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Interview with  
J. B. Heinen, Jr.  
October 29, 1973

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

Mr. J. B. Heinen

Interviewer: Dr. Ron Marcello

Place of interview: Dallas, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. J. B. Heinen for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 29, 1973, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Heinen in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Heinen was an officer who served with the "Lost Battalion," a Texas National Guard unit that was captured on the island of Java in March of 1942, and he subsequently spent the rest of the war in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

Mr. Heinen, 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, your education, things of that nature. Just be very general and brief.

Mr. Heinen: Well, I was born here in Dallas on April 22, 1913. I grew up in Dallas; I went to school in Dallas. I went to the public schools through high school. Then I went to the A & M University, where I graduated in 1934.

Then at that time, the country was in the middle of the depression, and one of the things that was an opportunity for young men just getting out of college was the CCC. Being a reserved officer from my commission out of A & M, of course, I applied for and went into the CCC field or duty and spent a couple of years with them.

Then they passed what was known as the Thompson Act, in which I think a thousand reserve officers throughout the United States were selected and called into active duty for a year's training with the regular Army. Out of that thousand officers, fifty of them were to be granted permanent commissions with the service at the end of the year's training on a selective test program. So I applied for that duty and received it and spent a year with the Army and was offered a commission under that program, not necessarily from the standpoint of the tests.

But I happened to be a pretty good golfer. I was at Fort Sam Houston, and I won the Fort Sam Houston tournament. The general was a golfer, and he wanted to enlarge the golf course. So after our schooling, which lasted about seven or eight months. . . I mean we had intensive. . . just like going to school. I mean, we had intensive classes in the different subjects

every day plus doing field duty with the unit itself directly, whatever maneuvers they were on or whatever training program they were on. We were also engaged in that besides our classes. Our classes were usually in the afternoon, and the training program for the units we were assigned to was in the morning. They'd come in in the afternoon and do their clean-up chores or whatever other chores after their training period.

But I was offered a commission with the regular Army under that program, which I turned down. I came back into Dallas, and my family owned a business which was being hard pressed at the time financially. I realized that we were in a very serious situation as concerning the possibility of our country having to go back into conflict or war, so I joined the National Guard unit here in Dallas, which was part of the 133rd Field Artillery. In order to get into the organization-- I was at that time a first lieutenant--I had to resign my first lieutenancy and take a second lieutenancy in the National Guard. But I felt that my training and my education and my background was suitable for helping train an outfit, and I didn't want to waste it.

Shortly after we'd joined--I think it was the following summer--the unit was sent on an extensive maneuver down

in Louisiana. We went for about three months of maneuvers as a National Guard unit.

Marcello: Now at that time, you really weren't in any particular camp in Louisiana, were you? You were kind of moving all around on maneuvers.

Heinen: No, no, this was just an Army maneuver where you played war games for a week or so, and then you took two days off. Then you played war games again for another two days, three days, or a week. In other words, it was just like they have at Fort Hood or anyplace else right now. They go on what they call a three-day maneuver, and they simulate war conditions. You have a red side and a blue side, and they oppose each other. This was such a maneuver, but it was embracing the whole 4th Army. So you had every unit from any place that was in this what was then the 4th Army, I'm sure, down in Louisiana, and they were either on the red side or on the blue side.

Marcello: What sort of equipment did you have during these maneuvers? What I'm leading up to is I've heard all sorts of stories about how ill-equipped the Army was at this period of time for war.

Heinen: Our equipment was the same equipment that they left overseas with. We had full equipment in every detail.

We didn't have live ammunition, but the guns that we used in maneuvers are the ones that finally the 133rd took over to South Africa, or Africa, wherever they went, and finally into Italy. But after that maneuver. . . of course, it's been a long time, and I kind of forget all of the time, but it wasn't too long after we completed that maneuver that we, the National Guard, was mobilized, and the 36th Division was stationed at Brownwood, Texas. We stayed there for approximately a year, as long as I remember.

Marcello: Now at the time that you were at Brownwood, at Camp Bowie, was this when the Army divisions underwent a reorganization from the square divisions to the triangular divisions? In other words, what I'm trying to get into the record here is the process by which most of the 36th Division went over to Europe, whereas the unit known as the "Lost Battalion" eventually ended up in the Far East.

