did, why, I never did see it.

Shortly after that first raid, we put out outpost guards, and as a result I was put out about three quarters of a mile on the perimeter there as an outpost guard. I spent the rest of the time there.

Marcello: Of what use were your artillery pieces? Could they be used to fire at the planes?

Evans: Well, yes, they did but they were highly inaccurate; I mean, you couldn't hit the side of a barn with those because you couldn't traverse fast enough. All they could do was just

to shoot, and that's about the extent of it. We had some shrapnel which was time-fused, and, of course, the only way you could hit one of those planes would be to get a burst in the proximity of one of them. But I'm not sure that they ever got anywhere close to them.

Marcello: I would assume that all these raids also hampered the work of those bombers.

Evans: Yes, it would slow the work down. It's kind of like a man said: "You got to keep one eye open and one foot on the floor all the time." You work and work and keep harkening to the fact that you might have to run away every so often to get away from those air raids. Of course, you wasn't going to get caught on the runway, so that was kind of the way it was. I know that some of the men got caught out on the runway, and one or two of them got wounded, but I don't think anybody got killed out there. I know that a guy by the name of Holder...they machine-gunned him. He got underneath a truck loaded with gasoline, and they machine-gunned the truck, and he had to get out, and they shot him after he got out of there. As I recall, that was about the extent of it.

Marcello: On February 27, 1942, the 19th Bomb Group evacuated--what's left of it. Describe your feelings or your reactions when you learned that the 19th Bomb Group was getting out.

Evans: Well, prior to that, we had some A-25's, which were some

dive-bombers. During that time, the Japanese was landing, and they sent those A-26's to bomb those landing craft. It was my understanding that they missed them. See, we didn't have any equipment to load those A-26's, and we used regular floor jacks to jack those 500-pound bombs up underneath. They had a yoke underneath those things and had some pallets made out of wood. I remember Colonel Eubanks was out there trying to help us load those bombs. We'd get them nearly up there, and then they'd fall off. I remember he'd cuss and walk around, and we'd jack them up again. Finally, we got those bombs loaded. They carried a 500-pound bomb in the middle and then two smaller ones on each wing, as I recall.

That's about the time that the Java Sea Battle was fought. I don't remember when it was fought, but it was about along that time. Then the bombardment group left out after they knew that they couldn't stop the invasion. But what perturbed me more than anything was that they took out Dutch civilians. They took out some dignitaries, I guess. I'm not sure that they didn't pay them to get them out.

Marcello: At this stage, were you and your buddies aware of the precariousness of your situation here on Java?

Evans: No, we were not told. Nobody knew. I mean, we weren't told at least. The officers may have known, but we were

not told.

Marcello: Am I to assume that you were perhaps fully expecting to be evacuated, yourselves, if evacuation became necessary?

Evans: Well, we didn't realize that evacuation was necessary. We knew that they was leaving out to go to Australia, and I didn't really give it much thought at the time as to why they was going to Australia. If I'd have thought, I would have known that they was retreating. Why leave there unless they was being threatened? And if they were threatened, certainly I was being threatened. But I never gave it much thought at the time. Like I say, I was fairly young and of tender years, I guess, and maybe my mind was on other things. We should have been thinking of survival, I guess. But as far as I knew, there was no reason for us to even think about leaving because we were ordered to stay, and stay we did. By the way, that guy that was afraid he was going to get shot, they court-martialed him and turned him loose, and he left with the 19th Bombardment. I traded him out of a pistol he had when he left.

Marcello: The next day, that is, the day after the 19th Bomb Group left, the 131st also evacuated that base. Isn't that correct?

Evans: That's right. We went back down to Surabaya.

Marcello: It's at this point where E Battery gets separated from the rest.

Evans: From the rest of them, that's right. We were separated.

We were ordered into Surabaya. They went to West Java, and we went to East Java.

Marcello: What were you doing in going to Surabaya?

Evans: Well, they took us down there, and we guarded the road down there. As I remember, it was east of Surabaya and close to the naval base, and we was to roadblock a road there between the river and the ocean, which would be the main thoroughfare from East Java to Surabaya. You know, the island of Madura is right above Surabaya, and Madura, I suppose, really guards the harbor there for that Dutch naval base.

We was there several days, as I remember, and I was on the roadblock there in the eastern part of Surabaya. There was a zoo there, and there was a golf course. We set up some machine guns up on the golf course, up above that road--the big hill overlooking the road. It seemed to me like it was looking from the south to the north. We dug some machine gun nests or machine gun pits there. What we did, we had some leftover machine guns from those airplanes, and so we made mounts for them and jerry-rigged them to where we could use them. We had some Browning Automatic Rifles, which are BARs. We had some of those. We set up a machine gun nest up on that golf course.

Marcello: In the meantime, are you having any contact at all with the Japanese either through bombing, strafing, or infantry?

Evans: Well, the first we knew about the Japanese coming in... there was a Dutchman who came up on a motorcycle and was telling us that there were some American troops coming in. He said there was a column of American troops coming in, and we was going to be all right now. Of course, we got down there and looked, and they was...in the meantime, one of these airplanes--one of these observation planes from cruisers--comes flying over, and we knew dang well he was Japanese because he had that "fried egg" on the side of it. We got to shooting at him. Then the Japanese started coming up there, and then we heard those men up on top open up on them with those machine guns. Then we knew they were Japanese.

What we didn't know was the Dutch had already capitulated --had already given up--and that they had declared Surabaja off limits, you see. So actually, we were firing at some people that we shouldn't have been firing at. Of course, our officers weren't told anything. The Dutch didn't tell our officers anything, and we didn't know anything. As a result we just bore-sighted our guns down that...and there was a Dutch gun there, too. They had a Mauser 75-millimeter gun, and, as I recall, it was in the middle of the road. I think it was an asphalt road, and they took a pick and knocked out a small place for the spade to go down in there to where it would dig into the ground. But the first time

they shot their gun, why, that spade jumped up out of that hole and dragged a Dutchman about one hundred or so yards down the road there. That gun kept running down the road, so we had to run down there and catch it. I think there was a Dutchman who got his foot hurt or something like that.

Marcello: In the meantime, are the Dutch putting up very much resistance?

Evans: Well, as far as I knew, they didn't. It was my understanding that their native troops revolted on them--mutinied--and the only ones that didn't mutiny or go over to the other side was the Ambonese from the island of Ambon. They were the ones that carried this big, broad cutlass-looking saber. They carried those sabers, and they were alleged to have been able to cut a coconut tree that was two feet in diameter in two with it. They were so strong that they could do that. I doubt it very seriously. Anyway, they were the only ones that didn't mutiny or desert. It was my understanding that there wasn't much resistance given. I didn't have any firsthand knowledge. Only afterwards I was told.

Marcello: Mr. Evans, we're about ready to talk about the surrender, which occurred on March 8, 1942, and I think that's a pretty good stopping point. Why don't we stop here, and I'll come back and interview another day real soon.

Evans: Okay. All right.

Oral History Collection

Pete Evans

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Duncanville, Texas Date of Interview: February 29, 1984

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Pete Evans for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 29, 1984, in Duncanville, Texas. This is the second interview in which I am recording Mr. Evans's experiences and reminiscences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese.

Pete, when we stopped the interview the last time, we had more or less been at the point where the Japanese had landed on Java, and your unit and the rest of the battalion was on the move. We had talked about the fact that your particular battery, E Battery, had been separated from the rest of the battalion. Let us kind of go back and pick up the story at that point. You mentioned that you were maneuvering and operating somewhere in the vicinity of a zoo near Surabaja, I guess it was.

Evans: Yes. It's a town called Surabaja. Our mess tent was set up close to the zoo. However, we were in the east part of Surabaja, which was, I believe, the road to the Dutch naval base there. We set up gun batteries. There was a river on one side, and the sea was off to the right, which

was a narrow strip of land that...we were on this main road, and we had two American .75-millimeter fieldpieces, and one Dutch Mauser fieldpiece was set up in the middle of the road. As a result, farther up the road on the golf course, we had some machine gun nests set up in order to cover the road in the event that the Japanese...which they eventually came down that road.

They came down the road--their patrols came down the road--and we sighted them. A Dutchman came down the road and told us that those were American troops, and we had no idea. We assumed that they were Japanese, but he said they were American troops and that they had landed--some American troops had landed--farther east down the coast, and they were coming up the coast to relieve us. Of course, when we got where we could see who they were, they were Japanese. Some were riding bicycles, and some were, I think, just walking and leading bicycles more or less. They were carrying their plunder or whatever it was with them.

As a result, we opened fire on them. The Dutch gun, as I recall, its trail jumped out of where they had dug a place for the spade. Where they fired their gun, why, it went down the road about three hundred yards and strung Dutchmen all up and down the road, and we had to go get them. Our guns were on the side of the road, and we opened

up on the...we actually opened the breeches of the guns and lowered the tubes down to where we could--what you would call--bore-sight them. We bore-sighted them on these Japanese troops and opened fire on them. I guess we must have fired, oh, sixty or eighty rounds to start out with.

Well, they retreated back down to a housing area for the Dutch naval personnel, and they got up on top of these buildings where they could see us, and they started...one group...we could see that they were setting up a trench mortar to fire on us. We sighted on those, and once we got them running, why, then we took one gun and went down about, oh, I guess, half a mile and leveled that whole housing area. We went in there and fired, and we just reduced all that to rubble. As a result, my sergeant, which was O. B. Williams, got a silver star out of it. I think there was maybe two bronze stars. I forget now what it was, but I think that was about the only valorous decoration that anyone got other than I suppose...I guess there was more wooden crosses given in war than there are any other kind of crosses.

Marcello: Were you ever told why you were separated from the rest of the unit?

Evans: No, I don't recall being told why we were. In fact, to this day I've never been told why. In fact, I never was

told why we were in Java to start with.

Marcello: What observations did you make of the Dutch during this period? In other words, did they seem to be too keen on putting up a stiff fight?

Evans: Well, the invasion of Java was just a short time--I'd say within a year or a year-and-a-half--of the German invasion of Holland, and, of course, you've got to bear in mind the Dutch used native troops and they used European officers, which were Dutch officers. They had many, many, I suppose, regiments of native troops, and, of course, the natives had been under the Dutch, I guess for a better word, "domination"--I guess I better use that word--for, I guess, 300 years or more. Of course, if you know anything about the East India Company...the Raffles Company settled parts of Sumatra and Java, and there was a war fought over Java, I believe, with the Dutch East India Company. Of course, the Dutch eventually came out with the Dutch East Indies, and they exploited the land like was in vogue at the time. The natives certainly resented that, and, of course, you couldn't blame them--having to work for little if anything. It's my understanding that once the fight started or there was some fights or skirmishes, I guess, why, the native troops deserted. As a result, the Dutch had to capitulate and did capitulate. They gave up.

They capitulated, and, of course, whenever they sued

for peace, I guess, or an armistice or whatever you want to call it, why, since we were under the command of the Dutch, we were also surrendered. However, we were never told that there was a surrender. Of course, at that time there was a lack of communication not only from actual communication but from a language barrier as well. We had no idea. We were not told that we were surrendered along with the Dutch troops, nor were we ever told that Surabaja was considered an open city and that the Japanese were given safe escort into the city, which we violated when we fired into their troops.

Shortly after we had this skirmish, why, we were ordered to go back into town by our officer--we had a first lieutenant--and we finally got the word that the Dutch had surrendered. Shortly before that, why, there was some Japanese scouting planes, which was from naval vessels, flying around, and we had a machine gun, and we shot at them. We were expecting a salvo from maybe from a naval vessel which was over the hill. We had no maps. We had no idea where the vessel might have been, but we knew that they were rather close by; and so as a result, our officer ordered us back to the zoo.

We did blow up a railroad bridge, as I recall. There was a railroad bridge there, and I believe we blew it up and went on back into town. We ran across some English

troops, and one of them gave me and five or six other guys a Bren gun carrier--one of these armored-type things--and we drove that through the middle of town, and as I recall, as we went through the streets, we could see the American and the Dutch flags flying, and you could look behind you, and you could see them taking those down and putting up Japanese flags. It was always amazing to me where they got those Japanese flags; I mean, I'm just curious as to how quickly that things can change. I think somebody got into some beer, and since we had no officers, we were sort of on our own. We had officers, but we were told that if we could get out, we could get out. We had no earthly idea...if I'd have had a boat, I wouldn't have known which way to go--whereabouts.

Marcello: What was your initial reaction when you heard for the first time that the island had capitulated?

Evans: Well, of course, we were very apprehensive. We didn't know what was going to happen to us, and it scared us, of course. It also made us rather angry. It made me angry at least--to think that our country would allow us to go over there to...I hesitate to say a godforsaken country. This wasn't a godforsaken country--it was a beautiful country--but to send us away off in that direction, use us for a short time, and then leave us in lieu of some other groups of people to be left--abandoned, you might say, just like a waif on

the street with no hope of any success in our endeavor... then, of course, the Dutch and them capitulating virtually without a fight...I can understand why. Their cause was hopeless because of their past sins--of their past treatment of the natives. Actually, had we not treated the Filipinos with the proper dignity that they were entitled to while we colonized their country--we had a pretty good PR group-- they wouldn't have fought as well as they did against the Japanese because they might have welcomed the Japanese. I'm not sure that if the Japanese hadn't have been as cruel and, I would say, aggressive as they were, I'm not sure that there would have been a lot of the Filipinos who went over to the Japanese. I'm not sure that they didn't, anyway.

Marcello: Had you heard the rumors going around that the Japanese didn't take prisoners?

Evans: No, I don't recall that rumor at all. I just assumed that the Japanese at that time...of course, I knew that they had been awful cruel to the Chinese in China. I just assumed that they were all Orientals and that they would treat Orientals different than they would Caucasians. I assumed that. I don't know why I did. In retrospect I can see now where the Japanese were probably as mean to us--maybe not quite as mean to the Caucasians--as they were to the Chinese. In the things that I've read since then, particularly about their biological experiments with POW's

and that sort of thing...I recall that they did use Russians and Americans in those experiments.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that after you had received word of the capitulation, you had gotten hold of the British Bren gun carrier, and I assume that you were just more or less aimlessly moving around.

Evans: That's true. In fact, it was brought to mind...I don't recall this, but a fellow by the name of Carter said that I suggested that we ought to go rob one of those banks to where we'd have plenty of money to get out of there on. We contemplated robbing the bank because we didn't want the Japanese to have the money, and we might as well take it as anybody else. I don't recall that; however, I wouldn't deny it. Of course, I wouldn't have thought that that would have been theft or any felonious act. I don't believe it would have been because the money was there if anybody wanted to get it. I believe he said he talked me out of it. I don't recall. Of course, we'd been drinking quite a bit.

I don't remember exactly where I abandoned this vehicle, but we went to this house, and it belonged to a banker. It was a huge mansion-type house. I guess it must have had thirty rooms in it, with outbuildings, and it had furniture in it. We had some food stashed there. We had cheese and ham. As I recall, we ate cheese and ham for about a week.

We stayed there about a week, and the Japanese came by the house with their tanks. They had some tanks and troops, and they came by and marched in. We could see them. We could watch them through the windows. We kept the lights out, and we could see the tanks and the troops coming down the street, and the trucks and whatever. Then we found out that they had a Japanese on every intersection, and one of the guys, I believe, went out to go somewhere--to try to get some cigarettes maybe or something--and he was accosted by one of the Japanese, and he turned back. Then maybe a couple of days later, while we were there...we took all of our guns that we had--we had sidearms and rifles--and there was a big well in the back of this place, and we dropped those--threw those--in the well and got rid of them. We got rid of all of our uniforms with the expectation of trying to get out. We found civilian clothes, and, of course, that was a mistake on our part. We should have kept our uniforms.

The Japanese came up and asked us were we soldiers, and we told them "no," that we wasn't. He spoke very good English and asked us if we were soldiers, and we told him "no." I told him that I was a student, and he looked me over, and he figured that I was rather young, but he believed it. He wanted to know about the other guys. We told him that we was all going to school. I believe we

told him we was going to school. Of course, he didn't hardly believe all of that, I don't think. But he told us that they were incarcerating all the Caucasians on the island for security reasons and that we should go to this certain place and turn ourselves in. Otherwise, they were taking over this house, that their general or one of their officers was going to move in that building, and they wanted us to move out. To preclude us from getting into any problem with the Imperial Japanese Army, we should leave.

Marcello: In the meantime, where was this Dutch banker?

Evans: Oh, he was one of the ones that was flown out of there. He was the one that went with the 19th Bombardment Group-- flew out. He and his family flew out with our planes, which it was ironic that we took...it might have been a coincidence, or it could have been some sort of trade that he made with our bunch. I don't know.

Marcello: What did you do during that week or so that you were there?

Evans: Well, actually, we just loused around, I guess, and played poker and wondered what was going to happen to us and what sort of action should we take on our part. We found out, that the natives were getting, I think, fifty guilders a head for turning in people. Of course, we kept a very low profile. We didn't show our face during the day or at night either, for that matter, other than in this backyard. They had a big backyard, as I recall, and some native servants'

quarters. I don't remember how many there were of us. I guess there must have been twenty or twenty-five of us. Our officer, which was Lieutenant Allen, didn't know what to do either. Hell, if he didn't know, I sure wasn't going to take command of the group as far as I knew.

However, we showed up at this place called the Jaarmarkt, which means "year market." It was sort of a fairgrounds sort of thing. It had a big high fence around it, and the first Japanese soldier that I saw--I'm talking about a regular enlisted man--was this little Japanese...I guess he couldn't have been much over five feet tall. He had a sling on his rifle, and he had a bayonet and swung it around his neck--he swung this rifle around. He couldn't speak any English, and, of course, we couldn't speak any Japanese, and he tried to run us off. The first act of any hostility that I saw...he kicked one of our guys--tried to kick him in the groin--because he wouldn't leave. Finally, as I recall, an officer came out and took us in. I don't even remember whether we gave them our names or not.

I think we just went in therewith the rest of humanity. There was Dutchmen and Englishmen and Eurasians, and, of course, Americans. We ran across some of our other bunch. We got there fairly early, I guess, and we got some cubicles in the wall. They had some stalls like they'd use. I met a Jewish fellow--a Dutchman. His name was Zeehandalaar,

which means "sea trader." He was sort of like the rest of some of the people. He was a very innovative person. He was one of those guys who, if you needed, say, a camshaft to a Folkers airplane; he'd come up with it one way or another. As a result, we stayed in the same room with him and a few of the others.

Marcello: What kind of gear did you have with you when you turned yourself in? You mentioned that you were in civilian clothes. Did you have any other gear with you?

Evans: No, I had nothing other than...I guess it was like a Palm Beach suit of clothes on. That's all I had. I had a pair of white shoes. That's all I had.

Marcello: In other words, you had abandoned your mess gear...

Evans: Everything...

Marcello: ...everything.

Evans: Everything, yes.

Marcello: Why did you go to the Jaarmarkt? Did the Japanese officer instruct you that this was where you were to go?

Evans: Yes, we were instructed to go there, as I understand it. As I recall now, he told us that if we would go there, we would not have any problem with the Imperial Japanese Army.

Marcello: Approximately how long did you remain there at the Jaarmarkt?

Evans: Oh, I guess we must have stayed there maybe the biggest part of a month-and-a-half or two months. I don't recall exactly. But then we were moved to a school, and it was

a high school called the Hocheburgherschule, which is a high school, burgher school. It means "high burgher school." We stayed there for a month, as I recall.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit more about your stay there at the Jaarmarkt. What did you do while you were there for that month or so?

Evans: Well, actually we just scrounged to try to make...oh, wait. As I recall now...wait a minute. How we got into the...it wasn't a Japanese officer that came out. It was a Salvation Army major that came out and got us and brought us inside, as I recall. That was the first guy that I ran across, was this Salvation Army major.

Marcello: That was out at the banker's house?

Evans: No, that was at the Jaarmarkt when we first went in.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Okay.

Evans: He was the first. And I might say that he saw what kind of circumstances we were in, and, as I recall, I believe he brought us some clothes and some other things that we would need. I think maybe he gave us soap and maybe a towel. This major was from the Salvation Army, and he had free access to the compound. He came and went as he pleased, and he did things for us. In fact, we were fed by the wives of the people that were captured for the first few days in the Jaarmarkt. The Japanese didn't--I don't think--really have anything to do with it. That was

my first introduction to native foods such as soybean cheese, soybean cake--"tofu," they call it now--rice, and various vegetables which is cooked up like the Chinese cook it up now. That was my first introduction to that.

Marcello: Did you have any difficulty adjusting to that kind of food?

Evans: Oh, of course, yes. It was quite a cultural shock to me. Of course, then the Japanese started feeding us. They only fed us "pap," which was just plain gruel, which was rice which was cooked up. Then we had rice and vegetables for lunch. I don't recall...we had about the same thing for supper, I suppose. But it was a cultural shock to me to have to go from American food like ham and eggs for breakfast to have to eat just plain rice without butter or sugar or anything else on it--just plain ol' rice. However, we had an officer--a casual officer--that was captured. He was there about in the early part of the war. He had a million guilders in cash, and he distributed that money. The money was to be used in Borneo. In Borneo there is an oilfield that you can take the oil right from the ground and put it in a ship. This officer came down, and he was to negotiate with the Dutch government to get oil for our Navy from that oilfield. He had a million guilders, is my understanding. And when he left, he distributed that money with the officers of the various batteries. Our officer...I don't know how much money he had, but he had a lot of money, and we scrounged

around and got food and bought off the black market, I guess, for a better word. We had a hole in the wall there where we could buy even ice cream through the hole. Messages were slipped out in various ways. One guy did it with a kite, I think. He'd play with this kite, and he let the messages go out over the wall. There was some sort of a talk about trying to break out and all that sort of thing.

There was two English officers which were wing commanders. They captured, I think, every Englishman in Singapore. There were a bunch of Englishmen trying to get out of Singapore. I think nearly every rubber planter in Singapore was a wing commander of some sort--without any wings. They were given the status of wing commander.

While I was there I learned to play chess. There was some chess masters there, and I learned to play chess. As I tell them, I played the 1941 champion of Europe to a draw. Of course, he was playing forty-nine other people. He played fifty people at a time. I played him to a chess stalemate. Of course, he was playing fifty people. He'd line them all up and play them all--amazing man. You could blindfold him, and he could play chess. I learned to play chess, and I enjoyed the game.

Marcello: Am I to assume, then, that the Japanese really weren't working anybody too hard here at the Jaarmarkt during this period?

Evans: Well, they did take out work details. The first work that I did, I worked on the airfield there--small airstrip there in Surabaya. We repaired the runway. Then we worked on the refinery. There was a big refinery there, and they had us working on this refinery. It had been blown up or had been burned, and there was a lot of barrels, and we did a lot of cleaning up around there, which was preparatory to their trying to put it back in operation.

Then we worked on some oil wells, and I helped put out an oil well fire. It was rather unusual way that they put it out. As I remember, we filled sandbags. This well was blazing. I guess the blaze was fifty feet high or forty feet high and had been burning since...the Dutch had, in fact, used what they called scorched earth policy, which they had destroyed a lot of things to make them useless to the Japanese. This oil well was one of them, and they had blown this well and set it on fire. The Japanese was trying to get oil, of course. That was one of the main reasons that they entered into the war. We filled these bags, and we'd get just as close as we could and build a retaining wall out of these bags around this fire. They would spray us with water to keep us kind of cool. Once we got the wall built, they filled this thing up with water, and then they got on one corner of it, and they had some bags of white chemicals and dumped it out there, and it went out. I don't know what...

I guess it was something maybe to take the oxygen out of the air around it. It wasn't like you would see a big fire. It was a small one, but, anyway, it was rather interesting that we were in on that.

Marcello: Were these work details voluntary, or were you simply assigned to them?

Evans: Well, as I recall, the Japanese would just send a squad down and just...now wait a minute. Maybe the Dutch allocated those crews--I'm not sure--or the Japanese just come down and sort of shanghaied them, just rounded up whatever they thought was warm bodies and sent us out. As I remember, we'd go out in the middle of the thing, and they would come in a Japanese truck and take us out.

I remember that one of the Japanese guards got slapped by his officer. That was the first time I ever saw a Japanese officer slap a soldier. He slapped him for pushing the rifle up and allowing one of the prisoners to take the rifle while he got on the back of the truck. They put about two Japanese guards in the back and two in the front, and then we'd go out. They pretty well knew there wasn't no harm going to come to them. However, this officer did punish this soldier for allowing this to go on.

Marcello: You mentioned that you saw this Japanese officer slap this Japanese soldier. What ultimately happened in this case? In other words, I have read and I have heard that in such

a situation everybody had to save face and that if this sort of thing occurred...

Evans: Well, of course, when he got back on the...as I recall, he was embarrassed, of course, and he was rough to us that day, I believe it was. Of course, the first time I got in any kind of a problem...the Oriental, in wanting you to come to them, will wave downward. In other words, they take their motion with their hand in a downward drawing of the hand back to them. I thought it meant "sit down." And instead of coming to him like he anticipated that I should do, well, I sat down. I wasn't trying to disobey him at all, but I thought he meant for me to sit down. It indicated to me that I was supposed to sit down, which I did. As I remember, there was a shovel laying there, and the first thing I knew I'd been hit upside the head with this shovel and knocked about half cuckoo.

It wasn't that I was trying to be smart. I was trying to cooperate with them as best I could because, after all, I was really frightened. I don't mind telling you. It scared the hell out of me. I mean, those people scared the hell out of me. I didn't know what to anticipate from them. I had no way of knowing. All I knew was that I was trying to make it the best way I could.

During this time, there was a Dutch Naval ensign. He was a rather older man, I suppose. He must have been up

around fifty years old. Of course, the Dutch had taken everybody into the military that they could. This man was an ensign, as I recall. He didn't salute a soldier, and they asked him why that he didn't, and he told them, well, he was an officer and that under the Geneva Convention he was supposed to be saluted, not salute the soldiers. Of course, the Japanese saluted everybody. The lowest soldier saluted the next guy, and then an officer was just virtually like God Almighty to those people. He slapped them. So they tied him up in front of their headquarters and left him there, I guess, about three days without water, without food, without being able to relieve himself. He was tied out in front, and I'm sure he died.

Then dysentery broke out in the camp, and we had the first funeral for the soldiers. One of the Dutch guys died there, and they had a nice send-off. They used the old-timey horse-drawn hearse, and that's the first time I'd ever seen a horse-drawn hearse used. But they came in, and they had the people that was driving it. It was a black hearse with all the fancy carvings on it, and like I say, they had little black horses, and they wore dresses. You know, they had all the trappings--the hearse had these. The natives that drove them in had these skull caps on like Moslems wear. Then whenever they took the body, the Japanese paraded it around the...as I understand, it was...I can't remember what it was. It looked like a little racetrack. It was sort of a track

around, and the Japanese marched with their rifles in a downward position with this traditional hearse. That must have been an officer of some sort. I never did find out who he was, but, anyway, when they got the body on board and started this parade around, the driver and the liveryman on board put these top hats on, and they exited this camp.

During this time, I don't recall how many prisoners was in this place, but we had sewage problems because they only had a septic tank there. I know they would pump that out about three or four times a week. It was always overflowing. Dysentery broke out in the camp. I don't remember if any of us ever coming down with dysentery there at that place. Shortly after that, why, we were moved to this high school at another location.

Marcello: You mentioned a lot of things here, and I need to follow up with some questions, and maybe we can generalize a little bit.

Evans: All right.

Marcello: You were here about a month or a month-and-a-half. How long do you think you're going to be a prisoner-of-war at this point?

Evans: Well, I guess maybe I had a mind set on this six months business. I was given promises that we could whip the Japanese within six months, that we were far superior than they were and that we would win within a six-month period,

that we could just physically overcome anything that the Japanese wanted to do. Of course, being young and impressionable, I suppose I believed it. I guess young people always believe what their elders tell them or try to believe it, anyway. Of course, being a very macho-type individual at that time, I had no reason to believe otherwise.

Marcello: After that first six months passed, then how long were you going to be a prisoner?

Evans: Now you will remember that during this time that they had fought the Coral Sea Battle and we had bombed Tokyo, so that gave us...we had evidence--at least some indications--that we were on the offensive. Of course, rumors always started that the Americans had landed there on Java, and we were going to be out within a short time--all those sorts of rumors.

Marcello: How did you receive word about the Battle of the Coral Sea and the bombing of Tokyo and that sort of thing?

Evans: Oh, I suppose that somebody must have had a clandestine radio of some sort--some sort of prohibitive radio of some sort, I'm sure.

Marcello: Let me ask another general question on this same subject. Is it important in a situation such as that to have a goal in terms of time? In other words, is it important to believe that "in six months, we're going to be free," and then when that six months is up, "well, surely it's going

to be in the next six months"?

Evans: Well, as I recall, certainly it's always beneficial to a person to be hopeful--to have hope. Without hope, all is lost, I suppose. As I remember, John Campbell, which is a fellow from down in Louisiana, said that the war would last about four years. Everybody ridiculed him because he thought it would be about four years. Of course, he was a hell of a lot closer than we were. It's always beneficial to the person that is in that type of a circumstance to believe that he's going to be rescued or be relieved within a short period of time. However, it is disappointing to him if his expectations are not lived up to. It's like anything else. He always gives his belt another hitch, and he goes for some other sort of goal or anticipation.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that the Jaarmarkt could possibly have been a learning experience in that it was here where you learned how to be a prisoner-of-war? That's a very general statement, and I have some specifics, but I'll let you respond to the general statement first.

Evans: Well...

Marcello: Let me give you a "for instance." How do you react, or what is your conduct, in the presence of a Japanese soldier?

Evans: Well, we were taught to salute and to bow to the Japanese soldiers. In other words, we had to subordinate ourselves to those people.

- Marcello: When would you salute, and when would you bow?
- Evans: Well, if you had a cap on, you saluted, and if you didn't have a cap on, you bowed, which we took that as an insult to us. Of course, now I realize that they bowed to each other as a form of respect. It wasn't a form of subordination as such. It was only a respect. Of course, the Japanese gave us no respect, so as a result we felt we didn't owe them any, either. We felt that the Japanese did not respect us as people, which actually they didn't.
- Marcello: What was their conduct toward the prisoners, and how did they show this lack of respect?
- Evans: They would kick people and slap people and beat people with sticks for, we felt, no reason at all. So that would be in my opinion very disrespectful as far as I was concerned. If I did something to be punished, certainly I would expect to be punished; but when you just do something with no cause --to punish someone--why, then we felt that was disrespectful, which in fact it was.
- Marcello: I have read that the Japanese military more or less had a language or style of talking that was unique to the army. In other words, there was a tremendous amount of yelling and screaming when they issued orders and things of that nature.
- Evans: Oh, well, the Japanese language is a very harsh language. I know from experience that a Japanese man speaks different than a Japanese woman. Of course, the Japanese Army is

like our army. You see the Marines drilling and talking and that sort of thing, and they talk a little bit different than a civilian does.

I don't hold with that at all. I think that the making of war should be an humbling experience. That should be the last resort. Maybe I'm wrong. Of course, I know that you have to have a certain esprit de corps, that the macho image of the American male is embedded in that tradition which I don't necessarily hold with. I think that some of the shouting and hollering and that sort of thing could be dispensed with. Of course, it's not for me to say one way or the other.

But the Japanese Army did have the same type of the use of their language in giving orders as much the same as the Marines, I suppose. I know that they did shout and holler and scream, and it got to where it was quite common to see soldiers slapped by their officers. The low man on the totem pole in the Japanese Army was lower down than the whales in the bottom of the ocean because he was slapped...the corporal could slap him, and the sergeant could slap the corporal and so on up the line. The pecking order was pretty well defined, and I guess when we got around to seeing Yamashita... I've seen Yamashita and Homma--both of those gentlemen. I'm not sure where they visited us, but I seen them both. Of course, MacArthur shot Homma, and Yamashita was hanged,

as you recall.

Marcello: Did the Japanese seem to go out of their way to inflict corporal punishment among the prisoners?

Evans: Yes, yes. As we call it in West Texas, they were pretty well "on the prod" all the time, you know, to dispense corporal punishment. Yes, they certainly were.

Marcello: Consequently, given this yelling and screaming and corporal punishment, how was it best to cope with these Japanese soldiers? In other words, can there ever be a close relationship developed between the Japanese soldiers and the prisoners?

Evans: Well, no. The best way to cope with that sort of a situation is to comply with whatever they wanted or whatever you anticipate they want. In other words, you pretty well try to anticipate what they might want and try to give them whatever they wanted. That was the best way to try to get along with the Japanese soldiers, is to not only do what they want you to do, or what you know they want you to do, but what you anticipate that they might want. You've got to bear in mind that, as far as we knew, if an officer or the people that was in charge would allow their soldiers to beat people and tie people up and slap people and put cigarettes out on their face or in their ears, if they would allow that, we surely had no doubt but what they could line us up and shoot us anytime they wanted to or kill us

anytime they wanted to. I'll tell you, my friend, when you're faced with either living or dying, you're going to pretty well do whatever is necessary to live because once you're faced with that, you know that death is a permanent condition.

Marcello: I know that in the pre-Civil War period, historians have written about the so-called Sambo mentality on the part of slaves, that is, there would be situations--many instances--where slaves would do whatever they could to ingratiate themselves to the master. Did you see this kind of Sambo mentality developing among prisoners, or was it simply best to stay as far away from those Japanese as you possibly could?

Evans: Of course, we pretty well pride ourselves in that the Americans stayed aloof or stayed away from the Japanese as best they could. However, we did see evidence of some of the natives or some of the Eurasians which we thought collaborated with the Japanese. I'll tell you later on about this, but we had occasions where we felt that they were a little overly friendly to the Japanese. We tried to stay away from them as far as we could.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the danger in getting too close to any of these Japanese was that they could turn anytime. They were unpredictable.

Evans: Well, in the first place, we stayed away from them because we had no way of communicating with them. In other words,

there was no way that I could communicate with the Japanese, and they couldn't speak any English. As a result, to attempt to communicate with them would lead to miscommunication, and if they misunderstood what you were trying to say to them, why, you might get yourself in more trouble than you could try to get yourself out of. So as a result, the best way, we felt, was to stay away from them, do the things that we understood that they wanted, do the things that we anticipated that they might want, and just hope for the best.

Marcello: How important was it to learn some Japanese, that is, the Japanese language?

Evans: We learned certain basic Japanese like salute, count off, general things that they wanted. We learned "no" and "yes" and the various other basic things to sort of struggle by. Later on, when we were up in Japan, we were in close proximity with the Japanese, and I could have learned Japanese. In fact, I did learn a considerable amount of Japanese. I wasn't too "gung-ho" or I didn't want to learn Japanese because they told us that we were going to be there forever, that if the war lasted one hundred years, we were going to stay there. I was determined that I wasn't going to learn Japanese good enough to...which was a mistake on my part. I should have learned it the first six months I was in prison.

Marcello: In other words, you could have avoided physical confrontations had you known a little more Japanese?

Evans: Oh, I could have been a lot better off if I'd have known how. I did learn Dutch. I speak Dutch fairly well. I learned to speak Dutch, and I even learned some Malayan while we were there a short time. I learned how to trade with the natives. They didn't like bread, and we would trade rice for bread and that sort of thing. I learned what "orangutan" meant. It means "man of the jungle." Oran means man. Subsequently, I've forgotten all the Malayan I knew. I know how to count. I can still count somewhat in Malayan. Of course, I can count in Japanese, and I still know some of the Japanese words that I used to know.

Marcello: You mentioned this briefly awhile ago, but let me just follow up. Had the Japanese processed you any way at all while you were here at the Jaarmarkt?

Evans: No, there was no records made of us at all. In fact, as I recall, there was no record made of us at all except maybe what the Dutch had done. No, there was no records made; there was no interrogation of any kind. We were just there--just like we fell off the turnip truck, you know--and that was about it.

Marcello: Did you get the impression that the Japanese felt that you had disgraced yourself because you had surrendered?

Evans: Well, of course, we learned that later on. We didn't realize why the Japanese were so mean. We'd always been told that the Japanese were kindly-type people. Of course, from the newsreels we'd seen where they'd killed the Chinese. They had done a pretty good job on the Chinese, and we knew that they were a pretty mean bunch of people as far as their army was concerned. We had seen the bombing of Nanking and the various and sundry other places in China where they were killing the Chinese. We always knew that war would kill the civilian population, which we felt was pretty barbaric.

We knew we were in a lot of trouble. We knew that the Japanese were bad news to us. We didn't know why. We were never told why they were so mean to us until later on, until we learned how to communicate with them. Then we were told as to why they felt that we should have died for the United States.

Marcello: Let's talk about another aspect of the whole process of learning how to be a prisoner-of-war. How important was military discipline going to be in pulling through this ordeal? In other words, let me be a little bit more specific. How important was it that you still more or less obeyed your officers? How important was it that there had to be a chain of command?

Evans: Well, as I recall, when we were first in there, there wasn't

much chain of command. There wasn't much cohesion between the officers and the men other than...the fact is, this officer had a bunch of money, and we could get money off of him and buy something to fix some food, and that's about the extent of it at that point. We had the officers, but they had no bearing on us, as far as we was concerned. The only thing was that each day we would try to buy things in order to make our life a little nicer--food and that sort of thing. There was no chain of command, as I recall, at all at the Jaarmarkt other than that we were just there, and we would get money off of him in order to buy things on the black market.

Marcello: You mentioned that there would be bowing and saluting toward the Japanese.

Evans: Yes.

Marcello: How about toward your own officers? Did military formalities such as saluting cease at that point?

Evans: Oh, yes. In fact, he didn't want us to salute him because he didn't want them to know he was an officer.

Marcello: So this sort of thing was dropped by mutual agreement?

Evans: Oh, yes. Yes, we were trying to figure out a way to get out. I don't know why we were trying to get out because we tried to break in the damn place. Our mentality was trying to get us out of the place at that particular time because we went out of our way to try to get in.

Marcello: Was there talk of escape?

Evans: Oh, yes. Yes, there was some talk. In fact, there was two officers that I recall just disappeared suddenly. They don't know what happened to them. It wasn't our officers. It was two English officers. Each night they would walk around this place, and they would talk. They would walk around this round sort of place, and one day they...that was it, and they were gone. I don't know what happened to them.

Marcello: What threats did the Japanese make in the event that a person did escape and was caught?

Evans: Oh, they told us that if we tried to escape and were caught ...now maybe they didn't tell us that. Yes, they told us that--that they would kill us or that we would be shot.

Marcello: Did you think they were bluffing?

Evans: I never believed the Japanese would bluff. I had nothing to call their bluff with, so I assumed they were telling me the truth. There was not doubt in my mind that they meant what they said.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that a lot of the talk about escape was cheap talk--idle chatter?

Evans: Oh, yes. It's just like anything else. Just a bunch of... you know, like shooting the bull, you know. No, there was not real effort on anybody's part to get out. As far as I know, it was just talk on the part of the people.

Marcello: We talked about military discipline a moment ago, and let's

talk a little bit about some forms of personal discipline. Here is this physically smaller person "lording it over" these physically larger prisoners. This Japanese is yelling, screaming, and slapping, and kicking. What kind of discipline is initially required to simply stepping back and hauling off on that guy?

Evans: Well, there used to be a saying that Sam Colt made all men equal regardless of their size, and you've got to bear in mind that they had the rifles and bayonets. You have to steel your nerves or yourself to take whatever abuse that they wanted to send out because you know that they can get tougher and meaner because they got the guns. You just have to go along with it as best you can.

Marcello: Is it humiliating to have to take this?

Evans: Oh, of course. It's always humiliating to have to take any kind of abuse without retaliation. Of course, you know that they can be worse.

Marcello: Did you notice that the Japanese seemed to especially like to pick on the larger or bigger prisoners?

Evans: Well, I hadn't thought of it in that way. Of course, I've always been a rather small man. I'm big as far as the Japanese standard is concerned--the size of the Japanese people. I don't really recall that they had what we call a Napoleonic complex. I don't recall them wanting to be meaner to a bigger guy than they were to a smaller one.

In fact, I thought they was pretty well even-handed
(chuckle).

Marcello: Let's talk about another form of personal discipline.
How important was cleanliness and hygiene going to be?

Evans: Well, you've got to bear in mind that it was quite necessary
for us to be as clean as we could. Of course, we'd take
a bath as often as we could. Of course, you've got to bear
in mind that at this place it was rather warm. It was in
the tropics. In fact, if you wanted to take a bath, all
you had to do is just step outside in the afternoon because
you got a rain every day at one o'clock. It rained from
one o'clock in the afternoon until about three o'clock every
day. That was in dry season, and then in the wet season
it rained all day. As far as taking a bath, there was no
problem there at all. All you had to do is just step out-
side, and you could take a bath.

In the preparation of food, we had very little, if
anything, to do with that. Of course, we anticipated or
we hoped that the food was prepared to where we wouldn't
catch anything from it, which eventually it did happen.

The sewage facilities there at this Jaarmarkt was
such that we knew that we was going to catch something
from this septic tank unless they kept it pumped out
quite a bit. When we were moved to the high school, as
I recall, the facilities were a little bit better than

they were at the other place. They had a better sewage system, better sanitary conditions. Now you bear in mind that we were only there a month at the high school.

In fact, we played baseball with the Japanese soldiers there. We did have a good rapport with them as far as playing baseball was concerned. They knew who Babe Ruth was, and I told them that he was my uncle, and I got a little better treatment out of the Japanese because I told them my uncle was Babe Ruth--that I knew him and he was my uncle; or I was kin to him. As a result, we played baseball with them, and their officers were umpires. I might say this. The Japanese were pretty fair people. They weren't unfair, as I recall, at that time.

Marcello: What precautions had to be taken relative to drinking water?

Evans: I wasn't in charge of that. It's my understanding that the water was good there at Surabaja. Maybe they boiled the water. I'm not sure. As far as I know, there was no precaution, as far as I know personally.

Evans: Now you mentioned that when you had turned yourself in, you had literally nothing but the clothes on your back. Did you pick up eating gear and things like that somewhere along the line, either at Jaarmarkt or at the school later?

Evans: Yes. As I understand, we got the dishes or whatever it was from the Salvation Army or from the Dutch women that came there and brought us some food.

Marcello: Already at this point, that is, even here at the Jaarmarkt, did you see the prisoners becoming scavengers...

Evans: Oh, yes.

Marcello: ...that is, gathering any object or article because somewhere down the line, it may be of some use either personally or for trading?

Evans: Yes, everybody became a scrounger. You scrounged up everything you could get your hands on. I remember the first night I stayed there. There was sort of a sign made out of cloth, and it was painted on it. It was blue--had a blue sign on it--and I remember I woke up the next morning, and I had blue all over me from that sign because it was cold at night. Of course, like the tropics are, you know, it's damp. I stayed under this sign. The next night we moved on inside, and I believe I got hold of a blanket or something. I don't remember now how I did, but I got a blanket from somebody--a U.S. Army blanket--and stayed inside there.

Marcello: Were the Japanese supplying the prisoners with any basic food such as rice?

Evans: Oh, I'm sure they were. I don't know where the food came from, but they had a place where they cooked, and we'd go in there and eat. I don't know where the food came from; I have no idea. As I remember, we used to fry this rice. We'd get the rice, and then we'd fry it up with hot

peppers and whatever we could scrounge up--eggs and whatnot. We had a helmet--an American-British-type helmet--and we made it into sort of a skillet, and we cooked the rice in that thing.

Marcello: In other words, you could build your own individual fires and cook in that manner?

Evans: Oh, yes, yes. The Japanese wouldn't say anything to us about that at all.

Marcello: How would you describe the quality of the rice that the Japanese were providing?

Evans: Well, let's put it this way. The first time I saw a bowl of rice, it had a worm in it. I pushed it back out of the way and wouldn't eat it. The next time...it wasn't long until I would pick the worm out of the rice, and then after a while, you got to where you just didn't look at all. You just ate the whole damn thing. That might sound facetious, but it's the facts. It's true. You don't pay a lot of attention to things like that after you get so hungry.

You see, a man can go from a very dignified person... he can go from being a very dignified, very vain, very meticulous person...in just a matter of a week, you can be lowered to virtually an animal, where you will fight for food, you'll kill for food, you'll do virtually anything. A human being can be lowered to nearly an animal and think nothing of it, you know. We think we're higher creatures,

but we're really not. When you come right down to the old nitty gritty, you're just like any other creature out there trying to make it.

Marcello: In terms of quantity, how much rice might you expect to get when you passed through the chow line?

Evans: I'm not quite sure, but I believe we were given about 500 grams of rice a day--I believe that's about right--which would be about 1.10 pounds of rice, which isn't very much rice. I believe we were given about 500 grams. I believe that's correct. That's a little over a pound of rice--a pound and one-tenth of rice a day.

Marcello: Awhile ago, you mentioned that you would sometimes fry the rice and throw in some peppers or an egg. Is it safe to say that this was done, among other reasons, to try anything to add some flavor to that rice?

Evans: Yes, to make it more edible. It was done that way in order to make it more palatable. Of course, just plain dry rice is not very palatable. If you can put a little oil in it, put a little pepper in there, maybe put in some eggs, and then fry this rice, why, it would be...in other words, it's kind of like going to a Chinese restaurant and getting fried rice as opposed to just plain rice. It's just a little bit better. It's got a little bit more food value to it.

Marcello: Were the Japanese supplying anything other than the rice?

- Evans:** No. I'm sure they supplied some vegetables--I'm sure that they did--but as far as I know, rice was all they furnished. On the black market, we'd have them bring in duck eggs and chicken eggs and that sort thing. We got more duck eggs than we got any other kind of eggs.
- Marcello:** How did the black market operate?
- Evans:** Well, the duck eggs were brought in by a workman that came into the place, and he put those eggs in the bamboo that they were building these places to stay. They built a bunch of buildings out of bamboo, and those eggs were brought in inside these sticks of bamboo. Some of this bamboo was up as big as six inches in diameter. In this country we only see little switch canes. In that country they...like the man said, "Here I am, sitting in a bamboo chair at a bamboo table eating bamboo sprouts out of a bamboo bowl with a bamboo spoon in a bamboo house." So bamboo is a pretty useful commodity in the Orient.
- Marcello:** And what would the natives be wanting in return for whatever food they brought in? The Dutch guilders that you had?
- Evans:** Yes. We used the money to buy things from them. This officer had money, and he gave it to us, or he gave it to this Zeehandelaar. He was the go-between. He knew how to speak the language--this Jewish man. Very fine man. He was a big tall guy. I don't know what ever became of

him. That's the last time I saw him, was at the Jaarmarkt.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that even in these early stages of your experience as a prisoner-of-war, food becomes the thing that is most on your mind?

Evans: Oh, it becomes an obsession to you. Once you get hungry... and I'm talking about "hungry." There's a difference between being hungry and, as we used to say, "huungry" (chuckle). It becomes an obsession to you. Every minute of the day, you fantasize about food, and you dream about food, and you wake up wanting food, and you go to bed wanting food. It actually becomes an obsession to you. It certainly does.

Marcello: I've heard it said that more fights would break out over food than perhaps any other subject in terms of maybe somebody trying to get more than his fair share or somebody thinking that somebody was trying to get more than his fair share or things like that.

Evans: Oh, I don't recall but one fight over food. Two guys were eating. One guy was eating with chopsticks, and the other guy was eating with a spoon. That's the only fight that I recall. We were pretty peaceable. As far as I know, we were a pretty peaceable bunch of people.

I had a fight with a guy in prison, and I don't even recall what it was over. But he was sort of a bully. We can get into that a little later on, if you'd like. But

as far as I know, in those two camps that we were in, we had no problems.

Marcello: I've heard it said that some people liked to volunteer for the work details because it offered an opportunity to steal food.

Evans: Well, it would give you an opportunity to have a liaison with people that was outside, and, of course, there was always the possibility that somebody might slip you some food, or you might be able to get a hold of some food. I don't recall finding any food at the refinery. All we ever found was a drum full of tar. On that airport out there, the only thing we ever seen was rocks and gravel. I had no opportunity to get any food while I was out.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that after being at the Jaarmarkt for about a month-and-a-half, you moved to this school. Maybe after a month-and-a-half, you had developed a routine of sorts, so was it a little upsetting perhaps to be uprooted to go to another place?

Evans: Well, yes, because like any other pattern of behavior, you know, you get upset. It's just like moving from one house to another house. You have to get accustomed to the surroundings and the people that you're going to have to deal with. There was an influx of our bunch. We had some other Americans that came in there. The other boys from Battery E came in, and we had some other Englishmen. As I recall,

we lost some Dutchmen. We didn't have as many Dutchmen at the high school as we did at the Jaarmarkt.

Marcello: How did your quarters differ from what they had been at the Jaarmarkt?

Evans: Well, at the Jaarmarkt we stayed in sort of in the wall. The high school was a Catholic school, as I recall. I believe it was. Well, maybe not...maybe not. I'm getting two schools mixed up. We were stationed at a Catholic school prior to getting captured. As I recall, there were sort of classrooms that were converted into billets for the men. I don't think we had cots or anything. I think we just slept the best way we could...any way we could. I don't believe there was any bunks or anything like that. They were just plain. We were just given those buildings, and we used them the best way we could. I believe I used a blanket and our mess gear. I'm not even sure as to where the mess tent was or where we ate.

I'm not sure about that at all. I'm rather vague on that. Of course, if I said anything about it, it might be inaccurate, and I'd rather not say something that... but I know that at the Jaarmarkt, we had a regular place where we went to eat. But at the high school, I'm not sure about it.

Marcello: How did you get from the Jaarmarkt to the school?

Evans: I believe we were marched. I'm not sure.

Marcello: So it wasn't too far away?

Evans: No, no, it was just a short distance away. It couldn't have been more than fifteen blocks, I don't think.

Marcello: Now did the entire E Battery move, or did a portion of it move?

Evans: There was some that went over to Madura, which was an island. They were captured on Madura, and they were brought back to a place called Tanjong Priok. They were on this dock. They worked on the docks there. Now they had more opportunity to get things than we did because they worked on the ships, and they worked as stevedores, and I believe...if I'm not mistaken...I'm not sure whether they were taken from there to this high school or not. Now I don't remember. I don't really know for positive. But maybe some of them were brought up there, and the others were left behind--maybe. I'm not sure.

But we were brought together sometime during this time on the trek west to Batavia, which is Jakarta now. We were brought together either at the high school, or we were brought together shortly prior to being taken to... or maybe we was brought together at Tanjong Priok in Batavia, which is another dockyard. We stayed there for a short while. Now I'm not quite positive. I don't really remember when we were all rejoined...where we all came together. But we come together in Batavia, as I remember, or maybe

shortly before that.

But what scared me was that we were all lined up one day in this compound there in the high school, and a Japanese came out with a squad of men in a truck. The Japanese had a machine gun, and I thought we was all going to be killed. I thought they was going to kill us all. It was some sort of a security reason. I don't know what it was. They was scared or something. But that's the closest to where I ever thought they was ever going to execute us. In fact, one of the guys said, "Did that scare you?" I said, "Well, I don't know whether it scared me as much as it did you." He said, "Well, why is that?" I said, "Well, I was behind you, and you're a lot bigger than I am, and I figured you might stop some of them bullets before they got to me."

Marcello: What did you do while you were here at the high school? In other words, was the routine more or less the same as at the Jaarmarkt?

Evans: It was basically the same. I think we had some token details that went out from time to time, but they didn't utilize the prisoners. They didn't have the work to do that would keep everybody busy. They didn't seem to have anything for us to do. As a result, you might catch a detail. I think maybe I caught it once or maybe not at all. But I do remember that I worked, while I was at the

Jaarmarkt, at this fire at the refinery and at the airport.

Marcello: So you're really not worked too hard, then, at either place?

Evans: No, no. There wasn't much going on, no.

Marcello: I gather, then, that you did have a lot of idle or leisure time.

Evans: Yes, we had a lot of free time, and as a result, I learned to play chess. I played chess with some very, very good players. I really became obsessed with chess, and I don't play it anymore because I...it's depressing to lose.

Marcello: You mentioned that while you were here, there were some baseball games between the Japanese and the prisoners. Describe how this all came about.

Evans: Well, I don't know just how it came about other than the fact is that somebody got a baseball and a bat, and they started playing. The Japanese guards came out and wanted to play with us, and so we let them play. I think they would play on Sunday. I believe that was when the Japanese had maybe a day off or something. So I think they played maybe a couple or three weeks there.

Marcello: Did they provide whatever equipment was used?

Evans: As I remember, there wasn't much equipment other than the bat and the ball, you know, and the men. As far as I know, I didn't play myself because I don't play baseball. But I remember the Japanese officers and maybe one of our officers was the umpire.

Marcello: What did you talk about in your spare time? Obviously, there must have been a lot of bull sessions.

Evans: Well, I guess we talked about home maybe. I guess one of the biggest topics was how in the hell did we get in this kind of a mess: "This is another fine mess you've got us into." (chuckle) But food, I guess...I guess we talked about girls, women.

Marcello: Did you find out a lot about people in this situation, that is, their personal lives and so on?

Evans: Well, you do learn a lot about men, about people--where they come from and, I guess, maybe where they're going to, their wants and their needs and their ambitions and their dreams, I suppose. But you really don't pick up much on that because you got your own burden to carry. You've got your own aspirations. It doesn't register on you. It doesn't register with you very much, really. It's like me here with emphysema. Another man may have it, but I can't give him sympathy because I'm sympathizing with myself. So maybe that's why you don't pick up on those sort of things. You've all got your own burdens to carry. Life is a lonesome thing. Life is very lonesome. You can be around a million people and still be a very lonesome person. Life is a solo trip, you know, for yourself, and as such you really don't...you do pick up on some of it, but you don't really pay a whole lot of attention to it.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that from the school, you move into Tanjong Priok or Batavia?

Evans: From the school we were put on trains and taken to Batavia, which was about...oh, I guess Java is 500 miles long, and we went to Tanjong Priok, which is a dock area of Batavia. I don't know how long it was that we stayed there. I really don't know how long we stayed at either one of those two places--the Jaarmarkt and the school--and how long we stayed at...I know we didn't stay in Batavia but for just a short while before we were put on boats and taken to Singapore. Maybe it was Singapore where we stayed a month. I guess it was.

Marcello: Now were you sent to Tanjong Priok simply for the purpose of being loaded onto a vessel and being taken to Singapore?

Evans: Yes, I'm sure that's why we were there, but I think that while we were there, we did do some work there. We were loaded on a Japanese boat there in Batavia and taken to Singapore.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about this because this is obviously a very important part of your experience. Were you ever given any notice beforehand that you were going to be moving, that is, that you were going to go aboard a ship and be taken wherever the Japanese had decided?

Evans: I don't recall. I just suddenly recall being on this boat and being put down in this hold of the ship, and

they would lower food in there to us. The ones that could stayed on top of the deck. I remember one guy suffered from heat exhaustion, and this Dutch doctor was taking blankets and covering him up, and I couldn't understand why you get so hot and then you get cold. He saved this guy's life by covering him up with blankets. Then dysentery, I know, broke out on the ship. I'm not sure whether they threw any...whether they had to dispose of anybody on this ship or not. It seemed to me like they did. One or two guys died on the trip over.

Marcello: Were you down in the hold?

Evans: Part of the time. I remember that we had a rivet...we could pull this rivet out and get water--sea water from the sea--and take a bath or cool ourselves down on the inside. They would lower buckets down in there to be used if a guy wanted to relieve himself. But mostly, as I remember, we just urinated in the bilge. I don't remember how long we was on this boat--three or four days, I guess. But I know they'd lower the buckets down in there with food and water in them--in honey buckets--and that's what they used to relieve themselves.

Marcello: Describe what conditions were like down in that hold in terms of space, in terms of temperature, and things of that nature.

Evans: Well, it was well above 120 degrees down in there, and

there was no walking space at all to speak of. It was jammed. People were just jammed together down in there. It seemed to me like just a sea of humanity.

Marcello: Could you stand up, or did you have to sit down and rub against one another?

Evans: Well, if you got you a place to stay, you'd better stay with it, you know. As I remember, I was close to the place where you could get in and out, and I got out of the damn place and stayed up on the deck for a long time. Then when I was forced back down in the hold, there was a rivet...we could pull this rivet out, and we could get water from the sea and could cool ourselves down somewhat with that.

Marcello: In other words, you were below the waterline down in that hold?

Evans: Yes. Oh, yes. It was a very small ship. Oh, it couldn't have been over 5,000 tons, I don't guess. It was a small ship. It was just a small coastal...I guess what we'd call a...I don't know whether you would want to cross the ocean in it. Well, I guess you could, though, but I wouldn't want to try it very often.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were forced back down in this hold. I assume that the Japanese didn't want anybody out on the deck.

Evans: Well, they didn't want you in any part that controlled the

ship. They had guards on that. As I remember, we had the fantail, and maybe they had some bathrooms built on that ship. I'm not sure.

Marcello: I know that on a lot of those ships they had the outhouses that kind of swung out over the side of the ship.

Evans: Yes. Then they had water running down it, as I remember. Maybe they did. I can't remember whether it was that or the Dutch ship that they had that way.

Marcello: Up to this point, was this your worst experience as a prisoner-of-war?

Evans: Yes. Yes, it definitely was.

Marcello: It must have stunk to high heaven down in that hold, too.

Evans: Oh, yes, yes. There was rats in there, and they had all sorts of debris in the bottom of the ship like old rice and cement and dirt and that sort of thing in the bottom of the ship--debris. It hadn't ever been cleaned out. The ship had never been cleaned out.

Marcello: What kind of food were you getting? You mentioned that it was lowered in buckets.

Evans: Well, I just think it was the same old stuff--just rice maybe and maybe a few vegetables. I'm not sure. I don't really recall exactly what it was, but it wasn't good food. I'll say that.

Marcello: Had you been allowed to carry aboard all of the personal gear that you had accumulated since you had been a prisoner?

Evans: Oh, yes. I brought aboard everything that I had, which wasn't very much.

Marcello: Can you recall what you had?

Evans: No, I can't--not at this time. I really can't.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you are on this ship for three or four or five days and that you're on your way to Singapore. Did you know that you were on your way to Singapore? Had you been told that?

Evans: No. No, we weren't told. I wasn't told anything. All I know was that they just put us on the boat, and we was going to go somewhere. However, we were told we was going to go to Japan or going to go somewhere else.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you found out that you might possibly be going to Japan? Did this have any significance or impact at that time?

Evans: Well, I don't believe we were told at that time that we were going to Japan. I believe we were told after we got to Singapore that we were going to be in Singapore for a short time, and we were taken to this big camp.

Marcello: Is this Changi?

Evans: I don't know the name of it. All I know is that it was a big camp, and our guards at Singapore was Sikhs and Punjabs --Indians--and the Japanese was over them. Then, of course, within this camp, the English was in charge. They was in charge of everything. They had the work details, and they

had the responsibility of issuing the food and the supplies that kept us going, and they was in charge of the hospital. When I first got to Singapore, I came down...I remember we went out on this work detail and was clearing these rubber plantations to make gardens, and after a few days, I came down with dysentery. My stay in Singapore was in the hospital with dysentery. I nearly died there with dysentery.

Marcello: Describe what dysentery is like in terms of your personal experience with it here at Singapore.

Evans: Well, you get nauseated at the stomach, and you start going to the bathroom quite frequently. It's like diarrhea to start out with. Then you start passing blood, and if you don't get some sort of a relief from it, it'll kill you. I was treated with castor oil and Epsom salts and water from rice that they bring to a boil. They'd bring rice to a boil and boil it for a little while, and then they drained the water off and give us the water. We had no food. I was given four ounces of castor oil in the morning and four ounces in the evenings, and then I was given Epsom salts water every two hours.

Now the theory is that the bug that causes dysentery, if it concentrated in one place for very long, it will eat a hole in the intestines, and you die from peritonitis. In fact, if you eat any kind of food that's got grease in it or any kind of a medium in which they can grow in, it

will kill you. I talked to this guy right next to me. He said he felt good that day, and he was going to get to get to go home in a few days. He had been there for several days. Remember now that all this time we were just running back and forth going to the bathroom. In fact, I told him that I met a guy that I thought looked very familiar to me, and it was myself meeting myself coming back, you know, from the bathroom. That sounds kind of facetious, but it's virtually the truth. You have to go twenty times a day...thirty times a day. When you use the bathroom, why, sometimes it's pure blood. This one guy said he was going to be all right, and about two o'clock in the afternoon, they brought in these things, and he was dead then.

Another guy that I knew said he got hold of some mutton stew that this guy had left there, and he ate that, and he was dead in thirty minutes from peritonitis. You see, that dysentery is very dangerous. It's a very deadly thing. It's not like what we call diarrhea, you know. During the Civil War they called diarrhea the "Tennessee quick step." Of course, we called it the "Nagasaki foot race." (chuckle)

Marcello: How long were you in the hospital before you finally were cured?

Evans: Well, I'm not sure how long we were in Singapore, but I didn't get out but just a few days before we got on the

boat to go to Japan. I was in there, I guess, three weeks to a month--in the hospital. I was starved during all this time, too.

Marcello: So in other words, one of the steps that has to be taken is that the patient may not really have any food.

Evans: That's right. In other words, you were not allowed any food. What you got was rice brought to a boil, and you was given the water off of that rice. You were not even allowed to have the rice. I remember that maybe four or five days before I left, I got some stew that had some substance to it. I got down to about ninety pounds.

Marcello: I'm going to turn over the tape at this stage.

Evans: Okay.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you had reached the point where you were down to ninety pounds. Pick up the story at that point.

Evans: Well, the English weren't too hospitable to us. I guess it was because they had their own cross to bear. We were given coconuts; we got vegetables out of the garden; and we got rice. We had our own cook tent. We'd take the coconuts and get the oil out of the coconuts--cook the oil out of the coconuts--and we cooked the vegetables and the rice. I guess that under the circumstances, it was about as good as you could do. However, we had quite a reputation there in Singapore. There was a fellow by the name of

Dempsey Key. Have you talked to him?

Marcello: I haven't talked to him, but I've heard about him.

Evans: Dempsey Key was the one that stole all the general's chickens. You know, he had chickens. He first got to stealing the eggs, and then finally he stole the chickens.

And we had Frank Fujita and Ben Keith...on the boat going up to Japan, why, they had killed this dog and cooked it. In fact, I ate some of it. It wasn't too bad, you know. The English was talking about us Yanks eating their mascot. They ate this mascot--killed it and ate it. But those are sort of peripheral stories that happened.

Marcello: But it is true, like you mentioned, that a strained relationship developed here between the British and the Americans.

Evans: Yes, because we felt that the British were unfair to us.

Marcello: They evidently ran that camp, that is, the internal administration of it.

Evans: It's my understanding that they did. I would like to see the terms of their surrender to the Japanese. Yamashita was the one that conquered Singapore and Malaya. They called him the Tiger of Malaya. Actually, he took a very small force and conquered the English. In fact, he was pretty well on his last leg when he got to Singapore. But nonetheless, it's my understanding that the British signed an agreement that they would administer the inside of this camp, and the Sikhs would guard the perimeters under the

supervision of the Japanese. The British got up, and they had their own formations, and they drilled, and they did all the things that they would just like being in the British Army. They had their own buglers and had their own hospital. They distributed the food. They disciplined and court-martialed. And it's even my understanding that they turned over some of their own men to the Japanese to be shot. Now I don't know how true that is. But I just can't believe that the British Army could turn over a man to be shot by the Japanese. I just couldn't believe that.

Marcello: Do you recall any incidents involving the so-called "king's coconuts?"

Evans: Oh, yes. The king had the coconuts, and we would go out at night--sneak out at night--and they had the Royal Marines that guarded those coconuts. You'd climb one of those trees, and when that coconut hit the ground, you better have that coconut ready to go because that Marine would "whup" the hell out of you with a stick.

We didn't like the British too well particularly there in Singapore. Of course, we finally got to where we did ..when we got up to Japan, we were in prison with some of the survivors off the Exeter, which the Exeter was the famous ship that sunk the Graf Spee down close to Montevideo, South America.

Marcello: So I gather that the British simply did not want the Americans

to consume these coconuts because they were the king's coconuts.

Evans: Well, that's true. We were in prison there where Bob Hope... where they did some of the "Road" shows--the "Road to Mandalay" and the "Road to Burma" and the "Road to Singapore." I don't remember how many roads there were, but there were a lot of "Road" shows, and Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby was in those shows. It was my understanding that that's where they did one of these films.

Now during that time, we would go on these work details. We'd go down to the docks and work sometimes. We were sitting there one day, and this little Japanese car drove up. A Japanese officer got out of that, and he had a white shirt on, Japanese jodhpurs--boots--and carrying a Japanese samurai saber. This Englishman sitting there said, "There goes another one of those slant-eyed yellow bastards!" This guy turned around and in very plain English told him, "I can't help it because I'm yellow, and I can't help it because I'm slant-eyed, but you leave the bastard part off." He had been to Berkeley or one of the colleges there in California. We got acquainted with him. I don't remember what his name was. Maybe his name was Konaka. It seems as though he got sucked up back into the Japanese Army. He said that since he had lived in America for so long, they didn't trust him, and he was an interpreter. He became

an interpreter. They treated the interpreters the same as they did an officer, only they wore white shirts. They couldn't wear any kind of a uniform. They were given part of a Japanese uniform. They wore a Japanese Army cap with a star in front and with the lace behind. It was a baseball-type cap, similar to a baseball cap. But we got to where we talked to him when we seen him, and he was a pretty decent guy.

Marcello: Now is it not true that you also crossed paths with the remainder of the unit while you were here at Singapore?

Evans: Yes. Yes, we did.

Marcello: Describe that reunion, that is, what you remember of it. Again, we must keep in mind that you were in a hospital for a good deal of the stay here.

Evans: Well, I remember that my wife's cousin, a fellow by the name of Kilpatrick, was with us, and I traded him or he gave me a shirt...he gave me a khaki shirt, as I remember. That's about the only reunion that I remember of. I don't remember any--I would say--a celebration or anything like that, other than the fact is we knew that they were there. We had a liaison with them, and we met with them and talked with them and all that sort of thing. We were actually kept separated. They were in another part of the camp, as I remember, and we were in our part of the camp.

In order to go over there to see them, you had to get

sort of a pass, and you went through...I believe I went over there one time and talked with Roy Kilpatrick. He was my wife's double cousin. Of course, that's before I married my wife. In fact, it was before I ever knew her. But I knew Roy because I went to school...he was a little older than I was, and me and his brother went to school together. But I knew him quite well. As I remember, he gave me a khaki shirt, and that was the extent of it.

That's the only thing that I remember about Singapore other than the fact that we worked and dug up these...we burned out these trees, and we cut those trees up, and we brought the wood in to use for fuel. We cleared the land for gardens. I remember seeing some okra growing at the end of the turn row, and I asked this Englishman...they guarded this all the time. The English guarded this. I asked him could I have some of those. I asked him what it was. Of course, I knew what it was, and he didn't. I said, "Can I have some of it?" "Yes." Every day I'd get a shirttail full of that, and I said, "Man, I believe I can learn to eat that stuff," and I kept him in the dark. He'd never seen okra before. As a result, I got a lot of okra from him and cooked it in various ways. I boiled some, and then we fried some. I learned how to eat okra. I never did eat it before, but you learn to eat pretty near anything if you get hungry enough.

Marcello: What were your living quarters like here at Changi?

Evans: I swear that for the life of me, I can't remember.

Marcello: The reason I bring up the subject is because I know a lot of the other people have mentioned the fact that the barracks were full of bedbugs. Do you recall that here?

Evans: Well, I know the hospital was full of bedbugs. Yes, I remember the bedbugs quite well. We slept on those English-type, cot-like things that had these wires...they had these slick bands of metal in the middle, and then on the ends they had these coil-type wires--springs--and on the sides they had springs. I remember that the damn bedbugs got so bad that I took some papers from somewhere--I don't remember where I got them--and I heated those coils. They was full of bedbugs, and I got them out of those coils to where I could sleep a little bit better. Bedbugs will keep you awake at night.

Marcello: Do you recall when you left Singapore?

Evans: Well, it was either the latter part of November or the very first of December.

Marcello: This is 1942.

Evans: That's right. I know we got into Japan just a day or two before they celebrated Pearl Harbor Day.

Marcello: So it was in the latter part of 1942, then, when you did leave Singapore?

Evans: It was in the latter part of November of 1942 because I

remember we got into Japan maybe one or two days before they celebrated Pearl Harbor Day. They had a big celebration. I remember that the ship that they got us on was a maru boat, and it was called Kamakura Maru. We were not put in holds. We were put on the weather deck. We were fed some canned stew and some rice maybe twice a day. It wasn't bad eating. They issued me an English winter uniform. In fact, there's a picture of it right up there (gesture). We were taken into Nagasaki.

Marcello: You pointed to a photograph of you in that British-issue uniform. When and where was that photograph taken?

Evans: That was taken in Nagasaki there at the camp. There were five of us lined up, and those pictures were taken there, and then our numbers were put onto the bottom there. That was an identification picture that they used in the administration of the camp. I got it after the war was over with.

Marcello: The Japanese actually took those?

Evans: Yes, they took those pictures. There were five at a time, and then they trimmed them off and used them.

Marcello: This is projecting ahead of our account, but from that picture it looks as though you had regained most of the weight that you had lost back in Singapore.

Evans: Yes, I did.

Marcello: I'm sure we'll talk about that later on. Now when you boarded the ship there in Singapore, did you know at

this point that you were going to Japan? Obviously, you knew that you were going to someplace where the temperature would be colder.

Evans: I believe we were told. We were issued those on the ship, but...let me digress here just a moment. On those details down in Singapore, we went in these trucks, and we crossed Raffles Bridge--Raffles Bridge in Singapore--and each morning, as we went by, there would be a Caucasian head... they had these spikes driven into these railings, and they had a Caucasian head, a Chinese head, and a native head stuck on these spikes, and then they had two or three spikes left over to intimidate people. Every morning they'd put fresh heads on there. In other words, that was to intimidate everybody that would see those things.

Marcello: This bridge was Raffles Bridge?

Evans: Yes, Raffles. It was named after the founder of the...I guess Raffles was the founder of the...I'm not sure...the East India Company to start out with, and then he became... he was the one that settled Singapore for His Majesty's government. Then he got the British involved with the Dutch over in the Indies. I'm not sure what his first name was. But he was kind of the instigator of the Raffles Company there in Singapore.

Marcello: Did you spend the entire trip from Singapore to Japan on that weather deck?

Evans: Yes. We got in like a typhoon. We got into some rough weather just outside of Japan, and it got cold, as I remember. I guess we stopped in Formosa--Taiwan now--and they disembarked a British brigadier general. We stopped there, and they allowed him off. They got him off the boat there, and he was to be incarcerated in Formosa at the time. They met this boat at sea. It was kind of a strange sort of thing that they'd stop a boat like that at sea to let him off because it seemed to me like it would have been vulnerable to some sort of a submarine attack.

But we went to Japan without any escort. This maru boat was a big boat, and it could steam pretty good. It was a very nice ship.

Marcello: I know that in a lot of cases, in order to avoid submarines, the Japanese vessels would hug the coast all the way from the southern areas almost all the way up to Korea, and then they would dash across from Korea to Japan proper. Did you notice that this was the case then, or was this still early enough in the war that the submarine menace wasn't really there yet?

Evans: It didn't seem to me that there was any...now one or two of the boats behind us got sunk, and one of my firends got drowned. He drowned. He was sunk with the Japanese ship. The Americans sunk the ship. But as far as I know, they just steamed right on up there, and we disembarked there

at Nagasaki.

Marcello: How would this trip have compared with the one that you took from Tanjong Priok over to Singapore, that is, in terms of conditions?

Evans: Oh, our conditions were much better. We weren't put down in the hold of the ship. Now you've got to bear in mind that on that other ship, there was also some Japanese troops on board that ship, and we were below their deck. We had to go up past them, and I remember them reaching out and hitting some of the guys trying to climb up out of that hold. But on this ship, we had the whole after deck to ourselves.

The Japanese, I remember, had a fencing tournament on board, you know, this Japanese fencing where they use those bamboo swords and fought one another. Of course, they had the other part of the ship.

But this was a nice ship, and we didn't have the same kind of conditions. However, we couldn't bathe--many of us. There was no way to bathe there on board that ship.

Marcello: What was the weather like?

Evans: Cold. It became cold after we got north of Formosa. After we let this general off and got up there, we ran into some, I'd say, typhoon-type weather--gale-type winds which was very strong, north winds--and it got cold. Of course, it never did warm up in Japan, as far as I was concerned.

It never did warm up in Japan except in the real hot summertime.

Marcello: Where did you land when you got to Japan?

Evans: We landed in the Nagasaki harbor, and then we were taken over to this island on, I guess, a tugboat or some sort of a boat. The first thing I saw whenever I got to Japan --when I unloaded off that boat--was a Fordson tractor. They was using it for a tug on the docks. It had slick wheels on it, and they were using it to pull dredge off the dock.

Marcello: This was a Fordson?

Evans: Fordson tractor, that's right. That was the forerunner of the Ford tractor-- the old-type tractor that Ford came out with--and they were rather dangerous to use because they'd climb up themselves. In other words, they were very prone to turn over backwards on you and kill you--the Fordson tractor.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that when you got off the ship, or at least shortly after you arrived in Nagasaki, you observed a Japanese celebration of the Pearl Harbor attack. Can you describe that?

Evans: Well, now I wouldn't say it was right after we got off the boat. The guards had a celebration--a sort of a banzai shouting match--out in the compound on the seventh of December. We found out that they were celebrating their victory at

Pearl Harbor.

The significance of this Fordson tractor called to mind the fact that when the Japanese was buying all of our junk--junk iron and steel and metal, rubber, and all that sort of thing--there was a consensus of opinion that said they'd be shooting it back at us. They was getting that metal from us, and everytime you'd go into sell junk to somebody, somebody would say, "Well, we'll send that to Japan, and they're going to be shooting it back at us before too long," which became true, of course. That was the significance of this Fordson tractor that, I suppose, is conjured up in my mind--that they had bought that as junk, and they were using it for...which may or may not have been the case at all. They might have bought it brand-new for all I know. But that was the significance of that.

Marcello: Okay, so you're moved to this island in Nagasaki bay or harbor. Describe what your quarters were like here.

Evans: Well, these quarters were about...I guess they must have been fifteen or twenty feet wide, and they were, I guess, forty feet long. They had four shelves like potato shelves, and you had about eighteen inches. They were wide enough to where you could sleep crossways to the room. There were four tiers. We had an upper bunk and lower bunk and tables in between. They had a place there for a fireplace, which we never did build a fire in it. We had long tables in the middle, and on each side they had an upper bunk

and a lower bunk--sort of like a potato shelf--and they had Japanese mats on them like these bamboo or frond mats.

Back of that, up at the top, you had a shelf for your own personal stuff. We were issued a bowl and a spoon and maybe chop sticks. I'm not sure. I guess we were issued towels. I guess maybe we got a towel somewhere. We were given a bar of soap. I remember that soap--the first bar of soap I'd seen in a long long time. The soap was pink and had an impression of a cow on the outside of it. I remember that very well.

We were given...I believe it was ten cigarettes a week. We could buy ten cigarettes a week, I believe it was. They were small cigarettes. Of course, at that time I smoked. Once in awhile, we'd get what they called "hollow point" cigarettes. They were bigger cigarettes, but they had a long pasteboard holder built onto them. We called them "hollow points." They always came ten to a package. All the cigarettes in Japan at that time came ten to a package.

Marcello: We haven't talked about the conduct of the Japanese guards since the subject came up immediately after your capture. Have they kind of eased up a little bit, or are they still as nasty as ever?

Evans: On those details there in Singapore, they were basically the same. However, we were in transit mostly, and, of

course, these troops that they guarded up there were combat troops, I guess. Maybe they weren't combat troops. Maybe they were just occupational troops. They weren't their best troops, I'd say that. They were just sort of there to maintain the occupation and exploit the country as best they could. As far as we were concerned, we had a very casual contact with the Japanese while we were in Singapore. Most of our problems were the English and the Sikhs. Those Sikhs were about as mean as the Japanese. They'd slap the hell out of you, too, you know, bust you upside the head or whatever. I never could understand until I found out that they were mercenary soldiers, and they'd fight for you if you'd pay them, and they'd fight for me if I'd pay them. It doesn't make any difference who they shoot at. They're, I guess, apolitical-type people. In fact, I've been involved...I represented a lady--she was a Sikh--for the Veterans Administration. I don't recall her name. I learned that they were apolitical people, and they have several different...the Sikh religion is their religion, and this lady happened to be a Christian. I don't know that I understand those people very well. But as far as our relationship to the Japanese during this period of time, it was very casual, indeed. The only time we had contact with them was when we went on a work detail.

Marcello: You mentioned that the barracks contained tables and things

of that nature. Am I to assume, then, that you took your meals there in the barracks?

Evans: Yes. The rice was brought in in big square boxes--enough for sixty men. In other words, there were fifteen men on the top shelf--eighteen inches a man or about that, top, bottom, and on both sides. I don't know how long they would be. Let's see...eighteen times fifteen, and you divide that by twelve...those shelves were twenty-two-and-a-half feet long, and so...and then there was enough room between where you could walk, and these men slept crossways, which would be, I would say, maybe about seven feet, which would be fourteen plus...they had wide sliding doors at the front. These tables were made into two pieces. They had two tables, one in the front and one in the back, and between the two tables they had a hole down there that had sort of a like a fireplace in the floor, like a floor furnace. There was nothing in it, of course. They had a dummy-type ...sort of like a trap door put on top of it.

Marcello: Describe what your diet was like here in these barracks or in Japan at this camp.

Evans: Well, we had daikons, which is like radishes, turnips, cabbage, a few carrots, and we got some fish. Once a week we got beef stew with about, I guess, maybe twenty pounds of meat for 5,500 men. If you got a piece of meat, you was pretty lucky. We got some whale meat once in awhile--

whale meat with the blubber and all that. Then our rice came sometimes with potatoes in it and sometimes with soybeans and then sometimes with maize. I'm talking about the kaffir corn-type--what we call maize--not the corn-type corn. I'm talking about the red maize--the headed maize that we call maize. It's called, I guess, kaffir corn for want of a better word for it. Like a red top cane, it had been polished off, and it had red maize--what we call maize in West Texas. That was cooked in the rice. In the stew would be daikons, which is radishes.

You see, you've got to bear in mind that they fertilize their land with night soil. Those radishes that we see, like the little white radishes, sometimes they're, oh, two or three inches long. These would be nearly as long as a baseball bat. They'd be eighteen inches or two feet long. In some cases they'd be as big as two inches in diameter at the top. Carrots were the same way. In fact, you could dig down in some of those carrots, and in the top they would actually have carrot wood. It would be just like hardwood. You could cut it with a knife. I mean, it's phenomonal how the Japanese can grow vegetables. Once in awhile we'd get daikons that were made into pickles. The way they do it, they'd take their garbage--I guess we'd call it slop--and they'd put this in a hogshead, and they'd put these daikons in there, and they'd let that ferment

and sour and make pickles.

Some of the soup or the stew would be seasoned with what was called mizu, which is a soybean paste, which is a by-product of soya sauce. In other words, the way they make soya sauce is quite an involved process. They let it ferment, and then they press the soya out of it, and it comes to the top. At the bottom it looks sort of like peanut butter, and they call it soybean paste or soya paste, and they use that to put in the...it was quite tasty. It had barley and soya sauce and soy beans, and I don't know what other ingredients it had in it. But I do know the two things that they put in that soya sauce was barley and soy beans.

Marcello: Are you still constantly hungry just as you had been back in Java or Singapore?

Evans: Now, you mean?

Marcello: Yes.

Evans: Oh, no. In fact, to me, to stop and eat food is a sort of a...I don't know if I want to get scared very much. I'm talking about the overabundance of food. I probably eat less on holidays than I do on an ordinary day because when I see a big table, for some reason...I don't know what it does to me. I don't relish food like I should, maybe. I do relish certain foods. I like certain Mexican foods, and I like oysters on the half-shell, and I like

shrimp gumbo and all those sort of things, but to go in and really eat a big meal nowadays, I really wouldn't even attempt. Of course, in the first place, if I eat a large meal with my affliction that I have now, it causes me a problem to breathe. Then, too, for some reason it had a scaring effect to me. I have a phobia maybe toward a lot of food. However, I would say that during that time, of course, I thought about food a lot. Of course, your body cries out for food, and once you get over that, I guess maybe you...maybe that's what happened to me. I don't know. But as far as to stop and eat food is sometimes a waste of time, as far as I'm concerned.

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

Evans: Well, I was sixteen. I guess I must have weighed about 125 or 130 pounds.

Marcello: The reason I asked that question is because, once again, I'm looking at that picture taken shortly after you got to Nagasaki, and it doesn't really look like you were on a starvation diet at that point.

Evans: No, that's right.

Marcello: It looks as though you had regained most of your weight.

Evans: I had. Yes, I had. It was later on when I had pneumonia that I got so sick. I had pneumonia three times when I was in Japan, and then I was layed up for about sixty days with bronchitis, and I was having asthma at the time. I

didn't realize what it was. But I had a real bad case of bronchitis. I had bronchial pneumonia, and then I had double pneumonia, and then I had single pneumonia twice in one lung. When I was put in the hospital and was given...we contributed a certain amount of money. We had a Japanese interpreter by the name of Inouye, and he went all over Japan and bought sulfa drugs for us. If we hadn't have had those sulfa drugs...you see, in Singapore we was losing about 125 men a day. About 125 people a day were dying there. Up in Nagasaki, during this winter, I guess four or five a day would die.

Marcello: Were these Americans, or were these mainly the other nationalities?

Evans: Well, mostly other nationalities. We never lost but, I think, one man, and he died of spinal meningitis--there in Nagasaki. One American died. The natives had never been around cold weather before, and they really didn't know how to conduct themselves.

Marcello: Describe what the work details were like here at Nagasaki.

Evans: Well, our daily routine was that we were awakened at about four-thirty or five o'clock in the morning.

Marcello: By whom?

Evans: Well, we had a bugler. He would blow the bugle and wake us up--a bugle boy. He was a Eurasian, and he was a hair-lipped boy, I remember. He was, I guess, about my age or

a little older than I was. We were awakened every morning, and then they would come around and count. First, a soldier would come along and count, and then the officer would come around with the interpreter and make sure that everybody was there. Then we were served breakfast.

Marcello: Which would consist of what?

Evans: Rice and some stew maybe. I guess some stew, yes. Then we were issued a wooden box to put rice in to take to work with us, which usually was accompanied by those fermented radishes or daikons, as they were called. Of course, this wooden box...after a while, if you use it, why, then it wouldn't be long until it would sour your rice, you know. Some of us had gotten some sardine cans--these long, oval sardine cans--and we'd got some tops for them and made them to where we could carry our food in those cans or those tins, and that was a little better than the boxes. But after breakfast, why, those that were not on sick detail would line...they would line us up and walk us down to the dockyard. I guess it was like...it seemed to me like two or three miles. I don't know how far it was. We were turned over to the navy, and we were put in certain work details. Some worked in the boiler shop; some worked in various and sundry parts of this dockyard. I worked mostly where we drilled--reamed out--holes on board ship for rivets. Some of them worked where they caulked them. Of course,

you've got to bear in mind that these had thousands of people working there.

Marcello: So you were actually constructing ships?

Evans: Yes, that's correct. As I remember, one time we was working down in the bottom of this ship reaming these holes with this seven-eighths reamer, and these are big electric drills, you know. They had those huge motors on them. We were reaming the bottom of this bilge, and it was sort of a rainy, cold day. Me and this Dutchman was working together, and to get out of this hold...in other words, there was a bulkhead there that was already plated all the way up to the top, and there was no way you could get through from this side to that side of the bulkhead. In other words, you had to go back about fifty or sixty feet and go up through the hold, and then to go into that other compartment where the bulkhead stopped was another fifty, sixty feet, so it'd be about 120 feet, you know. This drill loaded up on something, and I pulled it out, and it had--looked like--a little cord-like stuff on it. I pushed that back in there and pulled it back out and pushed it back in there and pulled it back out. So finally, I brought out...the Japanese cloth was real thin stuff...and I got out this guy's britches leg. Somebody had been asleep over on the other side of this bulkhead, and whenever I pulled that thing out, it had buttons, part of his fly buttons, and pockets, and I stripped

all of those clothes off of that guy on the other side. So that Dutchman didn't know what the hell to think of that, but it was a Japanese workman over on the other side that layed down there and went to sleep. That reamer went through there and caught him in the britches leg and just sucked up...stripped all his clothes off.

Marcello: Now when you were on these details such as the one you just described, were you being supervised by naval personnel or civilian personnel?

Evans: I was supervised by a civilian straw boss, and over him he had a foreman. The navy was in charge of security. These navy guards would walk around with sticks, and they were much meaner to us than the army was. We were counted, we were issued to these people, and they trained us. We were showed what to do and how to do it, and then we were supervised by them. We had so much work we had to get out a day. I forget now how many--whatever. Then in addition to the navy...the navy is called kaigun. Then they had these secret police, and they wore red bands on their arms, and they were the ones that went around and watched and kept an eye on everything.

Marcello: These were the kempei-tai.

Evans: Kempei-tai, yes, that's what they were called. And they were sneaky. They were mean bastards!

Marcello: You say that like you perhaps had some experience with them.

Evans: Yes, I did. I got slapped around by one. In fact, I got a tooth broken off by one of them.

Marcello: This was during your stay here at Nagasaki?

Evans: Yes.

Marcello: Describe what happened. Describe that incident.

Evans: I don't remember what happened, actually. The fact was that he told me to grit my teeth--showed me (gesture): "Kōgai," which means "like that." I wouldn't do it, so finally he hit me four or five times, and he finally broke this tooth...broke a tooth off...a big sliver place off of it.

Marcello: He broke off a molar probably.

Evans: Yes, a big molar. One of the back molars. That was the extent...of course, they were always bringing us in and making us do push-ups and "whupping" us with a stick, you know, making us do push-ups in the guard shack.

Marcello: These would be the naval personnel that would be doing this?

Evans: Yes.

Marcello: So in that sense, then, the petty harassment really didn't ease up when you came in contact with the military personnel.

Evans: No. I got a straw boss that was sort of a mean kind of guy, and he would take a piece of chalk, and he'd take a piece of wood and draw the American flag; and then he would take that piece of wood and wipe his ass with it, you know, and intimidate you that way. It's kind of hard to forgive that

sort of thing particularly when you're young, and you love your country, and you can't do anything about it (weeping). I mean, that's the sad part about it. You can't retaliate because you know that if you do...there was a man that hit a Japanese with a crow bar, and he was taken to a Japanese prison. He was tried as a criminal and taken to a Japanese prison as a criminal, and we don't know what happened to him. But, you see, you must maintain your self-discipline. You dare not...you've got to maintain control. You dare not lose control. If you lose control, you lose everything.

Marcello: Including your life.

Evans: Including your life. That's correct. And you've got to keep your eye on the ball all the time, and you've got to know those things. You just have to be a pretty strong individual in order to live through all this...

Marcello: ...both mental and physical harassment.

Evans: That's correct. That's right. I guess your body can stand more than your mind. I know that everybody that came back didn't come back the same regardless of where they served. You see men go forth, and they never come back the same. They don't come back. A part of them is left somewhere, and they never get it together again. You never get it together again. It's lost.

Marcello: Did these civilian straw bosses have the same prerogatives

in terms of physical punishment that the army and navy personnel had?

Evans: Oh, yes. They could slap you. They could do pretty well anything...I mean, they weren't as...I was pretty fortunate. I had one man that was an older man. I guess he was fifty years old, and he was always nice to me and nice to all of us. He taught us not to put our hands in our pockets. If you put your hands in your pockets, you'd get slapped. You never put your hands in your pockets.

Marcello: Why was that? Was it ever explained to you?

Evans: Well, yes. In fact, in this country, with a lot of jobs you're on, you don't put your hands in your pocket because you can't do anything with your hands in your pockets; I mean, it's a foregone conclusion you can't do anything other than count your change with your hands in your pockets. That was one of the rules.

I remember when we first got to the shipyard, they had this interpreter there...this naval captain or whatever he was--some Japanese officer--got up, and he made a speech. He'd talk a little bit in Japanese, and this interpreter would come along and say it in English. I remember this Japanese interpreter interpreting for this officer. He said, "I am the head man of the dockyard." He talked a little bit in Japanese. Then he'd come back in English: "If you work hardly, you will be rewarded." In Japanese again he

said, "If you work hardly not, you will be shoted by a bayoneted guard." (chuckle) Of course, that now seems rather amusing, the way he talked, but it was understandable. You could understand what he meant. It wasn't perfect English.

Anyway, to make a long story short, this one straw boss that I had used to get me under the deal, and he would draw a picture of a church and put a cross on it. He said he was a Christian, which you wouldn't let anybody see that sort of thing. But he was a pretty decent soul. We weren't treated too bad by the bosses themselves and the people that we worked with or around. We worked in crews of ourselves, and as long as you had done them a fairly decent day's work, you wouldn't get any problem. Of course, you remember now that you get to work by, say, seven o'clock in the morning, and by the time you'd get out and get back, it was seven o'clock at night--about twelve or thirteen hours a day.

Marcello: What kind of a lunch break did you have?

Evans: Oh, it seems to me like maybe thirty minutes or maybe an hour. But as far as eating your lunch, you could eat your lunch when you first get to work if you wanted to because we were down in the bowels of that ship, and as long as you'd hide and nobody would see you, you could pretty well do anything you wanted to. You could go to the benjo, which

is way off up somewhere, you know. Down in the bottom of the ships, there wasn't much they could do if they didn't stay right with you all the time.

Marcello: Did anybody ever come around and inspect your work?

Evans: Oh, yes. They came around two or three or four times a day. They had inspectors. They had different departments. I don't recall what all they did, but I do know that they'd check those rivets and make sure the rivets would go in, you know, where they could rivet them together. But these were about 10,000-ton ships. They were pretty nice ships.

Marcello: What would happen if you would break any of the equipment?

Evans: Well, they didn't like that. If it was broken, you had to be sure that it was truly an accident. If you sabotaged it, they'd beat the hell out of you. I remember they gave me a big ol' electric drill made out of steel. It wasn't made out of magnesium and aluminum. It was made out of steel, and it was real heavy. What I would do...they were three-phase. In other words, they were 220 motors--three-phase 220 motors. I'd unplug one of those...get one of those wires, take it loose, and burn the damn thing up. Then I accidentally dropped one off in the ocean, too, which they thought I did it on purpose, which actually I did, but I did it in such a way that I let this...it happened to be the boss standing there, and this guy...I had him pull on the cord, and when he did he was way the hell off

over yonder; and as it was, it slipped off in the ocean, which I meant for him to do it. But it was heavy. You'd get those reamers, and they'd break them. They were made out of high-tungsten steel, which there was a pretty well short supply of, and, of course, they didn't want those wasted...and drill bits and that sort of thing. Those were high-quality, high-speed, high-tungsten steel, which tungsten was pretty hard to come by in Japan, I imagine.

Marcello: When you were finished working, did you take the evening meal back in the barracks?

Evans: It was pretty well reversed. The thing was that we would go in, and we were able to take a bath. They did build us a boiler, and we would take wood and fire this boiler. We had a bathhouse, and it wasn't too bad, actually, to take a bath. It was on of those "dip-and-pour" kind of things.

Marcello: Would this be a daily occurrence?

Evans: Yes, you could take a bath everyday. But soap was a problem. Of course, soap's always a problem during wartime. The same thing that makes soap makes ammunition.

I didn't shave. In fact, I didn't shave until I come back from the war. I didn't even have a beard. My mother sent me...when the Stockholm--that ship--brought those diplomats back, why, my mother sent me a package. She sent me some tooth powder, I believe it was, and she sent me

twenty-five packages, five blades each, of Gibson razor blades. She could have sent me gold, and it wouldn't have been any more money to me than that. Those twenty-five packages...that was 130 razor blades--double-edge razor blades. There was no razor blades in Japan at all. When you had them, you had to sharpen them with a glass. I didn't shave, and I traded those razor blades for...this fellow that has the Gibson discount centers had one little ol' store in Wichita Falls, and he had one in Abilene, and he sold notions and that sort of thing. Down at Abilene he had a little outlet store there, and my mother went and bought those razor blades and sent them to me, and they was worth a fortune. It was amazing that I even got them from the Japanese.

Marcello: How late in the war did you receive that package from home?

Evans: It was about 1943, I guess, or maybe the latter part of 1942 because, see, they had the diplomats--the Axis diplomats --in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, in the Greenbriar Hotel. The Swedes were the ones that brought those diplomats back home.

Marcello: They were aboard the ship Stockholm.

Evans: Stockholm. And we got some parcels from home. We got one Red Cross parcel and one...and I got one parcel from home, and that was the extent of it.

Marcello: What was in the parcel from home in addition to the razor blades?

Evans: My mother sent some of these waffle-type cookies. They were Nabisco, as I remember. This tooth powder had broken and had gotten mixed up with all these cookies, and, of course, hell, I ate those cookies with the tooth powder mixed in. And I believe she sent me some socks. I can't remember what else because...whatever it was, the government sent a list of what they should send. My mother, I guess, thought I had a beard and that I'd be down to my hips in whiskers, but I didn't even shave. I hadn't even shaved up until that point. In fact, I only shaved once a week when I was going with my wife. Only in the latter years have I ever gotten as heavy a beard as I have now.

But as a result of this, we got to trading. I traded a lot. Horace Hanks--they called him "Trader Horn," and I was called "Wall Street." I would give them the quotation of how many cigarettes for this and how many cigarettes for so many bowls of rice and all that sort of business. We traded all the time. When the war was over, I had about 2,500 yen that I had accumulated over the years and traded around with. Of course, we gambled a lot, played poker when we had a chance to play poker.

Marcello: There was always a deck of cards that would show up somewhere.

Evans: That's right. I remember that we had a Japanese there who was trying to learn how to speak English. We had these sliding doors, and every morning before work or during chow,

everybody was paying off their debts, you know, with rice or whatever it was. These Englishmen was always coming in there, you know, and they'd leave that door open, and it was cold. So we took a sign and put a sign up there that said, "Keep this door closed, you bastard." Of course, a limey would see that, and he'd close the door. So this Japanese came along there and saw that sign, and he said, "Keep door closed. Ah, very good. Keep door closed." He said, "You bastard." He says, "Me bastard?" We said, "Yeah, you bastard." (chuckle) Anyway, I guess if he'd ever figured out what we was saying, why, he'd have....

But, anyway, we traded a lot and swapped around a lot --scrounged up things from the dockyard. In fact, we made guitars out of plywood, and we even had a bass fiddle that was made out of plywood...mandolins...had a string band. We made it from scratch.

I had a little racket that I made needles. Now you bear in mind that we hadn't gotten any more clothes. We hadn't gotten issued anymore clothes. We were issued those split-toed tennis shoes, and we were issued one set of shoes--leather shoes--and we weren't allowed to wear them because the population didn't want us to wear them. It was demoralizing to them, so they wouldn't let us wear them except on Sunday. Now I made needles. It sounds kind of strange, but the way you do make a needle, you make you a

fine punch, and then you take cables. See, we took those cables and made guitar strings out of them. You take a cable and unwind those cables and get around a riveting fire--it takes two of you to do it--and first you heat it, and you hammer it out where it's flat. Then in the next heating, you've got to be real quick, and you make a needle. You dress it off. I sold needles or traded things for needles.

The Dutch liked coffee, and the English didn't like coffee. The Indians wouldn't eat beef. They wouldn't eat bully beef or corned beef. So I cornered the coffee market, I guess. I traded tea for coffee. I'd go swap tea for coffee.

Marcello: Where did you obtain coffee?

Evans: From that one Red Cross parcel, and I'd trade the coffee to the Dutch for something else. I forget now whatever it was. And I had a pretty prolific business, to be honest about it. That's the reason I wanted you to talk to this fellow, Cleon Stewart, over in Fort Worth.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were talking about the package that you had received from home, and I was curious to know how your mother got word that you were alive and approximately where you were? This must have occurred someplace back in either Singapore or Java.

Evans: Well, I guess it was in Surabaja that the Japanese made some propaganda broadcasts, and we were took in there, and we made some broadcasts. They were broadcasted, I guess, over

Tokyo Rose's program or whatever, and my mother got some records and she got some...all it boiled down to is just that "I'm doing all right. I'm alive and I'm being treated well," you know. You know, what else do you say? They took us down to this studio or wherever it was, and they fed us real good. They gave us some Chinese food and fed us real good and sort of patted us on the back, and we went in there and made those broadcasts. A whole bunch of us did it, I guess. I don't remember how many there were, but there was quite a few of us.

I never could understand why they did. I guess because the Japanese wanted to maybe relieve some of the heat from the things that was going on over here. I guess about that time was whenever they was taking all the Japanese and putting them in camps. Of course, I can get a real hot argument about that, too. I think that was a terrible thing. They didn't put the Germans or the Italians or the Hungarians or the Rumanians in camps.

Marcello: When was it that you received the Red Cross parcel? Was it after you received the parcel from your mother?

Evans: No, it was about the same time.

Marcello: What was in that Red Cross parcel?

Evans: Well, as I remember, there was coffee, and there was tea, and there was corned beef, some bouillon cubes, and maybe some chocolate.

Marcello: How about cigarettes or cheese or powdered milk or anything of that nature?

Evans: I believe there was some powdered milk, but I don't believe there was any cheese or cigarettes. I don't believe there was any cigarettes. No, there was no cigarettes.

Marcello: I assume that the receipt of those Red Cross packages was a very, very welcome thing.

Evans: It was a welcome...it was just like manna from home, you know.

Marcello: Was there one parcel per man?

Evans: I'm not sure. I believe there was less than one per man. Maybe there was one per man. I'm not sure exactly. Of course, the Japanese got shares of it you know. They're bound to have got some of it. Some of the boys didn't get any parcels from home. I remember a man by the name of Shelby Davis. He didn't get anything, so I divided up with him and gave him some of my stuff. You had to share with your fellow-man, you know. He was kind of down-spirited. I come to find out his mother didn't want to send it because she felt that--that's what I heard; I don't know if it's true or not--but she didn't want to send it because she felt that the Japanese might get it. My mother said she would have sent it, anyway, with the outside chance of it getting there, and, sure enough, it did.

Marcello: Let's get back to your work detail again because I have a

couple of loose ends I want to clean up concerning it.

We talked about the number of hours per day that you worked.

How many days per week would you work?

Evans: Well, it would vary. We worked seven days a week, generally speaking. We would get a day off maybe once a month or maybe once every two months--something like that.

Marcello: What would you do during that day off?

Evans: We'd play poker and, of course, clean up and all that sort of thing. Now you've got to bear in mind that we hadn't been in Japan but just a little while until we discovered that we had lice. We found out that we got lice pretty quick. Every morning, when you get up, you'd "read" your shirt like a newspaper, you know. You'd get those big lice off of you. It was body lice. Then, of course, we had bedbugs, and then in the summertime we'd get what they call sand fleas.

Marcello: I've heard other prisoners talk about those critters.

Evans: We had bedbugs, lice, and fleas--not one, but all three (chuckle).

Marcello: How'd you get rid of those things--other than pick them off?

Evans: Well, you didn't. We'd pick them off, was the only thing... see, those fleas would get down in your blanket, just like a damn...they'd get down in your blankets during the day, and then they'd bite you at night. The bedbugs would bite you, and then, of course, you had lice. We never got head

lice, thank God, but we got body lice. But everybody had lice in Japan. You know, during World War I, every country in the world had lice except the United States.

Marcello: Cooties--isn't that what they called them then?

Evans: Cooties--that's right. That's right.

Marcello: Was there any way you could get rid of those kinds of things, such as boiling your blankets and clothing and things of that nature?

Evans: Well, it'd be right back the next damn day.

Marcello: It would only be temporary relief.

Evans: Temporary relief. The only thing that you could do was just "read" the seams of your shirts--take your shirt off and "read" them and get them out and kill them that way. I remember one time a guy took one of his shirts out and hung it out on the outside. We had a nail on the outside, and it was cold--in wintertime--and those damn things came up there, and there must have been a tablespoonful of those things. They crawled just as far as they could get up on top of that nail, and they was falling off. They were old greybacks. Hell, they're big damn things! Of course, you'd catch typhus from those sort of things. We never had typhus, thank God, but we had meningitis, pneumonia, and, of course, bad colds, dysentery. As I say, we had a lot of that "Nagasaki foot races." We had a lot of that, and a lot of diarrhea.

Marcello: What kind of hospital facilities were available here at

Nagasaki to treat some of these things that you just mentioned?

Evans: Well, the navy or the Kawanami Shipbuilding Corporation had a hospital there. They had a surgery. We had some wards. We had two TB wards there in the camp, and then we had one leper. There was one leper. They kept him outside--out at the back. They had a little house built for him and kept him isolated. Of course, tuberculosis was far more deadly, catching, than leprosy. His brother would take his food to him. He was a native. He was a Eurasian from Java. We had several outbreaks of meningitis. One of our men died of meningitis. But by-and-large, our deadliest enemy was pneumonia.

Marcello: What kind of antibiotics were available. You mentioned sulfa drugs awhile ago.

Evans: Well, you've got to bear in mind this was before we had any antibiotics. There was no such thing as antibiotics in those days. As I say, we took up money, and we had Mr. Inouye, which was a Japanese interpreter, and he was a pro-American, and he'd go all over Japan. We'd send him all over Japan, and he'd buy sulfa drugs for us. As a result, we held off...some of the people wasn't killed.

Marcello: Did you have any of your own doctors in the hospital?

Evans: Oh, yes. Yes, we had one English doctor and three Dutch doctors. One's name was Weiswich, and we called him "Rice

Fish." He was a Dutchman.

We had boils, which was rather...I had thirty-six boils at one time. They would come up--big blue places on your legs, back, neck, buttocks. I had thirty-six boils operated on at one time--cut them open. You could pick them up like a...as big as a tea cup. You could feel the outside of them. It was sore and blue, and it hurt. Oh, God, you couldn't get no rest from them. I was bent over a table, and this doctor took a scalpel and cut every one of them open. Once you get them cut open, why, they don't hurt so bad. Then they'd take a big vial, like a big hypodermic needle, maybe an inch in diameter, and they would draw blood out of your arm; and then they would inject that into your buttocks. You see, what that does, that's an old way of treating boils, which we know now that it's caused from infection--lack of sanitation, I guess, lack of cleanliness. But it's caused from a "staph" infection most of the time.

The last boil I had was on my foot. So one winter I decided I wanted to be off work. In order to get off, you had to be checked up on by a doctor. If you ran a temperature of thirty-eight degrees centigrade, you were allowed to stay off. So I talked to this guy--medical orderly--and he got me some carbolic acid--phenol, its called. So I painted the top of my foot with the phenol, and I told them I burned it on a riveting fire or scalded it. So I

got off a whole damn winter. I had to pay this ol' boy a fee to stay off, you know.

We had some that they alleged they broke their feet and all that sort of thing, but I never did have enough nerve to break a foot. We had one guy there, and they said that he charged so much for breaking a foot where you could stay off. Of course, I never did get into that sort of business. I never would want to.

Marcello: This leads me into my next question, as a matter of fact. Who determined whether or not a man was sick enough to stay off a work detail?

Evans: Well, you made sick call every night usually, and the prison doctor would examine you. On most occasions they would be able to say you were sick enough. They'd take your temperature. As I say, if you had a thirty-eight degree centigrade temperature, then you were allowed to stay off. Anything less than that, you weren't. If you had an accident...of course, like, in my case you could see that my foot was in terrible shape. He'd put salve on it every night or every daytime, and I'd put more phenol on it every night. So it wasn't getting well too fast. But I never felt badly about it because anything I was withholding from the Japanese was...

Marcello: It gave you certain psychological satisfaction, I'm sure.

Evans: Yes, satisfaction in knowing that you put it over them. They had a Japanese doctor that would come in from time to

time and check over the records, and if he felt like the doctor was...there's another little ruse or ploy that we would take. We worked around welding where you'd get a flash in the eyes. Well, you can take cigarette tobacco and put it in your eyes, and you could have a simulated flash in just a little and some of the guys did that. You sort of sabotaged, I suppose, your own body to stay off. But this is the only time I ever tried that. That was a real bad winter. It wasn't a bad deal for me.

Marcello: Did you get paid for not working?

Evans: Yes, I got twenty-five sen a day, I think. I got the same as a Japanese soldier, which would be twenty-five sen a day. Of course, the only thing you could spend it for was cigarettes and soap, and damn few cigarettes, and hardly any soap, so you wound up with your money.

Marcello: Where did you buy these things?

Evans: Well, I don't recall just how it was done, but every so often they'd bring it in, and then we'd pay for it. I don't remember how it was done. It was done through the hancho--our head hancho and the room hancho.

And by the way, I don't know whether you know this or not, but we used to have news reports. A guy would come along every morning and give us the news--what was going on. See, the way this was worked, we had a Dutchman--I believe his name was Bunting--and he was an interpreter. He could

speaking Japanese. Well, we had Chinese guys in the camp, and we'd get Japanese newspapers. We had a guy...they called him the "Grand Duke." He was a very dignified-looking Dutchman. He was grey-headed and had a grey moustache and a grey goatee. What he would do...they would get those newspapers, and he would cut out the parts that he thought was, you know, good. He'd fold those up, and he'd put them on top of his dental plate--put it back in his mouth--and then when they would get the news back to the camp, the Chinese guys could read the characters, and they'd put it into phonetics. Then the phonetics was changed over into English or Dutch or whatever language we wanted to put it in. That's the way we kept up with the war. We knew what was going on all the time. There was no way that they could keep the news from us.

Marcello: I assume that probably the stories that appeared in those newspapers were distorted, but you could probably tell in terms of geographical proximity that the war was coming closer.

Evans: That's true, yes. Also, we could tell by the type of fish that we got.

Marcello: That sounds interesting. I think you need to explain that.

Evans: All right. You see, certain fish is caught a certain distance from the land. So they had a type of fish that they called "shit fish." It was a type of fish that they caught close to

shore, and they used it for fertilizer. So whenever they started having to eat the fish, they had to substitute night soil for the fish. Therefore, they traded shit for fish, which we called "shit fish." See, we had English people who had been fishermen for years. They're more fish eaters than anybody in the world, you know; the British eat more fish than anybody. But we had fishermen there, and they knew how far you had to go out to sea to catch this type of fish. In other words, whenever they knew that we was closing in on them, we got to getting these fish that they catch closer to the shore. So that's the way we knew that our Navy was pretty well shoving them back to their homeland. You know, the Japanese go all over the Pacific fishing, but it finally got to where they couldn't go out of the harbor with a rowboat because we was sinking it.

Marcello: You mentioned the Chinese a moment ago. Am I to assume that these were Chinese who had been mess attendants aboard some of the naval vessels or something like that?

Evans: No. I don't know exactly where those Chinese came from, but I'm sure that some of those were British subjects probably from Hong Kong or maybe from Singapore or someplace like that; or they could have been from Java and that sort of thing and got caught in the Dutch Army. They weren't none of ours at all. You know, most of our mess attendants were Filipinos and blacks.

Marcello: We were talking about the pay awhile ago, and you mentioned

what it was. When was payday?

Evans: Well, it seems to me like it was sort of like leap year-- off and on, you know (chuckle).

Marcello: Who was keeping pay records?

Evans: Well, I don't recall that there was any pay records kept. I just think that they'd come along, and the hancho would say how much money you got coming: "Here it is."

Marcello: Now was this the regular Japanese currency or was this script?

Evans: Oh, yes, it was Japanese currency. It had the chrysanthemum on them and a picture of the samurais and all those. It was regular yen.

Marcello: You know, way back yonder we talked about Frank Fujita. Had you lost him by this time, or was he still with your group when you first got to Nagasaki?

Evans: No, we lost Frank Fujita in the latter part of 1944, shortly before we went up to the coal mining camp.

Marcello: Do you recall when they finally discovered that he was Japanese?

Evans: Well, I knew that they found out about it, but I didn't know the details. The only thing I knew is, he came up missing one time. There was one other guy that they shipped out of there by the name of Donald Heleman. Of course, Donald died. He subsequently died from pneumonia. He was our mess sergeant.

Marcello: How come they took him away?

Evans: I'm not sure, but they transferred some of the people out, and I don't remember the reason for it.

Marcello: How long did you remain at Nagasaki altogether?

Evans: Well, let's see...from around the first of December of 1942 until about June of 1945, I guess.

Marcello: So in other words, you were there while the air raids started.

Evans: No, no.

Marcello: They had not hit that area yet?

Evans: No, Nagasaki had never had an air raid, and we couldn't understand why. We could never understand why Nagasaki had never been bombed.

Marcello: Did you see evidence of American planes going over and that sort of thing?

Evans: One time we saw one plane, and we weren't for sure. But, of course, we found out the reason why they didn't bomb Nagasaki--because they was saving it for that atomic test.

Marcello: As the war did turn against Japan, could you detect any change in the attitude of the guards or the civilians? Now, of course, they were already nasty, but could you detect any further changes?

Evans: Oh, yes, sir. When the war would go badly for them, they were worse to us. I remember that when Yamamoto got killed, they was very bad to us. They stood us out in the rain and made us stand out there. Then when Roosevelt died, they had

a big three-day celebration, and we had some days off during that time. I guess they wanted to humiliate us a little bit more.

Marcello: What effect, if any, did the news of Roosevelt's death have upon the prisoners?

Evans: Well, of course, from what we knew about the political system in the United States, we knew that somebody else was going to take over. Of course, they always had. We weren't worried about it one way or another. However, it was grievous to us that we'd lose a leader. Even though I may be opposed to whoever's in power, I would certainly hate to see us go through the throes of a change in leadership.

Marcello: I guess that, given your young age, Roosevelt was the only president you could ever remember.

Evans: Oh, I could remember Hoover. I can still remember Hoover. In fact, I remember that my father lost 160 acres of the finest land in the world over Hoover. Hoover, of course, fed Europe--Hoover did--because the Democratic president told him to feed Europe; but yet as president, he sat around and let us all starve to death, you know, with food rotting in the fields.

Marcello: Did you notice that your food changed as a result of the air raids. Now you mentioned the fish a moment ago. How about the quantity of the food and so on that you were receiving?

Evans: Well, you know, most of the food, like soybeans and potatoes...I guess potatoes maybe were home-grown, but most of those other things were...soybeans came from Manchuria, and, of course, to get food from Manchuria across there, why, they had to utilize a certain amount of ships, and I'm sure they were vulnerable when they would get across the Sea of Japan.

And I might add during this time, we lost all of our officers. All of our officers were taken away and taken to Manchuria. We had no officers. The highest-ranking officer that we had was a first sergeant. That was when they made the transfer from Nagasaki to Orizaba, Japan.

Marcello: Did that create any problems in terms of your routine, that is, the taking away of the officers?

Evans: Well, not really, because the officers didn't work. They didn't do anything. They had a "dog robber" to take care of them--I mean, an orderly. We called them "dog robbers." They didn't work, and we didn't have much contact with the officers, actually. The only time we would see them maybe ...I think maybe they would come around. Our highest ranking officer was a major--this Major Harrigan. We called him "Wrong-way" Harrigan because he was flying the wrong way and lost his way. But as far as I know, they didn't contribute much to us, and we didn't have much to do with them.

We had a Japanese first sergeant that came around

dragging a stick. That's the one we was worried about. His name was Yastagi. Yastagi-san was his name. We built some air raid shelters, and an air raid shelter in Japanese is called boku-go. What he would do, during the day he would take the sick, lame, and the lazy that was laid off from work, and he'd work on this air raid shelter, which was boku-go. He'd come around and point at everybody and holler, "Boku-go! Boku-go!" So we got to calling him, "Boku-go." But his real name was Yastagi-san. I don't know whatever happened to him.

Marcello: Was there ever very much resentment over the fact that officers were not working?

Evans: Well, it didn't worry me any because I just felt like that everytime there was anything that they could do to keep anything from happening to the Japanese, it would help the war effort. In other words, anything that they could withhold didn't bother me a bit one way or another. As far as I know, it didn't bother anybody else. Of course, I certainly wouldn't want to think an officer should work. While I would certainly say that if something needed to be done in the war effort that we needed an officer to do, if I was an officer, I'd be the first one to grab something. But as far as us feeling resentful, no, no way at all. I didn't.

Marcello: Were you sending any mail or receiving any mail during

this period?

Evans: Yes, we sent some mail, and I got some mail from my mother.

Marcello: Let's discuss this one point at a time. Describe the type or kind of mail that you were able to send home.

Evans: Well, you could just only say, "I'm doing all right," and "How are you doing," and that sort of thing, as I remember.

Marcello: Were these little pre-printed cards like postcards?

Evans: Some of them were. Some of them was on paper, yes, and some of them were little pre-printed cards, and you just signed your name to it.

Marcello: Describe the mail that you received from home.

Evans: Well, it was about the same. There wasn't much in it. Some of it had been censored out. Some had been cut out. Some had been rubbed...you know, rubbed with that whatever it was.

Marcello: What did that mail do for your morale?

Evans: Well, you liked to hear from them, you know. I had a brother that was...oldest brother was in the war. He was in Europe. My mother never would say anything about him, so I thought he was dead. I thought he might have got killed. But he made it through the war. He was in the 8th Air Force.

Marcello: Approximately how many pieces of mail did you receive from home?

Evans: Oh, I guess, maybe half a dozen.

Marcello: Would they come singly, or were you likely to get a batch

of letters at one time?

Evans: Well, I don't believe they came in bunches. I know we got some mail about the time the Stockholm came by. Then I'm not sure about some of the others. I'm not quite sure about it. I don't remember the dates on it.

Marcello: What other jobs did you possibly engage in there at Nagasaki in addition to working in the shipyard down at the docks? You mentioned the air raid shelter awhile ago, which from time to time, I assume, you worked on.

Evans: Well, of course, I worked in the shipyards, which was a very dangerous-type of a situation. As I say, all sorts of toxic...like asbestos, zinc...I'm talking about where they had a plating place...and carbon tetrachloride, which they used to cut the chemicals off of fittings and all that sort of thing. All sort of pickling solutions were used to clean metal in getting ready to plate it. They had a big plating place there. And, of course, there were riveting fires, high-pressure hoses, air hoses, high-voltage outlets of all sorts. We got to thinking about heights and falling--scaffolding falling down, people falling off scaffolds, scaffolds collapsing with them. We even had some men to get drowned.

The largest dry dock in the world was built in Nagasaki. The largest inland dry dock in the world was at Nagasaki at that shipyard where we worked. They were

building it at the time we were there. It was about 1,200 or 1,400 feet long, about 300 feet wide, and 50 feet deep. They had built two 10,000-ton vessels in the front of this dock and outfitted them. They was made in two compartments. In other words, they could build four 10,000-ton vessels in this one dry dock at the same time. What they would do, they laid the two keels in front while they were digging it--after they got it built halfway. They built those two ships, and then in the middle they put a caisson or gate. After they built these two ships and got it out to the back to where before they put the aft caisson--the big gate at the back to the ocean--why, they flooded this dry dock and shifted the two ships from the front to the back and put them on blocks. Then they laid two new keels in front, which they had two keels up, I guess, maybe ready to put the top deck on them. They was that far along. And the other two ships was in the back. Well, they was getting ready to build the caisson that went out into the ocean.

Well, they had a high tide, and this tide broke the sea wall and flooded that after compartment with those two 10,000-ton vessels. Those vessels went through that caisson in the front and flooded the front part of it. As a result, these ships that was started being built, they just ran right up the stairway. They just went right up that stairway, and two guys got drowned. Two of our guys did.

And then one guy got a lifesaving medal for saving a Japanese boy--a little Japanese boy. See, they worked boys in those shipyards. They had ten-year-old boys working in the shipyards. They had mentally retarded children working in there. In the afternoon they'd bring school children from the school and work them in the shipyard doing things. It was an all-out effort, no doubt about it.

Marcello: What was the best job you ever had there at Nagasaki?

Evans: Well, I don't think I had a best job. I did about the same thing all the time. I was a driller--drilled holes in the ships and reamed holes in the ships. Of course, they tried us out on various and sundry things. I worked in the plating mill for a while; and then I worked in the--I think--the boiler plant for about a week; and I worked as a ship's carpenter and was carrying them big ol' timbers around, and I didn't like that, either. That was about the extent of it.

Marcello: When did you leave Nagasaki?

Evans: It seems to me like it was the early part of June. I want to say June 12, but I'm not for sure. It was the day of the big raid on Fukuoka--when they burned down Fukuoka. They burned down Fukuoka the night that we went through there that day.

Marcello: Okay, this would be in June of 1945.

Evans: That's right.

Marcello: Since I'm almost out of tape, we'll stop there, and we'll pick it up next week hopefully.

Evans: Okay.

Oral History Collection

Pete Evans

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date of Interview: March 7, 1984

Place of Interview: Duncanville, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Pete Evans for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 7, 1984, in Duncanville, Texas. This is the third in a series of interviews to get Mr. Evans's reminiscences and experiences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II.

 Pete, when we stopped the last time, we had been to the point where we had almost gotten you through your stay at Nagasaki. Before we leave there, however, let's kind of clean up some loose ends, and I'll start by asking you if there's anything else you would like to add relative to your stay at Nagasaki?

Evans: Well, in going back, I recall that after we had gotten those Red Cross parcels, we had gotten some chewing gum. The Japanese had never seen chewing gum or were unacquainted with it. Those that had, I suppose, might have been foreign diplomats. The general public and the soldiers--the guards--had never seen anyone chewing chewing gum, so they couldn't

understand seeing us chew chewing gum. They always thought we was eating something. Of course, since the Japanese population was virtually on starvation--the same as we were-- why, apparently, it must have been demoralizing to see the prisoners go along chewing chewing gum. They felt that we was eating something, and they didn't have any food to eat, so they came out with a decree that you couldn't chew chewing gum while you was out in public.

So I recall one evening...during what we called tenko, which would be, you know, when they were counting us, why, we were not allowed to sit on the edge of our bunks while they was within close proximity of counting us. It just so happened that evening that I was, I guess, a little delinquent and sat down on the bunk, and one of the guards caught me. It just so happened that I had some chewing gum in my mouth. He held out his hand, and rather than doing what I should have done--I should have swallowed it, but I didn't--I spit it out in his hand. He took it and rolled it up in a little ball and looked at it. He didn't know what it was, I suppose, but he knew it was pliable. So what he did, he just took that chewing gum on the end of his thumb, and he just plastered one of my eyes shut, and then he preceded to try to knock the other one out.

He kind of got tired of "whupping" around on my head, I guess, and he called the hancho, which was our...first,

it was my first sergeant, Farris Gilliam. He called him down and told him to hit me a few times. So Farris would hit me with the soft part of his hand, you know, and he'd have to push him back out of the way and say, "Like this," you know, and "WHAP!" So I thought it was all over with, you know.

Shortly after the thing was over with and everybody had gone to bed or was going to bed, why, he came back with a couple of other guards, and they took me to the guardhouse. A Japanese ax is not like one of our axes. It's a smaller ax than ours, and it's got a smaller bit on it. In other words, I suppose their axes looked similar to a tomahawk. The blade part, I guess, would be about three-eighths of an inch thick, and the bit part would be probably about two-and-a-half or two-and-three-quarter inches wide. It had a type of handle similar to a hoe handle. It wasn't a big, wide handle like ours; it was a smaller handle. He grabbed up this ax, and I thought, "Well, he'll turn the handle part around and hold the ax by the head and hit me with that part of it." But it just so happened that he didn't. He hit me with the flat part of the ax. Everytime that he'd hit me, of course, the weight of that ax, which would be about...oh, I guess that ax would probably weigh a pound-and-a-half or two pounds--the head part--and he knocked me down over some other guys.

Finally, a sergeant came in--this Japanese sergeant came in--and put a stop to it. But I was very, very concerned. I didn't get any bones broken, but it could have been very, very dangerous because of the fact that he was hitting around close to your backbone and your pelvic bone and your legs and that sort of thing. And then not to say that he might turn that ax a little bit and cut your leg off. Probably that time and the time when the naval guard worked me over was about as close as I ever came to being permanently injured.

I remember several other guys getting some terrible beatings. We had a bakery there. They had an oven, and somebody went in and stole a bunch of buns. I forget now how many buns that there was, but somebody had went in there. Of course, they tried to find out who did it, you know. This Japanese sergeant--this Yastagi-san--was trying to play Charlie Chan and everything, I guess, and was trying to find out who it was. He'd go around looking in everybody's mouth (chuckle). He'd make everybody open their mouth up, and he'd look in their mouth to see if he could see a bun, I guess (chuckle). A guy told him, "Hell, if you'd look in the other end you might see the bun!" He said, "That bun's long gone." So anyway, they came down through this one guy's area...this Japanese had learned how to speak English, and he came by, and he said, "Who is the leader?"

We said, "The leader?" He said, "The gangster leader!" He said, "All Americans are gansters! Everybody gangsters!" We was all gangsters. They knew we did it. You know, hell, there was no doubt in their mind. The English and the Dutch wouldn't do it. They didn't have enough Dutch and English there apparently. I guess they figured we did it because we had, I guess, more guts than the other people. More audacity, I suppose, would be a better word for it.

But anyway, we had what they called the baka gang. You know, they had a crew of men that they called bakas, that were called "crazies." We had one guy there that a rivet fell out and hit him on the back of the head, and he wore a bloody bandana around his head for weeks and months and months and months, and so they figured he was crazy. He would catch grasshoppers and roast them. He wore what looked like a jumper--what we used to call a jumper--a blue denim jumper--with big pockets on it, and he'd go around with a pocketful of grasshoppers all the time. He stayed as fat as a town dog, you know, which I guess there's a lot of food value in them. I couldn't ever eat one, but he could. We had another one. He was a Dutchman. They put little signs on them.

They had another guy there that I was raised up with called "Corky" Woodall, and "Corky" Woodall was born tongue-tied. They never clipped his tongue when he was a child.

I guess "Corky" now is...oh, he's sixty-seven or sixty-eight years old. He's older than I am. I'll be sixty-five years old. Anyway, "Corky" Woodall had never had his tongue clipped until he got in the Army. When he got in the Army, they took him over there and clipped his tongue. Of course, at that late date, they didn't give him any voice therapy, and, of course, he talked just like he always did. As I recall, a guy by the name of "Red" Shields was...anyway, as I remember, during the time we were in Singosari, we were having chicken for lunch. Somebody told "Corky"--we'd been having those air raids--that if he'd go like a siren, why, everybody would run out of there, and he'd get all the chicken he wanted to eat. So like a damn fool, I guess, ol' "Bo"...I just called him "Bo," but they called him "Corky." He goes like a siren, and, of course, everybody flushes out of this mess hall, and he gets to seeing everybody running, so he gets scared, too. It just so happened that there was a...I believe...and maybe this happened during a raid. Anyway, this actually happened. He flushed all these people out, and then he got scared himself and outran the whole damn bunch. Anyway, during one of the raids, I believe, "Bo" carried everything he had on his back. You know, everything he had he carried with him all the time. Anyway, him and "Red" Shields was running down through these woods or whatever. I don't recall exactly.

The Japanese Zeros came over, and the bullets got pretty close. Ol' "Bo" was looking back over his shoulder to see where those airplanes were and ran into a tree. We had those British-type helmets, and he hit that tree so hard that he creased that helmet. Of course, when we got to Japan, everything he'd say everybody'd laugh at him. It didn't make any difference if he'd be serious.

But while he was there in Java, they put him on number one...where we were was sort of like one of these Moroccan forts, you know. They had this wall around the damn place and a front gate and had a guardhouse. "Corky" was on the post where all these people came in from--officers and enlisted men--from going downtown at night. Ol' "Corky"... these people came up, and he said, "Halt!" He kept saying, "Halt!" Finally, this guy said, "'Corky,' don't you know what to say next?" He said, "No, I don't! You better stay where you are while I think of it!" Of course, with that kind of a background, everything he said was funny. He could be just as serious as...it could be a serious situation, and we'd laugh at him, I mean, not to make fun of the man but just to laugh. It was so comical.

When we got to Japan, why, they put a baka tag on him, and he could go anywhere and do anything he wanted. Nobody didn't bother him, With one of those crazy signs on, why, hell, you could just virtually do anything in the world.

Well, this Yastagi found out that "Corky" was from Texas, so he asked him if he was a cowboy. He said, "Oh, yeah," that he was a cowboy. Yes, he was a cowboy. So anyway, they got him a well rope--a big ol' well rope, I guess, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. They made him a loop in it, and ol' "Bo" wrapped this rope up, you know, and wanted to know who he was going to rope. So they had a Dutchman in this cell. They had a cell out there where they kept people in solitary confinement. They kept them in the dark, you know. They let this Dutchman out of this cell. So they was going to run him by and let "Bo" rope this Dutchman. Well, the Dutchman (chuckle) really didn't know what the hell was going on, so he didn't know whether to run or walk or stop or what, you know. So ol' Yastagi--this Japanese sergeant--decided he'd get him...of course, he always carried a damn stick around. It was about an inch-and-a-half in diameter and, I guess, about four feet long. He'd drag that stick around, you know. He got after this Dutchman and got this Dutchman to running. Of course, he was after him with a stick, and ol' "Bo" with his rope, you know, was going to run him by, and here they come, you know (chuckle). So instead of roping the Dutchman, why, he threw the rope, and it caught this Japanese sergeant and threw him down in the damn dirt--all down and around in the dirt, you know, and dusted

him off real good and jerked him down, you know. That kind of broke up the party, so he took "Corky" and put him in the cell and kept him in there, I guess, maybe an hour. Finally, they took him out after supper and took him down to the guardhouse where the Japanese ate and fed him. They turned him loose and didn't do a thing to him.

The Japanese for some reason...it's in their culture, I suppose, that you don't...a person that's deranged or you think is deranged, unlike in our culture, is treated with, I guess, maybe respect. I think they must think that they can communicate with the gods, I suppose. I think the Indians had the same kind of culture. I'm not sure. I haven't ever read it anywhere, but I anticipated that that's what it was all about.

Marcello: I've heard other prisoners make similar remarks about the Japanese attitude toward people that were mentally deranged.

Evans: Yes, that's right. Yes, they would not mistreat them in any way. They treated them differently than they did the other prisoners.

Marcello: I guess this kind of humor that you just talked about is one of the things that keeps you going.

Evans: Well, yes. You had to keep, I guess, maybe a positive outlook on things. There was always something that...just like our life now, you know. You kind of wish your way to the grave, you know. If it's not payday, you wish it was.

You wish and you wish and you wish--forward. You look forward to things. It takes you out of the world, you know, because it's one day less, you see. I guess, basically, what we always wished was that we were somewhere else or wished the war was over or wished it was a day we had off or wished we could take a bath or whatever, you know.

Of course, in the evenings we pretty well had our own...for a short while, we had things to ourselves, and we played music. We could play chess. We could play cards. We could trade, and I like to trade and swap and buy and sell or whatever. I liked to play poker, too. People would lose so much rice that they would go bankrupt... what we called bankrupt. Oddly enough, it's kind of like our bank. We'd have what they called Rule Eleven. You know, they could only take so much rice at a time. They couldn't starve you to death. In other words, it was an agreement among the people. It wasn't nothing for a man to lose a hundred bowls of rice.

Marcello: You actually gambled with your food?

Eyans: That's right! You bet! As I remember, when I was about seventeen, I guess it was, we played while I was in Camp Bowie. We played payday poker. It got to where, as I remember, I think I lost about \$30 and I won about \$30 playing what they called payday poker. We'd keep records of it. I won \$30 off this one guy. Well, I paid everybody else off, and this guy reneged on me. Of course, he was

a grown man. I wasn't going to fight him or anything like that, so it rocked along there until about 1944. This guy had had pneumonia, and I had grown some since that time. It just so happened that I lost a hundred bowls of rice; he won a hundred bowls. So it all worked around to where I owed him. So I said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you the same kind of deal you did me in Camp Bowie, my friend. The whole deal is over with. We're even now. We'll not ever play anymore, so we're finished." So I had the muscle to back it up, and there was nothing said about it. We had a few scraps. We had a bully there, and I had a fight with him. I don't remember now what it was over. You know, as you get a little older, you know, you lose your timidity, I suppose, and you kind of back up what you feel is right, and that's basically what it was.

That's about the extent of things that happened. Of course, I guess I could scratch around and find a hundred things that happened, but I think that's basically typical of the everyday occurrences. We had a man who died there with spinal meningitis--from Schulenburg--and, of course, we had pneumonia and diarrhea. We didn't have any dysentery there.

Marcello: Given that climate, I can understand why pneumonia would be perhaps prevalent there.

Evans: Yes. I always thought Japan was a tropical climate, you know, and when we got to Nagasaki...to me Japan is a dark, dark place. It's never...in other words, when I got there, it was dark. The sun came up in the southeast and settled in the...to me it looked like it came up in the southeast--well, in the south--and set in the north. It just came up over the horizon just a little ways, and then it would set. To me Japan was a dark place. Only in the summertime would we ever have...it seemed like it would be lighter. The days didn't seem as long as ours for some reason. I don't know. I guess maybe it was my outlook. Of course, we was inside most of the time and worked under that big shipyard, and it was dark in there. We'd only walk about, I guess, a mile-and-a-half from the shipyard--or maybe two miles--to our camp. That camp where we were, they had blasted these hills down and made the land. In other words, they had some people working there. They had some mine rails and mine carts, and they would get up on the side of those hills and blast those hills down. These rails would run out into the ocean, and they would dump that dirt. Our camp was built on that type of reclaimed land, I suppose. Then they kept building out there, and we were right on the ocean. We were on the ocean.

Later, they put a steam boiler there and built us a bathhouse. Of course, in order to run that boiler, why,

each guy would bring a stick of wood from the shipyard. You'd get a piece of scrap lumber or whatever you could find, and you'd bring it in and pile it up. Of course, with about 4,000 or 5,000 men bringing in wood, you could get a pretty good bunch of wood.

We had trouble getting salt, and we would take seawater and boil the seawater and make our salt. Like I said before, we had people that could play--musicians--and we made our own instruments. If you needed something, you could pretty well get it if you wanted it.

Marcello: Awhile ago, we were talking about the prison camp humor and some of the funny things that occurred. I've heard it said from other prisoners that they observed that the Japanese had trouble understanding why anybody who was a prisoner-of-war could find anything humorous. Did you notice that attitude on the part of the Japanese perhaps?

Evans: Well, I know that the Japanese didn't like the prisoners, particularly those that would surrender. I could tell that they didn't...a few would laugh with us, and I used to talk Japanese like Donald Duck, and, you know, you'd have to hold their rifle for them while they'd laugh about it. As I remember, I used to talk Japanese like Donald Duck, and they'd get a big kick out of that. But that's about the only time that I can recall. I don't really remember whether or not that they looked down on us for

having some humor there in camp. I guess that if they did, I've forgotten it. But I do know that they basically hated us because of the fact that we surrendered. They couldn't understand that at all.

Marcello: I assume that here at Nagasaki, you were in with more or less the Dutch and British prisoners-of-war. Is that correct? There may have been other groups, but they were perhaps more prevalent.

Evans: Yes. Well, we were with the Dutch. There were more Dutch than there were English or Americans. We were in there with some of the remnants of the Asiatic Fleet, which was stationed in the Philippines, which had the...oh, no, I'm wrong there. We had some survivors from the USS Perch, which was a submarine that got sunk. They got out in shallow water, and they had to come out of this submarine, and they were captured. We had some remnants of the cruiser Houston, which were liaison signalmen that was detached from the Americans ships to the Dutch ships in order to communicate with the...we're talking about the survivors of the Java Sea Battle, which was the only sea battle that was fought in World War II without the use of aircraft. It was all at night. It was a night engagement. They had the Dutch fleet and the Australian fleet and some English ships, and some of the ships from our Asiatic Fleet, which was the Houston and the Marblehead and a sprinkling of destroyers.

We were in there with the survivors of the Exeter, which was the one that sank the Graf Spee in Montevideo, or they ran the Graf Spee, that pocket battleship, back into Montevideo in 1939 or 1940. As a result, there was a big diplomatic flap, and as you recall, the skipper of the Graf Spee scuttled this ship outside Montevideo harbor and then committed suicide. But we were in there with the survivors of the Exeter, and they had the ship called the Java and the DeRuyter and the Perth and the Houston. I don't recall all the names of the ships. I used to know them all, but now I've forgotten them. But they fought this battle, and, of course, we lost the battle. As a result, they landed their troops on Java, and as a result, we capitulated. Anyway, we were in there with those people, and then, of course, we were in there with a bunch of Dutch Army people and some English antiaircraft people and some English RAF. Of course, they had a sprinkling of the colonial army, which had the Eurasians, which was half-Dutch and half-Javanese or whatever their native mothers were because the Dutch would take wives or girlfriends. We had Eurasians, and we had Indians. We had some of the colonials from the English and from the Dutch in with us. Of course, we had the Australians. Then later, they brought in a bunch of the civilian workmen from Wake Island. They were brought there. They had a 125-man

Marine contingent there, and they held the Japanese off for I forget how many days. The civilian workmen were there to build, I think, a submarine base, and I believe they was going to build an air base there at Wake Island. I don't know how many there were, but it was over a couple of thousand of them. So when they captured them, why, these people said they were civilians. Well, of course, the Japanese weren't anybody's fool. They knew that they'd armed those civilians, so they throwed them all in prison camp.

Later on, I got all sorts of letters from those people that I knew. Most of them were from Boise, Idaho, and up in that mining country. They were working for this contractor, and, of course, when they were captured, their pay stopped. It looked like they weren't going to get any money. Of course, Congress, benevolent as it is, recognized that it was an injustice, so they straightened it out with an act, and they paid them. The government paid them. I don't know whether they paid them the same amount of money they would the military, but at least they compensated them later on for the time that they were there, as I remember.

But that's the make-up of all the people. Of course, we were, I guess, the biggest sole unit that I recall that were there, which was E Battery.

Marcello: So E Battery was still basically together except for those specialists that had been siphoned off to some other place.

Evans: The only ones that weren't with us were the stragglers, like, the people that got sick along the way. We had one guy that had jumped out of a second story window after starting a fight in Australia and broke his leg, and he wasn't captured. Then we had some people that got sick in Singapore. We didn't lose anybody until we got to Singapore, and we lost several men there from dysentery and beriberi. "Red" Shields, who died last year, had dysentery, I believe, and he was left in Singapore, and a few of the other people that I recall were in Singapore at that English camp.

Marcello: Of the nationalities that were with you there in Nagasaki, which ones did you prefer to associate with the most, and which ones did you prefer to associate with the least?

Evans: Well, I liked to associate with all of them because I made a profit off of all of them. I learned to speak Dutch while I was there, and many of them didn't know that I could speak Dutch. These people would want to trade with me, and this guy would bring an interpreter along to talk to me. As a result, why, I could know what his bottom line was, so I could outfox him on the trade.

The English...I always thought they were a little bit ...other than some of them, they were kind of pompous people. I don't know.

I remember a limey there, an Englishman, while I was

in the hospital. We were both pretty sick with dysentery. Of course the English do everything with sort of, I guess, a ceremonial flair. They can't do anything...can't boil tea without having a brass band. In Singapore there was about 125 people a day dying, and they buried them...they had a place that was like our...I don't know whether you know what an earth silo is. It's a big long trench. They could put eight abreast...they buried those people in boxes about three feet square, and they were buried sitting up. What they would do...the people who would die in the night, why, they would perform autopsies on them, I suppose, and record their deaths, and they put them in boxes about three feet square. Early in the morning, about six o'clock in the morning, why, they had these Goldstream guards, which were Scotsmen, and they would take these bagpipes and, I guess, pump those things up and tune them up. Early in the morning, about six o'clock in the morning, they were the burial detail, and they would play a dirge going down. They'd carry so many people down every morning, and every night they would cover up the end boxes, and then the next morning they would clean that out of the way and start burying them the same way. Well, the burial detail would tune up those bagpipes, and they'd play a funeral dirge going down, and then they'd play a quick march coming back.

And so this guy's name was "Leggy" Woods. He was born

in London. He was a cockney, and to be a cockney tradition has it you've got to be born within the sound of Big Ben and all that crud, which I guess are their traditions. Every morning I'd wake ol' "Leggy" up and say, "'Leggy,' you hear that?" He'd say "Yeah, I hear it." I said, "You know who they're tuning up for, 'Leggy?'" He said, "I jolly well don't know." I said, "Well, they're tuning up for you." I said, "They've got their bagpipes all tuned up." I said, "They're ready for you, buddy." I said, "They told me that since y'all done in ol' Mary Queen of Scots, they wasn't going to rest until they got every damn limey up here and buried him out there in that damn trench." He'd get mad and raise Cain about it. As a result, he lived over it. I remember every morning this went on for, I guess, about three or four weeks, and we got out about the same time together.

Anyway, that's the things that you did, you know, to antagonize other people. Of course, I'm sure it antagonized him to think that I thought they were tuning up those bagpipes to haul him down there to the graveyard.

We would lose one or two people along the way. We lost several--I think five or six--there in Singapore from dysentery. They actually contracted it there on the boat, coming from the water on the boat, from Batavia or Jakarta to Singapore. Then we lost one or two guys there in Nagasaki,

I think. We didn't lose anybody from pneumonia. Donald Heleman died after he left Nagasaki, and then a guy by the name of Kalick from Schulenburg died of spinal meningitis. We were more fortunate than those that went to Burma and Thailand and those places because they came down with... of course, we had malaria, too.

We had contracted malaria, and we still had malaria. I had several malaria attacks after I came home about a year or a year-and-a-half after I got out of the service. In fact, I drew compensation for malaria for, I guess, a year. That was the statutory limitation on malaria. They said if you come back to a cold climate, within a year or a year-and-a-half, why, you should get over the malaria.

But we had beriberi, which there's two kinds of beriberi. One is what they call a wet beriberi, and then there's a dry beriberi. We had scurvy. Your mouth...absolutely all of the skin would come off your gums, and your teeth would bleed; and the actual skin would come off your scrotum, which you'd have just like a raw piece of meat. It's caused from a lack of vitamin C. In order to cure that, they did give us some shots, I think. We thought they were vitamin C shots or whatever. They might have been something else.

But the Japanese had a strange way of giving shots. I don't know whether you've heard this or not, but instead of shooting you in the buttocks or your arm, they'd shoot

you in the chest, in the breast. They wouldn't shoot you in the arm like we do. They would take the meaty part of your breast and shoot you there. They would feed us red pepper...I'm talking about cayenne pepper. We called it lombok, which there's an island in Java called Lombok, and that's the name of the pepper. It's a red cayenne pepper. We finally got over the scurvy.

I had two kinds of beriberi. I had a wet beriberi, which is like...it's an adynamia of the...the way it's explained to me, your blood, when it comes around--when it circulates--it doesn't go around for its health. In other words, what I'm saying is, when it makes a trip, it picks up something from your system. When it can't find vitamin B, it picks up water and transports that to your system. As a result, you have adynamia of the feet and legs. It got so bad that it caused a deterioration of the nerves of the legs, and you had what they call a "drop foot." It's like what they call...we used to call it "Jake-leg," you know, where your leg...you know, "Jake-legged" people. You've heard of "Jake-legged" people--what they call "drop foot?" Your foot will drop down, and you can't hold your shoe up. For some guys it got so bad that they had to put springs on their shoes--on the tips of their shoes--and tie it up above the calf of their leg to hold their foot up. It's called "drop foot," and that's caused from beriberi.

You would have a wet beriberi first, and then after a certain period of time, after it progressed, then the water would break. You would go to the bathroom so much, and your system then would throw the water off, and then your leg would deteriorate to where it'd just be skin and bone, which is called dry beriberi. In fact, actually, it's not known, I don't guess, or diagnosed in this country.

Then, of course, we had pellagra. You had pellagra, and people's legs would break out from pellagra. All of the avitaminosis-type of diseases was quite prevalent there in the camp, which contributed to other diseases, of course. Then, too, the bedbugs and the lice and the fleas would also...to have had to support all those vermin along with yourself, I guess, why, it was pretty bad. It really was.

Marcello: Of all of these various maladies that you mentioned, which ones did you have at one time or another while you were there in Nagasaki?

Evans: Well, of course, during my entire tenure as a prisoner, I had dysentery; and I had beriberi, malaria, pellagra, scurvy, and pneumonia. I had pneumonia three times. I had double pneumonia, single pneumonia, and then I had bronchial pneumonia. And then I had bronchitis for several weeks and was unable to...I guess maybe I was having asthma at the time, but I didn't realize it. I had those big boils, which were, I guess...maybe it was a staph infection of some

sort that caused them. Other than that, I was quite healthy (chuckle).

Marcello: I assume, however, that you were not necessarily alone in having all these things.

Evans: Oh, no. This was pretty general. It was pretty general throughout the group. Everybody had about the same...of course, the officers were fed a little better than we were, I suppose, there in Nagasaki, but, as I say, when we left there, the officers were transported to Manchuria or to somewhere up in the northern part of Manchuria and were taken away from us. I suppose they did that for security reasons.

We were told all along that if the Americans landed, they was going to kill us. I'm quite sure that they meant it because they couldn't fight the Americans and have a bunch of prisoners loose or worry about the security of the prisoners, I suppose. It's kind of hard to think about, but you can imagine being invaded by a foreign invader and have five or six thousand men close to you. I guess they would have killed us. I don't know. At least I didn't want to test the idea; I mean, I thought they would do it. There was no question in my mind that they would kill us without any qualms; I mean, there would be no compassion at all. There's no doubt in my mind that they wouldn't do it.

Marcello: Of all of the nationalities, which one did you detect as

being the most optimistic about your chances of getting out, and which ones were the most pessimistic?

Evans: Well, I think that the Americans certainly were the most optimistic because we had faith in the ability of the people, and we knew that the United States was a bastion of freedom. I guess the Australians were next. I guess the Americans and the Australians were pretty well equal as far as being optimistic. We got along very well with the Australians.

Marcello: Why do you think that was the case?

Evans: Well, I think that we had a common tie with the Australians because we basically came up about the same way--as colonials from the English--and we were both penal colonies, which people don't really realize the United States was a penal colony. Australia was settled by prisoners--ex-criminals from England--to more extent than we were. And us being Texans, of course, with wide-open spaces...Australia had an agrarian...most of them, like us, had an agrarian background which brought about horses and cattle. Of course, we were not too much on the sheep part, but they have more sheep, I guess, in Australia than anything else, that and kangaroos. Anyway, we got along well with the Australians, and they were very optimistic.

Then I guess the Dutch were last. The English was next, and then the Dutch were last because not only had they lost

their colony to the Japanese, but they'd lost their homeland to the Germans. Their queen was in exile at the time --in England, I suppose, or wherever. Their government was in exile. All their countries were occupied. Of course, that would be demoralizing because their families were also captured. All the men that were the Dutch there were colonials that had lived in Java, and their wives and children was also captured and interned to the Japanese. They didn't know where they were, and, of course, that would bear on a person's mind. I could understand me being there, but I knew my family was safe, and they didn't.

I guess, if I was going to rate it, I would rate it that way.

Marcello: I guess that you really didn't want to be around those kind of people too much, did you?

Evans: Well, maybe I had a little different outlook toward the Dutch than most because I learned to speak the language, and, as I say, I worked with one everyday. I had a lot of compassion for them because I could understand the reasons that they had to capitulate the island there and surrender everybody. Actually, it was a hopeless cause. It was much the same as the English surrendering Singapore, because of the fact that they felt overwhelmed at the time. The Japanese had the biggest fleet in the area, and the Americans had lost their fleet in Pearl Harbor. Now you're talking about the

very early part of 1942, and the English had lost the Gibraltar of the East--one of the greatest fortresses allegedly ever been built in the annals of military defense --and here the Japanese went through the worst part of the jungle and conquered a superior force. Of course, the Japanese had superiority of the air, superiority of the sea, and for all we knew they had superiority of the land.

So I can understand why the Dutch would capitulate, because of the fact that it was a hopeless cause. Their fleet had been sunk. Their air force, what little there was, had been defeated many days before. In fact, our bunch had been whipped out of Java. We were unable to stem the tide to the superior Japanese forces. For that reason I could understand why they had to capitulate or had to surrender their forces. Then there was the fact that their native army--what few there were--had mutinied and actually, I guess, went over to the Japanese. I mean, that's what happened to the Sikhs. The Indian troops all went over to the Japanese except for the Gurkhas. The Punjabs and the Sikhs went over to the Japanese and were mercenaries, but the Gurkhas stayed loyal to the British.

I could understand. I was quite sympathetic with the Dutch because everybody was down on them, and I never was one to just kick a dog when he's down. I always try to pick him up and do something for him. Quite honestly, I

found that many of the Dutch were highly educated people. I learned to play chess with them and learned a lot of customs and traditions of the Dutch and Europe that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise if I hadn't have had some sort of a liaison or communication with them. I rather enjoyed my contact with them, I suppose.

Marcello: I have one other thing I want to talk about here at Nagasaki. We mentioned this in a previous interview, but I'd like to get more details on it. That is your black market activities, your trading activities. Take me through that from beginning to end in terms of just how it worked.

Evans: Well, I would trade with the Japanese workmen.

Marcello: What did you have to trade with them?

Evans: Well, I traded razor blades and needles.

Marcello: You got the razor blades from those packages from your mother?

Evans: That's right.

Marcello: And you made your needles?

Evans: That's right. I would either get money, or I'd get food. I'd get buns, rice, fish, sardines--that sort of thing--and then I'd trade it to the Dutch and the English and the Americans.

Marcello: And what did they have?

Evans: Well, I'd get coffee or tea. I'd get coffee from the English, tea from the Dutch, and I'd trade tea for coffee. Cigarettes

was an item. At that time I didn't smoke. I did smoke, but I didn't smoke as much; and then whenever I got sick, I quit smoking for about a year and then went back to smoking, which was ridiculous, really. But there wasn't actually very much to get from the Japanese. They were in pretty rough shape themselves.

Marcello: Did this trading with the Japanese have to take place on the sly?

Evans: Oh, yes, definitely.

Marcello: How did you make your arrangements? How did this take place?

Evans: Well, we'd meet at the shipyard, and you'd have to smuggle all this stuff in, you know. You just couldn't walk in with it because they'd have shakedowns from time to time. They'd shake you down to find whatever you had.

I remember a guy named Pancho Valdez. He cut his finger off, and he put his finger in his pocket and wrapped this thing up. It was kind of (chuckle)...and so this particular day, he put his finger in his pocket.

Marcello: I can't believe we're laughing about a guy who got his finger cut off (chuckle).

Evans: Well, anyway, he cut his finger off, and he put it in his pocket, and coming home that day, they decided they'd have a shakedown. He took all of his stuff out of his pockets, and he was holding it out there in his hand (laughter), and

this Japanese ran across that finger (laughter). But oddly enough, they took and sewed the thing back on. I noticed where he died here not long ago, and he still had his finger. They sewed his finger on him.

Marcello: I wonder what the Japanese reaction was when he saw the finger?

Evans: Well, it shocked this Japanese. He didn't know where in the hell he got that finger, you know, until he showed him which one of his fingers he cut off. But that was kind of unusual, I thought.

Marcello: How did you smuggle your things back into camp?

Evans: Well, you had little bags. You'd take those buns, and you'd put them in this bag, and you'd hang them down between your legs--on the inside of your legs or up your back or wherever. Of course, in the wintertime you had all the clothes you owned on, you know, and you could pretty well smuggle in whatever you had.

We had one Japanese interpreter there named Inouye, and we gave him money, and he would go get the sulfa drugs for us. Of course, the Japanese didn't have any penicillin. We didn't even know penicillin existed until after the war. We knew that there was sulfathiazol and all types of sulfa drugs,..sulfadiazine and that sort of thing. That was what we treated most of our pneumonia patients with. We attributed our low death rate based on that fact. We would take this

money and give it to Mr. Inouye, which he was pro-American. He could speak English fairly well. We had some interpreters there, as I remember, who were pretty mean. They weren't very good to us. But this one interpreter named Inouye was a very nice man. He was a big, tall...he looked nearly Caucasian, and I guess he was forty-five years old at that time. I certainly hope and wish him well, you know, now even because he was good to us, particularly to the Americans. If you got in any kind of trouble with the navy...they bring these guys up there, you know, and if you got Inouye as the interpreter you pretty well got out of it, but if you got one of them other guys...you had some of them that had been raised in California. I remember one guy that had lived in California for a number of years, and he was pretty mean to the Americans because I guess maybe of his treatment that he'd received from the Americans. We haven't been very nice to our ethnic groups in the United States, and it's sad--sad indeed. But it's a fact. We haven't been very good to the Chinese and Japanese, blacks, Mexican-Americans, Jews, Polish, Puerto Ricans--you name them.

Marcello: Did you ever see men trade food for cigarettes?

Evans: Oh, yes,

Marcello: That always amazes me.

Evans: Oh, yes. Yes, they'll trade you food for cigarettes. Well, cigarettes are not any different than any other kind of

narcotic. It's a narcotic, and once you're hooked on it, it's no different than marijuana, no different than heroin or cocaine or amphetamines or whatever, you know. There's really no difference because you become addicted to that drug, and once you become addicted to a drug, you'll do virtually anything. You'll walk a mile for a Camel, you know, in a snowstorm, and I was no different than anyone else. The day I quit, I had one in my mouth, one in the ashtray, one in my hand, and was reaching for another one. I thought, "What kind of damn fool am I?" It's hard to stop cigarettes. It's definitely hard. That's a hard chore. People would trade food for cigarettes. There's no doubt about that.

I'll tell you something else. I've seen those Hindus --those Indians--starve to death with a can of corned beef on their shelf. They will not eat beef. They would not eat it. They would starve to death before they would.

I've seen men sit there with an old box of cold, soured rice and say grace over it. I just never could do that. I just never could because I think that if the Lord was wanting to be benevolent to me, He'd give me a little bit more. Of course, I guess I'd have starved to death if I hadn't have had that box of rice, but I thought He could deliver a little bit more, you know. Like the guy that went to the front door and asked a woman for something to

eat, she came out and handed him a slice of bread. She said, "For God's sake." And he said, "Well, for Christ's sake put a little butter on it." (chuckle)

Marcello: Okay, let's get you out of Nagasaki.

Evans: Oh, but after these buns were stolen, they starved us for three days. We weren't allowed any food for three days. They caught one or two of the guys, and they beat them with a stick and all that sort of thing. That was just shortly before we left. That was just a few days before we left, and we weren't given any food for three days. I guess that was three or four days before we left Nagasaki, and that was our "last hurrah," I guess, at Nagasaki.

Marcello: And where did you go from Nagasaki?

Evans: Well, we were taken on the train up to a place called Orio.

Marcello: Describe what the train trip was like. Take me from Nagasaki to Orio.

Evans: We were put on a train, and, again, we weren't allowed to look out of this train, as I remember. I don't really recall too much about the train trip.

Marcello: And when again did that occur? What time of the year?

Evans: I'm thinking April, May, or June of 1945, as I recall.

Marcello: So the bombing of Japan had been going on for some time; however, they had not bombed Nagasaki.

Evans: That's correct.

Marcello: And I assume that they made you keep the shades drawn on

that train because they didn't want you to see the damage that had been done.

Evans: That's right. We went through the big town of Fukuoka, and it's my understanding that that night, after we had went through, they fire-bombed Fukuoka, which was a big, huge industrial center. It was the capital of Kyushu because the numbers of our camp were Fukuoka No. 2, and the one that we went to was Fukuoka No. 9. I believe that's correct. It seemed like we always got there in the dark, but we got to Fukuoka No. 9...it seemed to me like it took about a day. I don't remember how long it took us to go.

Marcello: So when you were in Nagasaki, the camp's designation was Fukuoka No. 2.

Evans: No. 2, that's right. Then we transferred to Fukuoka No. 9, which was this coal mining camp.

Marcello: But it was still on the same island.

Evans: Yes, on Kyushu island. We was up close to a place called Yawata and Moji, which was a big...had the Moji tunnel, which is a tunnel between the islands of Honshu and Kyushu. They had the Moji tunnel there. They dug a tunnel between those two islands, and we were at this little town called Orio, which was, it seemed to me like, between Yawata and Moji.

Marcello: What kind of a reception did you get from the civilians on this trip?

Evans: Well, I don't remember seeing anything about the civilians.

I don't remember even having any contact with them, at least myself. Now there might have been some of the others, but as I recall, I pretty well stayed on this train. I really don't remember too much about what really went on.

Marcello: So it didn't last too long.

Evans: It was just a brief train trip, about 150 miles, I guess-- about that long.

Marcello: There's another question I wanted to ask you earlier. This is a little bit out of place, but I'll ask you here, anyhow. You mentioned that when you were back at Fukuoka No. 2, you came in contact with some people off the submarine Perch.

Evans: That's right.

Marcello: What did you find out about the course of the war from those guys?

Evans: Well, they was captured about the same time we were.

Marcello: Oh, they were captured early in the war.

Evans: Yes, and they had another ship there called the Pope--the USS Pope--which was a four-stack destroyer, and they were captured, also. They scuttled that ship. In fact, both of those ships were scuttled, and they were captured.

Marcello: Okay, describe what Fukuoka No. 9 looked like.

Evans: Well, Fukuoka No. 9 must have been some sort of a civilian quarters for mine workers. They were two-story buildings, and we were put in cubicles. It seems to me there were, like,

about four men to a cubicle. They had a cubicle downstairs, which, if there had been a Japanese civilian family, would have been their kitchen, and the upstairs would have been their bedroom. They had porches along the bottom side. They had stairs. In other words, if you was upstairs, you couldn't go from one place to another. You had to go downstairs and go from one cubicle to the other--from one unit to the other, I suppose. Apartments, I guess, you'd call them. We'd call them apartments. But you had, I believe, four men in the bottom and four men in the top. They were long unit-like things like a barracks, but they were like apartments. That's basically where we stayed. The cubicles were covered with this rice mat like the Japanese use, and, of course, they were infested with the usual bedbugs. Of course, we had lice. We brought lice with us. Of course, they already had some pretty good pedigreed lice there already, and everybody had lice, including the Japanese. I'm not sure whether the soldiers had lice or not, but I'm sure they did.

Marcello: What did you do for blankets?

Eyans: Well, the blankets that the Japanese issued us were kapok blankets. They were made out of kapok, and you couldn't get enough of them to keep you warm in the wintertime. You could have ten of the damn things, and they wouldn't keep you warm. I had one American blanket--one U.S. blanket--

and it was the only one that I had, and it was better than twenty of those others.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of prisoners say that they would actually sleep together, for want of a better word, so that they could share blankets and pile all those blankets up.

Evans: Certainly. That's true, yes. That's right. You had to pretty well stay together. If you didn't, you'd freeze to death. When we were there in Nagasaki, as I remember, in the cold wintertime, you had to bunk together. We thought nothing of it. I never thought anything about it--stay warm. Like I say, necessity was the main thing. Japan gets pretty damn cold. You hear these people talking about these Siberian winds last winter coming across there. We were initiated to Siberian winds long before that over in Japan. Of course, it's a damp country, anyway, and we had no fires. You wore all the clothes you could find, and you covered up with all the blankets that you could get hold of, and you still stayed cold. Of course, the lack of food--the lack of the right type of food--was detrimental to us as well.

Marcello: What was the food like here at this camp?

Evans: Well, it was basically the same. I suppose the army had something to do with the distribution of food. The food was basically the same. We had a mess hall there. At Fukuoka No. 9, we went in the mess hall and ate, where at

Nagasaki they brought the food to the room. But we went to the mess hall there, and the food was basically the same. We had a little fish, a little whale meat. Once in awhile we'd get a little beef, a few potatoes, sardines, maize.

Marcello: Just whatever they could scrape together.

Evans: Whatever they could get together. That's true. As I say, the Japanese were suffering as well as we were; I mean, they themselves didn't have too much food.

Marcello: Describe the work details.

Evans: Well, as you know, a coal mine is run on three...I believe they were run on three shifts. You had the day shift, the swing shift, and the graveyard shift. Within that they had what they called the saitan group, which got extra food for doing extra work. When you were in the saitan, you were issued a special helmet which, as I remember, had a blue ring around the back of it.

You were issued, I guess, a hard hat that had an adaptation to it that you could wear a miner's light. Each morning you were issued a miner's lamp which consisted of a wet cell battery about the size, I guess...it would weigh about two pounds or two-and-a-half pounds. You wore that on your belt. Your belt...you had a piece of rubber-type material that would cover...that was bigger than the battery to keep the acid from getting on your clothes, and then this

light was fixed in such a way that you couldn't turn it off. You was unable to turn it off because they wanted to make sure that light stayed on all the time so they could see you.

Of course, when you were down in the mine, you were mustered up in groups of about ten men, as I remember. Each morning, before going into the mine, why, they had one of these Japanese Shinto shrines that you had to take your hat off and...now wait a minute. I'm not sure whether those...I don't believe that those were hard hats. I believe they were soft hats that had this adaptation where you could put a miner's lamp on them. And you had to bow to tennin heika, which would be the emperor, and when you bowed down, why, you always had to take your hat off. When you bowed down, why, you knocked the dust off your clothes. You did that going in and coming out. We walked, I guess, about two miles to the mine.

Marcello: What time would this whole process begin?

Evans: Well, the process on the day shift would start, oh, at five o'clock in the morning, I guess, to get food. Then, of course, they'd call out the names, and you were mustered up similar to the way you were in Nagaskai. You were counted by the army, and then you were turned over to these mine foremen. Of course, they had a contingent of Japanese soldiers there to guard the mines.

Then you walked down in this mine. You were counted up by the Japanese foremen, and you worked under them. You walked down this mine, and we went down three levels, as I remember. At each level you'd go into an air chamber. Each time the air pressure...you'd be pressured up, and they had these big air compressors and ventilating equipment on top of this mine. We worked in the third level. We had to walk down and walk out. It was about six hundred feet between layers, and when you get down into the bottom part of that, you was about 1,800 feet underground.

Then we would walk out under this ocean. We were out under the ocean. We worked under the ocean. In fact, here in January, 1984, they had a mine explosion over there in that general area where we were working. They were out under the ocean working. They have one of them modern mines over there. The reason we know that we was out under the ocean...we had the English sonar experts, and when we'd shut down to eat our lunch, why, we could hear the ships going over on top. We also knew we were under the water because of the fact that we were pressured. In other words, we were pressured up in order to keep the sea from coming back into us. In other words, that pressure had to be critically adjusted not only to keep the ocean from coming in on us, but if the pressure went up too high, why, you'd get a blow-out, and people would go up in the ocean, and

it'd kill them. I suppose you could come down with the bends, I guess, coming out of that mine. Oddly enough, walking into the mine was more tiresome than walking out of the mine.

Marcello: Why was that?

Evans: Well, it was harder on your legs walking in. It was, I guess, about a forty-five degree angle going down in that mine. Walking down into the mine caused a terrible...caused your legs to have charley horses and all that other stuff. Walking out was better than walking in because it wasn't as tiresome to me. At least that's the way I found it. When you get down in there, why, you had to mine this coal. They'd blow it down, and you'd have to load it out.

Marcello: So you were basically shoveling coal?

Evans: Well, we didn't use a shovel. It was a device that was made out of basket material, and it was made in the general shape of a shovel. Then you were given a rake--a small-handled rake. The rake handle was about fourteen inches long, I guess, and it had a three coarse-type tines on it or prongs. You would lay this down, and you would take that and rake the...it had hand holds in it--this basket did--and you raked the coal onto that, and you could pick it up and put it in this coal car.

Marcello: Which was on tracks.

Evans: Which was on tracks. We were fortunate. The coal face was

six feet. You didn't have to stoop. You know, in Pennsylvania they work coal that's only fourteen inches thick, and you take out five-foot cubicles. In other words, every coal mine that's ever been mined has still got half of the coal in there. The Japanese mined coal the same way because it's too expensive to support the roof, and they take out a five-foot cubicle and leave a five-foot cubicle. When they have these accidents...in this country, when coal gets expensive, they go in there, and they take out some of that quick coal, and when they do the roof falls in on them. I suppose Japan's the same way. We had one or two accidents there. We had some people that was digging a stope into another area of a mine to open up a new part of a mine, and they were down in the bottom part of this, and water came in there and drowned seven of our prisoners.

Marcello: And what were they digging in there?

Evans: They were digging a stope. You stope down, is what you call a stope. And they drowned on the way. The water got down in there and killed them.

Marcello: How would the coal be loosened up before you started raking and filling these baskets. Were they blasting?

Evans: Yes. We drilled those holes, and they would fill them with dynamite, and they would shoot. Of course, they'd rush us back in there and get that coal, and you'd just nearly die with a headache all the time because of the fumes from

the nitroglycerin. You see, fumes from nitroglycerin are just like taking a nitroglycerin tablet. It makes your heart "rev," and you get terrible headaches. Of course, we were never allowed to handle dynamite.

I worked in the mine, and then, I guess, about the last two weeks...well, then I was taken out. This coal was coming out of the mine on a conveyor belt, and they had a place there where the coal would drop off this conveyor belt and made a big, huge pile of coal. And this coal was getting hot. In other words, when you move coal out of a coal mine, it gets hot spots in it. See, the storing of coal is a very dangerous operation. I don't know whether you understand this or not. When you take coal out of a mine, and it piles up...a pile of coal particularly, if it's small grain coal, it'll cause internal combustion like green cane or hay or whatever. In fact, the ships have been known to burn up because of spontaneous combustion from coal. We were in there digging that coal out and getting rid of it. What they would do, they'd dig down in there and find those hot spots, and then we would take a fire hose there, and we would hose down those hot spots and try to keep them from catching on fire. Anyway, they had about sixty or seventy of us doing that for about a week or two, and then shortly before the war was over with, why, they had us up on the hills there digging defense caves in limestone there--

digging those out for that. In fact, the day the war was over with, why, we were up there on the hills digging one of those out.

Marcello: What kind of a shift were you putting in while in that mine? How many hours?

Evans: Well, you worked eight hours; and it took you two hours to go in, and two hours to come out, which was twelve hours a day. For all practical purposes, you was working twelve hours.

Marcello: And would they switch people around with regards to the various shifts, or were you always on the same shift?

Evans: I believe I stayed on the day shift all the time I was there. I worked in the mine longer than I did anywhere else.

Marcello: Did you have any quotas?

Evans: Yes, we had to load seven tons a day. We had to get seven tons of coal a day.

Marcello: About how many people were working on those seven tons?

Evans: Well, we had about ten men, and we had to load seven tons, I believe it was, for ten men. Well, maybe...gosh, I don't remember. But I know that we'd put slate...they used to raise Cain. We'd take a big piece of...to cheat them a little bit, we'd take a big piece of coal and put it in the end; and you'd have a void at the end on each end, and you could fill that coal car. Those coal cars held two tons of coal, and I believe ten of us had to get seventy tons

of coal. I believe that's correct. I believe we each had to get seven tons. In other words, we had to get...gosh, I don't remember now.

Marcello: But they made sure you were going to stay down there and get out that quota.

Evans: We had one guy there...if you think a dark night is dark... the way we would do, we'd take and get off in those places, and we'd take our light and put it down--scratch out a place and cover it with coal where it was dark and you couldn't see anything. We had one guy there that we called a "three-ringer." Their bosses...one ring, two ring, and three ring. A "three-ringer" was a...we had this one "three-ringer," and he had this big light--big spotlight--and, man, it would just knock your eyes out. He had those three red rings on the inside of his light. You could tell who he was because of the fact that he had that light. He carried an inspector's pick which was sort of like, I guess, a mountaineer's pick. It was like a walking stick, and on the end of it it had a sharp point, which you could use this point to test roofs. Then on the other side, it had a hammer so you could test braces. On one end of it was a pick that he could dig places out for coal and test whether or not it was coal or slate or whatever it was. This guy was a big, tall Manchurian. We called him a Mongolian. He was a big, tall guy. He was better than six feet tall

because he had to stoop to get under those...and he was mean. He was a pretty mean guy. He'd take that dang...he'd catch somebody goofing off, or if he didn't think you was quite doing what he wanted to do, he'd take that mine inspector's pick, and he'd knock your light off. That was the first thing he'd do. He'd spot you with that spotlight and knock your light off, and then he'd take and try to beat you to death with the other end of it. We got quite a few treatments from him. And the guy that was in charge of the upstairs was a little bitty Japanese guy, and he was pretty mean, too. He would turn us over to the guards, and they'd "whup" around on us pretty good.

Marcello: Were your supervisors in the mine civilians?

Evans: Yes, they were civilian employees. They worked for this coal mining company.

Marcello: Could you detect changes in their attitude whenever one of these air raids would occur or anything like that?

Evans: Well, we only saw one...we saw Yawata bombed by about fifty B-29's. They came over in shifts, and...no, there was more than that. I don't know how many there were, but I know we saw those planes. They kept us in this cave all the time, and we could hear the bombs hitting. They were pretty mean after that. They didn't like that. Of course, Yawata... that was just a few days before the war was over.

Now at night they sent a B-29 over, and they would shine

those lights up there, and they dropped out these...it looked like pamphlets, you know. Later on, we saw some of those propaganda pamphlets that they'd dropped out. We didn't know what it was.

But then Yawata burned for three days and nights. The sun didn't come up for three days and nights there. Yawata was a big steel-making town, and all this coal was going to Yawata.

Marcello: Describe that air raid in a little more detail because I think it's kind of interesting and important.

Evans: Well, it was in several waves, I guess there must have been about 150 of them.

Marcello: Did they bring you out of the mines and then herd you into this cave, or how was that done?

Evans: No, we was working in this cave. I was working in that cave.

Marcello: Oh, I see. This is at the point where you're working on those defense emplacements.

Evans: Yes--these zigzag caves where they were using them for defense purposes. We were herded in there, and before I could see out,..and these aircraft came from three different directions and bombed that place.

Marcello: I assume you could hear what was going on.

Evans: Oh, yes. I could see. I could actually see outside this cave, and Yawata was in that general direction. They tried to keep us from seeing it.

Marcello: What did you guys talk about?

Evans: Well, it kind of encouraged us. That's the first time we'd ever seen any activity at all. In fact, in Nagasaki we'd only seen one aircraft, and we wasn't sure it was an American aircraft. That was late in the afternoon. That was the only one that we saw, and we didn't know exactly what it was. But this was the first real activity that we'd seen from our bunch all the time we was in prison camp.

Marcello: What did it do for your morale?

Evans: Well, it pumped us up pretty good, you know. Of course, you know good and well it did. Of course, it did give us some encouragement.

Marcello: I guess you couldn't show your pleasure, however, could you?

Evans: No. No, we didn't dare laugh or whatever. Shortly after that we were lined up there to go to work one morning, and a Japanese plane came by. This Japanese sergeant...a guy looked up at that airplane, and he slapped him around because he thought it was an American airplane. It wasn't long after that until the war was over.

Marcello: Now you probably have a pretty good inkling by this time that if the war's not soon going to be over, it's obviously going against the Japanese.

Evans: Well, we knew that anytime you could fly over with that many airplanes and bomb virtually with impunity, why, we knew that the war was getting pretty close to being over

with. As I remember, we found out about peace about two o'clock in the afternoon because the day shift...or the swing shift in the camp...we weren't very far from the mine, and the day shift from the mine came out of the mine complaining that their relief--the swing shift--had not shown up at the mine to relieve them.

We kept waiting for the evening crew to come on, and as I remember, the guy that was in charge of our group had a letter about, I guess, so big (gesture), and their bunch got together...and this guy come up from the office. I guess it was the Japanese coal mine office. It was a Japanese soldier. They had this letter, and they would read this letter, and they'd look at us and then read this letter and look at us, read this letter and look at us.

So when it came time for us to go back to our camp, why, we were all marched back just like nothing had actually happened, and when we got back to the camp, why, we were told that the war was over.

Marcello: Now did you have in the back of your mind that threat that the Japanese had made?

Evans: Oh, well, yes, of course. They told us that we had gassed them--that we had used gas on them, that we'd used poison gas, that we had poisoned them. Of course, that was still in the back of my mind--that we were going to be murdered, you know, shot or killed or whatever.

- Marcello: Had you made any plans in case this contingency did arise?
- Evans: Well, not really. There wasn't much I could do; I mean, after all, they were pretty well in charge. They had the guns, and they had their bayonets and swords and whatever. We were just on the mercy of the world, I guess. I hadn't made any plans, but I knew that they weren't going to shoot me willingly. I was going to be hot-footing it away. They were going to be shooting me in the back. I was going to try to get away the best I could. But as far as making any plans, I hadn't made any plans at all.
- Marcello: Describe the emotion of this Japanese official or guard when he told you about the...did he say that Japan had surrendered or simply that the war was over?
- Evans: Well, I used to know the name for war in Japanese. Anyway, the only words that he said to us was that the war was finished. What was the word for war? I can't remember.
- Marcello: Could you detect any emotions on his part?
- Evans: Well, of course, they were downcast. They didn't know what to anticipate, and, of course, I knew the feeling, believe me (chuckle). I knew what he was feeling, but he didn't know what to anticipate from the conquering army. Nobody knows really what's in the mind of another other group of people that you don't have any communication with and that's been shooting and killing you for four or five years, you know. You really don't know what to anticipate. That

next morning, as I remember, the only Japanese that was anywhere around was our camp commandant, which was a Japanese officer--captain, I believe. And I might say he was a pretty decent kind of man. He wasn't harsh, and he ran a pretty good camp. He stayed and all the other guards and everybody else was gone.

Marcello: Okay, so this guard or official informs you that the war is over. What emotions do you feel, and what happens at that point?

Evans: Well, goddamn, we was trying to find a way...we wanted to get the hell out of there the best we could. Of course, we couldn't as long as the Japanese were in charge. But the next morning...

Marcello: How about that night? Were there any celebrations or anything that day and that night?

Evans: Well, certainly. We all talked all night. Hell, we couldn't go to sleep because of the anticipation or the exhilaration of knowing that the war was over with and that our liberation was going to be forthcoming in a very short time. We didn't know how it was going to come about, but we knew that it was going to, certainly. We all discussed, I guess, what the first thing we was going to do when we got the hell out of there.

Marcello: What were you going to do?

Evans: Oh, gosh, there were so many things that it would take the

rest of the day to tell you what all I was wanting to do. I wanted to do all the natural human things that anybody else wanted to do--get drunk, get with women or whatever. The main thing I wanted was to get back home. You know, we'd been gone a long time. We wanted to go home. I was tired of the war.

And then, too, you felt remorse that the war was over with and that hadn't contributed any more to it than what you had. Actually, we hadn't contributed. I guess maybe we had contributed more than what we thought we had. I guess it worked out pretty good. We worked there in the shipyards building those ships and sending them out and getting them sunk, you know, which was contributing to the depletion of their natural resources or their resources. Then, too, I guess we had some satisfaction in knowing that in order to keep us there, they had to keep a certain amount of people occupied. Of course, there in Nagasaki, we had some Korean guards who was a lot meaner than the Japanese were.

Marcello: Those Koreans were real "sweethearts" all over the place, were they not?

Evans: Yes. The Koreans were far more vicious than the Japanese. I suppose, since they were colonials of the Japanese, they wanted to show the Japanese that they could do only what they could do but that they could do it better, you see.

We weren't too happy with the Koreans. Korea was called Chosen by the Japanese. They wore a different-type uniform than the Japanese Army did, and they had a different-type arm band than the Japanese.

Marcello: What was the attitude of the Japanese toward these Koreans?

Evans: Well, they treated them like subordinates. I'm not talking about like subordinates, but they were about as rough on those Koreans as they were on us. They slapped them around.

In fact, it wasn't unusual to see a Japanese Army officer or a Japanese soldier slapping a civilian around. They caught some of those people when we were working there in Nagasaki and mowing those hills down and reclaiming that land. They caught them trading with some of us there, and they tied him up on a post the same as they did some of the prisoners.

In fact, we had two guys try to escape there in Java, and they were put in a cage, like a chicken cage, you know, and they were tied up. They'd go out there once in awhile and put cigarettes out on them and all that sort of thing. It wasn't unusual to see that at all. If you've ever seen a guy put a cigarette out in a man's ear or on his forehead or on his chin or on his cheek or even on his eye, it's pretty demoralizing. Then I've seen them take them and hook them together just like a couple of horses, and with reins they'd "whup" them--"whup" them over the ears with

a stick or a club or whatever--and make them go from one place to another. They'd put them out in this cage in the hot summer--hot sun, you know. They'd be in that cage in the hot sun and tied up with their hands tied behind their back and kneeling on the ground with a bamboo pole under the backside of their knees, which virtually cripples them. Then while they was in that position, they'd put cigarettes out on them and walk by and kick them. They were not allowed to go to the bathroom to relieve themselves. I think maybe they gave them a little water once in awhile and maybe gave them a little food--enough to keep them alive. They were using them to show us an example.

Of course, we were told that if we tried to escape, why, we'd be killed. In fact, one of my lieutenants was up to be shot the day after the war was over--Lieutenant David Hiner. He lives over in Abilene now. It was my understanding that he was up to be shot the day after the war was over with. But we absolutely had no possible way of escaping because the facts are that a man would show up like a lump of coal in a bale of cotton or vice versa.

Marcello; Awhile ago we were talking about the word of surrender. We're into the next day. You mentioned that you wanted to go home. From this time on, is it safe to say that you guys were very, very impatient, that is, were you thinking, "When the hell are they going to come and get us out of here?"

Evans: I don't know whether you want to go into this or not, but the next day the Americans started dropping food to us by parachute.

Marcello: Yes, I do want to talk about that.

Evans: Okay. Anyway, our highest-ranking officer was a first sergeant. They started dropping food to us, and these airplanes would come over--these B-29's. We're talking about B-29's, and they would drop...they had various kinds of foods and medicines and whatever in drums. What they had done, they had taken these two fifty-five gallon drums, and they'd cut one end out, and they'd welded them together, and they dropped them out in parachutes. The first run that they made on the camp, they run over the camp and dropped the damn things on the camp. Well, what happened was, those drums on those parachutes was tied on there with... they had rings welded on them, and they were so heavy that they would strip loose, and they were actually bombing our camp with those things. So what we did...they had a big slag heap between the camp and the mine, and what we would do...we went out...well, on the first run that they made of the camp, our camp commandant's samurai sword got broken with a fifty-five gallon drum of food and medicine or whatever it was. There was a Japanese house that got hit with a fifty-five gallon drum of Melba...and it had Melba peaches in it. A woman got killed. This case of

Melba peaches hit here and killed her. We went down there, and we found her. There she was, all her insides and brains and guts or whatever all mixed in with those Melba peaches. I couldn't eat a Melba peach for years after that, you know, after seeing that.

Marcello: I'm going to turn over the tape now.

Evans: Okay.

Marcello: Okay, continue talking about the food drop.

Evans: Well once we got the food...once we got the drop...they dropped every day. Sometimes they'd drop two or three a day. They'd fly over and drop that food, and in these bundles they had all different kinds of...they had vitamins and different kinds of medicines. In that they had these leaflets that said, "Do not overeat or over-medicate." Well, there was one guy there, and, hell, he found a whole big bottle of damn vitamins pills, and he just ate them like they were damn peanuts, you know. We had different types of food.

Marcello: What were some of the kinds of food that were dropped?

Evans: Well, they had Melba peaches, and, gosh, I can't remember what all there was, but I'm sure there was other kinds of food.

Marcello: There must have been chocolate in there somewhere, I'll bet.

Evans: Yes, and there was...I can't remember.

Marcello: How about the usual Army C rations?

Evans: Yes, that's what it was, as I remember it. That's the first time we'd ever seen any C and K rations.

See, they had different colors--the parachutes. They had red parachutes, white parachutes, and blue parachutes. We had a fellow by the name of Marvin Snelling--he's dead now--and he was a tailor. So we decided that we would build us a flag. So we sat up all night one night, and we made a flag--an American flag. That flag, I guess, was about...it couldn't be over three feet by two-and-a-half feet, and, of course, it had the forty-eight stars on it and thirteen stripes. I don't remember now whether the stripes...whether it had the right amount of red ones and the right amount of white ones. Anyway, we made a flag. So the next morning, why, we was out there bright and early, and we hoisted it.

Of course, now in the meantime--you've got to bear in mind--the Japanese was raiding our drop zone. So I guess to keep the Japanese out of there, why, we formed an MP detachment. We had ten Australians, ten Dutchmen, ten Englishmen, ten Americans. Anyway, we had forty or fifty men, and we formed a unit. I formed a MP detachment, and I appointed myself as the commander of this thing. Of course, me and the first sergeant got in a big hassle about it, and I just virtually told him that we were running this

thing, and he could do just what he wanted to do, and we was going to run it the way we wanted to. So we sent down to the camp...did anybody tell you about what happened in the camp?

Marcello: I don't think so.

Evans: Well, anyway, we sent down to the mine, and we told that mine guy that we wanted all those hanchos up there the next morning. We wanted them. We were going to have a kangaroo court. We was going to gather the information from them. So the next morning, there all these people were. We had all these Japanese. We had that old three-ringer there and had that guy that was so mean to us. We had a book, and we got all their names. We had a guy there that recorded it, and we listed all of the damn mean things that those people had done.

It had been raining, and so as a result, we decided that our gardens needed the night soil put on the gardens. So we gave all them guys a honey bucket and made them go dip that all out of the latrine and go fix our garden. We turned them loose after that.

Then the next day, or I guess the next few days, nobody didn't show up, so we decided we'd go downtown. We went down there, and I disarmed a whole trainload of soldiers-- made them pile all their rifles up in a pile and all their bayonets up in one pile, swords up in another pile, pistols

in a pile.

In the meantime, they had a cavalry stable there, and I got a horse, and I'd ride that horse and carry that saber around and ride up and down. I was pretty well the cock-of-the-walk there, you know. And we'd go down to this train station, and I disarmed a whole troop train. I'm talking about, I guess, fifteen or twenty cars of soldiers.

Marcello: What did you do after you disarmed them?

Evans: Well, I put them back on the train and sent them whichever way they were going. But we had big piles of damn rifles and bayonets and swords and whatever they had--you know, we disarmed them--ammunition. Of course, all of our people got armed. It's a wonder we hadn't got hurt, killed, or something.

Marcello: Evidently, once the Japanese got the word that the war was over, that was it for them. They were through.

Evans: Yes, the starch went out of their shirttails pretty fast. It sure did.

Marcello: As usual, they were in effect obeying orders that they had received.

Evans: From the emperor, yes. Oh, yes. Then it come our turn, you know. I've often wondered how to talk to one of those guys since they had treated us in such a way. I just wondered how they felt. I just wonder how they could justify their surrender, you know, and then still feel the

same way they felt toward us. I've just often wondered about it. The sad part about it is that I should have learned Japanese so that I could have spoke to those people.

We heard about this atomic explosion. We decided, or I decided, that we'd go down and look this thing over. So we got there. Of course, now you...oh, yes! I'll tell you, the greatest feeling I ever had was when we go to...of course, we had clothes.

Marcello: The clothes came in the air drop.

Evans: That's right, in the air drop. We got brand-new clothes, and we got DDT insecticide. We killed those damn bedbugs and those lice and those fleas. I guess that in the three-and-a-half years that I was prisoner--about that time or right along about that time--that I ever slept without being bit by some sort of a varmint or some sort of vermin, and we kind of got even with those that was there, you know.

In the meantime, I went down and got a truckload of beer. I'm talking about one of those big Japanese trucks--full of beer. I'm talking about big cases of beer. They had those big bottles. We went down to this Japanese warehouse--I guess it was like a quartermaster depot--and they had this beer in there. I loaded this beer on this truck, I'm talking about a truckload as high as you could stack it--with beer. They had a power plant there, an ice plant, and we got 900 pounds of...another truckload of ice,

and we took this beer and went down to the middle of the compound of this camp. We iced down these big hogsheads of beer. We just iced it all down. We got all 5,000 men drunk, I guess, including a Catholic priest that was there. Everybody got drunk, and a guy by the name of...and what we had done, we had quit using our mess hall, and in between these buildings, we'd take these parachutes and tie them between where it'd be shady, and we had a poker game going in one place and a dice game going in another.

Well, all these people got drunk, and instead of them disposing the bottles just anywhere in the world, they'd throw them out the window. This parachute was full of beer bottles--broken beer bottles--and it sagged. A guy named Horace Hanks decided he wanted...I don't know whether he was at the poker game or at the dice game or vice versa. Instead of him going downstairs...you had to go downstairs in order to go to the other place. Instead of him going downstairs...there was a little ledge--a little roof--that couldn't have been over about two feet--a sloping shingle roof. It had been raining, and ol' Hanks decided he was going to step across there--just go from one window to the other window. When he did he slipped and fell off in that parachute full of beer bottles. He hit the ground and everybody said, "Well, old Hanks is dead. Don't worry about him." They said, "Them damn beer bottles cut his

throat. We know he's dead." So pretty soon ol' Hanks come out of that damn thing, and it hadn't cut him anywhere. Of course, nine times out of ten, it would have caused him some real serious damage. But it didn't.

Well, then, I'd say, within the next few days, we decided that...now we're talking about from the fifteenth of August, when the war was over, to the second of September, when we were officially liberated. So me and this Navy guy from the Pope got on a train. We'd just get on the train, and they wouldn't even ask us for money. When they wanted to know if we had orders to get this beer, we told them MacArthur sent us, you know. You could say MacArthur, and you could get anything you wanted. It didn't make any difference what it was. They knew who MacArthur was. We'd just tell them "MacArthur" on the train. And we had our K rations or C rations or ...I guess that's what it was.

Me and this guy...a French priest on the train, and he had been in Japan for forty-five years. He was an old, old, man, and he was from France. I spent one night at this monastery, and these Japanese nuns or whoever it was took some of this stuff and fixed us something to eat.

Then the next day, we went down to Nagasaki, and on the train we saw all that devastation down there in Nagasaki.

Marcello: Can you describe that in any more detail?

Evans: Well, that's probably the most frightening thing that I can

recall. Of course, we knew some of the general landmarks of Nagasaki and knew of some of the things that was in existence at the time that we left. And then to go back and see nothing--absolutely nothing! Nothing--literally nothing--was left! Absolutely nothing except one big ol' building. Even where the...they had these steel window sashes, and it had absolutely blown out that glass right even with that sash, and in some cases it had even melted the sashes. They had a big coal gas plant there where they made coal gas--gasoline from coal--and they had these big twenty-four inch I-beams that would hold up some of the superstructure of this thing, and it just melted it down just like a candle and just draped it over--just literally melted it--and there was nothing there. Those twenty-four inch I-beams wouldn't be over...they would taper down like a candle--just like you'd melted it--like a candle you'd melt--and it just draped over. Streetcar and railroad tracks were just twisted out of the ground. The heat had just twisted them out of the ground. I remember seeing a streetcar that was turned over on its side, and it was just literally burned and melted down like it was made out of wax.

Of course, I didn't realize it, and, of course, nobody realized it, that we was in there during that radioactivity time. We didn't know actually what it was. We just thought

it was a big explosion. I mean, not even one building--not one structure--was left except that one structure.

This other guy took me over there and showed me the shadow of a person on the side of a building who had been walking along--just the shadow. Of course, they'd already cleaned up all those people during this time. We were not molested in any way. We were not spoken to; we were not accosted by anybody. They had crews there working--had people working cleaning out the streets--and they had been working on that, I guess, since the ninth, and this was about the twentieth, I guess...the twentieth or twenty-first --along in there. They were cleaning up the debris and was getting out some of it.

Of course, at the time I welcomed it, but at the same time I couldn't imagine--I could not imagine--something that could be that devastating. Then we found out it was an atomic bomb, and it was one bomb that did it and one airplane that did it. We couldn't hardly believe that that could have happened. Looking back at it now...and, you see, they use one of those things as a fuse to start one of these nuclear weapons now. They use that as a detonator. It's kind of like the man that says, "I know how to take onions off your breath. You eat garlic." In other words, it just gets worse and bigger. It seems to me that it was such a terrible, such a tragic, thing for a man to ever see something

like that. You can try to tell somebody what it looks like, and yet it's stamped in your mind knowing that there's worse things than that--ten times or fifty times worse or a hundred times or a thousand times. God knows what's going to happen to us.

You see, all the infrastructure--all the support systems --in and around Nagasaki broke down. There was no place to put their sick or the people that was hurt. They did draw on the surrounding communities. But what would we draw on here if there was something that was dropped that was, say, a hundred times worse than that? No place! Even now they don't have but fifteen burn beds--fifteen or twenty, not over twenty-five--at the finest hospital in the country right here. Parkland's only got fifteen or twenty burn beds, and just think of how many burned people that would need medical attention. They couldn't live if we were to be attacked by atomic or nuclear weapons. It's so inane, you know. It's such an insane...really, if it wasn't so serious, it would be...it's ridiculous, you know, when you get to thinking about it, that we would continue to build 40,000 of those damn things--40,000--when twenty-five of them would blow the United States all to hell. There'd be nothing left of us.

Marcello: Describe your first encounter with American personnel.

Evans: Oh, well, the first guy I run across was a sergeant. On

the way back, we stayed in a Japanese hotel--me and this guy did. It was a traditional Japanese hotel, and I believe it was on the way from somewhere close to Fukuoka. Of course, Fukuoka had been burned down in May or June of that year. We stayed in this Japanese hotel, and they brought us some food, as I remember, and they gave us a place to sleep. In the middle of the night, you could hear the pitter-patter of little feet, and then it sounded like something like rain. What they were doing, they were taking salt and sprinkling it on us to ward off our evil spirits. Well, I don't know whether it was to protect us, too, or protect them. I thought it was rather unusual.

Marcello: When you were down there in Nagasaki, you just kind of looked around, and obviously there was nothing there, so you started coming back.

Evans: We started back, yes. We spent that night there at the hotel. The next morning, we got on a train. We met an American sergeant and a Japanese corporal in an American uniform, and he was a Nisei. The Japanese man was an interpreter. We went back to camp, and we stayed there, it seems to me like, two or three more days.

Marcello: Incidentally, had you been given any kinds of orders or instructions on what to do until the liberating teams did come in?

Evans: No, we didn't get anything. I was just a free agent. I

could do as I pleased, you know.

Marcello: I guess at this stage you had taken orders for so long that you weren't really in the mood to take orders from anybody else.

Evans: That's right. We gave a few orders then, you know, to the Japanese around there. We weren't mean to them. We didn't do anything that was detrimental to their health. The only thing that we did to those people--those hanchos-- was that we wanted them to feel a little humility in having them dip out all that night soil out of the back of that latrine, which in itself is degrading.

Marcello: That'll make anybody humble, I'm sure.

Evans: Yes, particularly when you have to take one of those long buckets and carry it up that slippery hill, and then it drips off on you, you know. I don't know whether you've ever seen that operation or not, but in the Orient they build those latrines, and they have a place at the back where you can open them up. This human excrement is in there, and, of course, it's got maggots and all that other stuff in there, and urine and whatever. They put that in buckets, and they take it out and put it on the food. That's the reason that the food is prepared the way it is in the Orient. The way the Chinese cook food, they cook it enough to kill whatever bacteria might be in the vegetables, and at the same time they make them as raw as they can make

them because it's more nutritious for them. Otherwise, how could a billion people live if they didn't recycle everything? I'm talking about not only China. I'm talking about India, Japan, Korea, and I'm not sure about...well, in Russia I guess they have a little different culture than the Chinese. But all of China and Korea and Japan have to recycle their sewage in order to live. Otherwise, they couldn't make it.

Marcello: What did you talk about when you encountered that Nisei interpreter?

Evans: Oh, hell, we found out a lot about things in the United States. We talked about the war and when we was going to get to go home and news from the States. Then, of course, we found out that there was women in the Army. We didn't even realize that they had women in the Army back in those days.

Marcello: So describe your getting out of Fukuoka No. 9.

Evans: Well, we were put on a train and took back to Nagasaki, and they had a group of people there on the dock. All of our clothes were taken off, we were given a bath, we were deloused again, I suppose, and we were taken on board a small flattop--one of those little aircraft carriers. We were taken out there, and that was the day that they were signing the surrender terms in Tokyo Harbor, I guess. That was September 2, 1945.

We got on board this ship, and we were taken to Okinawa. I can't remember the name of that ship, but it was a small aircraft carrier. As I remember, I don't even believe we went below. I believe we were...I don't remember now. At least I didn't. We were taken to a harbor--Buckner Bay--and they had another ship there.

Oh, but let me tell you about the storm that we had there in Orio. During this time there was some Chinese who had been liberated. They were liberated and on their way someplace. I don't know where they were, but they wanted to stay the night, so we gave them our mess hall. Those guys had been prisoners since 1933. They'd been prisoners for twelve years. That night that typhoon came and had such a devastating effect on the Americans there that they said it would set the war back a year. Why, it blew that mess hall down around all those Chinese, and I believe maybe one or two of them got hurt. I forget now what kind of medical facilities we had there, but, anyway, somebody treated them.

Anyway, there at Buckner Bay, we were transferred to another ship called the USS Haskell, which was a liberty ship. One or two of the guys--I know a guy by the name of Ben Keith--got off the boat and got on a motor launch and went over to Okinawa, and he was flown home. He got home, oh, I guess, a month before I did.

Marcello: Where did you get your first good square meal?

Evans: Well, on those ships we got some...I don't remember now what we got. Whatever it was we ate it, and we enjoyed it.

Marcello: Was there any particular food that you had been craving while you were a prisoner-of-war?

Evans: Well, not really--just every damn thing. You know, you just wanted everything. I don't recall now any particular food that we wanted. I know I missed eggs and milk. We got some milk on board that ship--the first milk that I'd had in about three years or whatever.

Marcello: Did you guys more or less have free run at the chow hall while you were on those ships?

Evans: Well, I don't recall. I don't remember exactly. Now you've got to bear in mind that we had Dutch and English and Australians on board this ship. It was a mixed bunch. I believe that they stayed with us until we got to the Philippines, I believe. They were split off and went to wherever they were supposed to go in the Philippines.

We got on board this Army transport or this smaller ship. We didn't get off at Okinawa except just to transfer from one ship to another. I don't remember how that was accomplished. I guess it must have been done by launch. When we got on that ship, we were issued some more clothes, and our other clothes was thrown away, and we were fumigated again. Then on the way to the Philippines, why, they

showed some movies--the first movies we'd seen since the war. I don't remember now what they were, but whatever it was...maybe "Charlie Chan Finds New York" or whatever. Hell, I don't remember now. It was so long ago.

Then when we got to Manila, we were taken to the 29th Replacement Center, which was about ten or twelve miles out of Manila there--a big tent camp. On the way from Manila out there, you'd see rows and rows and rows and rows--I'm talking about mountains--of material such as ammunition, rifles, tanks, guns of all kinds, foodstuffs--just literally mountains and mountains of materials. You just couldn't believe...I'm talking about just...it wouldn't be twenty feet between them, and there'd be another row of K rations and all sorts of things. I guess they were various foodstuffs and materials and munitions of all kinds. They were on the side of the road--just on both sides of the road just as far as an eye can see. We just couldn't believe that there was that much stuff in the world, you know.

We were taken out there, and we were examined by doctors. We weren't actually examined by doctors, but we had sick call, and anybody that was sick could go to sick call. They kept food in this kitchen. We were given, I guess, four cans of beer a day, and we had hot food twenty-four hours a day. They had these kitchens there, and we could go get food anytime we wanted. We had hotcakes in the morning and

the first eggs I'd had. Of course, they were powdered eggs. Everybody'd gripe about them, but they were good to us. They tasted good to us. We stayed in Manila, I guess, the biggest part of a month.

Then we got on the USAT Shark, and it took us about six weeks to cross the Pacific, and everything in the world happened to that ship. We had breakdowns of all kinds. Of course, we were back to the chess and the poker. We were paid...I was paid \$500, I believe, there in the Philippines. I believe that's where it was. Of course, it didn't take very long to get rid of that. When I came on board, you couldn't get whiskey. When I came on board, I had seven quarts of Filipino moonshine. I guess it was moonshine. We had a doctor there named Reineman from Jacksonville, Florida. He practiced in Jacksonville, Florida, and he was captured in the Philippines. He was one of our doctors. He and I pretty well stayed drunk all the way back to the United States. He was an officer, and he was in the stateroom. Of course, he could get me a free pass up there. We drank all this whiskey on the way back.

Then when we were disembarked in San Francisco, we were taken to Letterman Hospital there in San Francisco. If you're coming from the west on the Golden Gate Bridge, it's right to the left, right down at the base of that

bridge. When I'd get up in the morning, I'd look out there. Of course, we were given the usual medical examination there in the hospital.

Then one morning, why, we were put on a hospital train and taken to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. Two of the guys kept waiting on this train and waiting on this train, and here they come down the track. They had two bottles of whiskey--all of them just as drunk as they could be and coming down the track. They got them on board, and those orderlies was very nice to them and said, "We've got a shirt here we want you to try on. We've got a shirt that'll just fit you." So they eased those damn strait jackets on them and put them up on their bunks and handcuffed their damn feet to the deal, and we took off for Texas on that train. Those hospital trains were built in such a way that they had bunks. I forget how many days it was--several days--on the way back to San Antonio.

Then, of course, when we got to San Antonio, there were more tests and more medical tests, medical examinations, and all that sort of thing. Various and sundry questions were asked about our treatment.

Of course, when we got back, I was given a leave immediately, and I rode back from San Antonio to Abilene with the guy that married me and my wife--a Baptist preacher. I wanted to take back some whiskey, and I couldn't imagine

how I was going to get this whiskey back to Abilene with that preacher in the car. So I told him I was going to go buy me a pair of shoes. I went down...and at that time, you could only get real expensive whiskey, or you could get some real cheap whiskey. In other words, there wasn't any in between. So I bought two bottles of Scotch, and I remember now that they were Ballentine Scotch--the three ring kind. I went by this shoe store and talked this guy out of a couple of shoe boxes, and I put that whiskey in them shoe boxes. Of course, a fifth of whiskey don't look like a pair of shoes. Anyway, I guarded those shoes all the way back. Years later, after this preacher had married me and my wife, he said, "By the way, was those shoes pretty good to drink?" (chuckle)

When I first got back home, why, there was an old friend of mine out there--he's dead and gone now--who chewed tobacco all the time, and he was plowing up his garden. He had a mule hooked to a breaking plow--one of these walking breaking plows. I stoppped. He'd plowed, I guess, maybe twenty or thirty steps out into the middle of this little field, and I asked him if he wanted a drink of whiskey. Yes, he said he wanted a drink. He tied them lines up, and he came up. He had a big chew of tobacco in his mouth, took a drink out of that bottle, and he didn't even take the chewing tobacco out of his mouth. He turned that up and

took a big drink out of it and studied it a little bit and turned it up and took another drink. He said, "Hot damn, boy, that tastes like it's got iodine in it!" (chuckle). He said it tasted like it had iodine in it (chuckle). He'd probably never drank any Scotch. Scotch does taste like it has got a little iodine in it.

Marcello: Yes.

Evans: I never will forget that. But the usual things go on after you get back home.

Marcello: Did you have much trouble adjusting to civilian life once again?

Evans: Oh, yes, of course. Everything is so exhilarating to you. I got back on November 9, 1945, and I got back about ten or eleven o'clock at night. There was a real heavy frost on the ground, and I remember the moon was shining just as bright as it could be--nearly like daylight. My mother came out on the front porch, and dad woke up and built a fire, and we talked a while.

The next day or maybe the day after that...I guess it was the next day...where we was raised there in Abilene, there's a certain place in town all these people used to... Farmer's Corner, they called it, All the farmers stayed there in a certain place. I got to town about eight or nine o'clock in the morning. In the middle of the block, there's a cafe that was run by a distant cousin of mine.

I started out at nine o'clock in the morning trying to go from one-half a block, and it took me until noon to get a half a block. I couldn't...people were slapping you on the back, shaking your hand. My damn hands got so sore. You know, with the politicians going around shaking hands, I just can't believe how in the hell they do it, you know. Johnson, you know, handled it pretty easy. You know, he didn't let you have much of his hand. But my hand swelled up from shaking hands with people. My back felt sore from people patting you on the back. They asked you all kinds of questions. You couldn't answer them fast enough. Then after that was over with, I like to never have got lunch. I couldn't hardly eat my lunch. Then it took me the rest of the day to get away from the damn place--just a press of people. Of course, everybody knew you, and everybody wishing you well, and everybody wanting you back. They were proud I got back and all that sort of thing.

But the notoriety of coming back...of course, they had parties of all kinds. They had a reunion where people got together and all the legions--the American Legion and the VFW--all got together and had a big party there in a big hotel with all the big dignitaries present. Hell, I'd never ate in a banquet in my damn life. But, anyway, you struggled through that, I guess.

I went to work while I was still on leave. I stayed

on leave until...see, from November 9 until June 6, I stayed on leave all the time. I was called back to San Antonio one time for some more medical evaluation, and the day I was discharged, this doctor said, "Sign these papers here. We're going to evaluate you here for compensation." So I signed the papers, and then when I got back, I got my discharge, and this General Wainwright--Jonathon Wainwright--who was there when we got our discharge, wanted us all to reenlist and stay in the Army. I told him, "I done had all of this damn Army I want." In fact, that's about the "enoughest" enough I've ever had, you know. A man comes back from the war with just all the holes that the good Lord intended him to have was pretty damn lucky. I know some of them come back with more holes in them than the Lord had an idea for him to have, and I didn't want to go back to another war.

Marcello: So you did get to work, then, very shortly after returning to Abilene.

Evans: Yes, I went to work for a livestock auction company that I'd worked for before. When I was a kid, I'd worked there. I went to work there for them right after I got back. I went to work just about a week or two after I got back home and got some of my running around done with and seeing some of the people I wanted to see. I worked, I guess, two or three days a week there. I worked for them for a while,

and then...I forget now.

In August of 1946, I went to Indiana. I went to auctioneer school in Indiana, and I sold cattle and horses and mules and cars and furniture--all those sort of things --off and on for a number of years until I went to work for the Air Force.

I was in the oil business...I went to work in the oil fields for a while, and then I got in the oil business and ran roustabout crews. About 1960, I guess, the oil business got so bad that everybody went bust in the oil business, so I went to work for the Air Force.

Then from there I got to be president of the local union, and then I got this job that I just retired from. That was back in 1967.

Marcello: And what was the job you just retired from--for the record?

Evans: I was what they call a national representative for the American Federation of Government Employees--that's the AFL-CIO--which organizes and services locals in the federal service--Army, Air Force, Navy, Veterans Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and all the federal services. I worked for them up until March of 1983. So I've been retired since that time.

Marcello: After you were liberated, were you ever given--and I'm using "you" in a collective sense--any kind of psychological examinations, psychiatric tests, or anything of that nature?

- Evans: No. Maybe I should say that everytime we would go in for an examination, we would see a "shrink." We were asked a few questions by these psychiatrists. As far as I know, we were never given any psychological tests to determine what degree of insanity we may have brought back with us (chuckle). Like a man says, "The only sane person in the world is the man that's never seen a psychiatrist." He said, "Once you see one of them, you're something. You're classified as some sort of a nut."
- Marcello: So evidently, the whole idea was to make sure that you were okay physically and then get you home as quickly as possible.
- Evans: Yes. They were very liberal with their leaves. In other words, after three-and-a-half years, they let me stay out until June 6, 1946, and I went back and got my discharge. I went to Decatur, Indiana, and I was gone about a month, I guess. I came back, and there was a check for, I think, around three hundred and something dollars there waiting on me that said I'd been rated...I forget now. It seems to me like 30 percent or 40 percent...no, I was rated 100 percent disability for the first year. I was given 100 percent total permanent disability compensation, which amounted to...I don't remember now...about fifty or sixty dollars a month. Then I drew that for about a year, and then I was cut back to about 30 percent, I believe it was...

30 or 40 percent. I think I appealed it and got it up to 50 percent, and I drew 50 percent until 1972, I guess it was. Then I found out I had this emphysema, and they raised that to 60 percent total and permanent disability. That combined with the other made it to where I drew 80 percent. Now I'm 100 percent total and permanent. I'm 100 percent total and permanent, Schedule C, which means that I'm house bound. I draw a certain amount of money for being house bound, which I have limited mobility.

Marcello: At any time after your return, were you ever asked to provide evidence in the war crimes trials or anything of that nature?

Evans: No. I was given a questionnaire at the end of the war, I believe it was inquiring if I knew of any atrocities. I filled it out. I guess they thought those was so insignificant that they didn't need me. No, I was never asked that.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Evans, I think that's a pretty good place to end this interview.

Evans: Okay.

Marcello: I hope I've picked your brain pretty well here for your experiences as a prisoner-of-war after three sessions. I want to thank you very much for having participated in our project, and I'm sure that the students and researchers are going to find your comments most valuable when they

read them.

Evans: Well, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity, and certainly I hope that in some way I've imparted to some people the tragedy of war. War is such a tragic thing. Maybe in some way I've imparted to people that they should strive to avoid wars at all costs even to the point of being humble and subjected to humility. I believe that war should be the very last thing people ever should resort to because you can talk your way a lot further than you can fight your way.