Heinen: Well, no, we weren't involved. I mean, I don't remember that. I mean, if the change was occurring, it was something that was normal and natural, and we weren't paying too much attention to it. The reason that the "Lost Battalion" got separated from the 36th Division was quite simple. MacArthur needed some more artillery

over in the Philippines. It involved some political maneuvering of which I never questioned or don't really care about. But he wanted some reinforcements, so a unit of 75 millimeter, which was French 75's, was asked for--one battalion--to join MacArthur's forces in the Philippines. Now this is before the war has actually commenced. Now the National Guard was under a strict legislation, though, that said that you couldn't move a National Guard unit out of the continental limits of the United States.

Marcello: That was a part of the Selective Service Act of 1940.

Heinen: That's right. That's right. In other words, we were not supposed to be moved out of the continental limits of the United States. Now in order to get around all of that, they asked for volunteers, and this particular battalion, the 2nd Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery, which was a 155 millimeter--was asked to do that volunteering. All of the personnel except officer personnel had to be single. But the 131st Battalion couldn't fill all of the officer spots with single officers. In other words, if you . . . I don't know how that broke down. I mean, they finally had married officers over there, but when they needed replacements, it was always with a single officer. There were two or three of us from other units who were sent to the 131st as replacements.

Marcello: In other words, this explains how you, as a Dallas resident, were able to get into that 131st Field Artillery.

Heinen: Yes, that's right. So, of course, that in itself offered a little complication. Again remembering--and this is in no way complaining or derogatory or anything else--but there was politics in all of these units and still is, I'm sure. Now the 133rd was mainly out of San Antonio and that area, and Dallas had this one battery up here, which was kind of a black sheep deal. In other words, San Antonio is approximately 260 miles away from here. See, all of the headquarters personnel, the colonels and commanding personnel, were from the San Antonio area, and we're up here stuck by ourself. Now in addition to that, I come in as highly trained, qualified, officer, so to speak. In other words, I've had training far in abundance, an exception to everybody else in the outfit. Not only that, I'm the senior first lieutenant in the outfit. My years of service have accumulated to where under a normal situation, I would have had a captain in the reserve by that time. I'm a first lieutenant in the 133rd. Now for the 133rd to jump their own personnel over me is quite difficult. In fact, it's nearly impossible. So when they needed



a volunteer, I fitted it. I was single, I was qualified, and I was also available, and when I'd move out, I'd remove a problem that is within themselves. In other words, they have their own personnel that they've lived and trained with. I'm relatively new into the National Guard. I haven't been with them anywhere near the years that these other people have been with them. Some of those boys or officers had been there for eight or ten years or more. I'm there a year and a half or two years or whatever it is by this time, and since I never contacted them--my training was all done in Dallas--they really didn't know me and I didn't know them. So they were able to accomplish a pretty slick deal. Of course, it was all right with me. I came there because I was qualified. Now I felt, and still feel, that if anyone as an officer personnel should have been in the prison camp, it should have been me because I was the highest qualified man to be there. My whole training, my CCC experiences, my Army experiences, and everything else, were beamed at the situation we found ourselves in. So if anybody had to be there, I belonged there.

Marcello: You were the logical one.

Heinen: Yes, as far as I'm concerned. In other words, I certainly had experiences in this line of activity that far exceeded anybody in the camp.

Marcello: Well, in essence then, why did you volunteer to go into the 131st, when you knew that it was probably going into a zone where there was a danger of being captured or killed?

Heinen: Well, I was on leave. Actually, I was out in Arizona headed for California with another friend of mine, an officer friend of the 133rd. We'd been given a thirty-day leave or something. Of course, you leave an itinerary of where you might be contacted on your leave. We had left that. They did find me in a hotel. . . or we'd stopped over at the hotel we were supposed to in Phoenix, Arizona, or Tucson. I've forgotten. Maybe it was Tucson, Arizona. Now my CCC duty had been in Arizona, and I had made friends in Tucson and Phoenix. Quite a number of the. . . in fact, all of the. . . all of the people who were members or who composed the CCC personnel were from that area. In other words, it was again a deal where the CCC took people locally and put them into these camps and gave them a job and training and equipment, and they did useful work. It was a very successful program. So I had friends there, so we were

stopping at Tucson to say hello and spend a day or two before we went on into California, where I didn't know anybody.

So I received this wire to report back immediately, which I did. When I got there, well, the colonel asked me if I'd take the assignment. Well, I'm a great believer in not pushing your fate. I didn't know anybody in the 131st. But here's a deal. As far as I'm concerned, I was keyed to accepting the orders. I never questioned what they did to you too much. So they said, "Well, would you go up there and join the outfit?" I said, "Well, yes, I'll go." I mean, it just didn't occur to me to buck it. Now there were several, my captain particularly, who came in and begged and pleaded with me not to take the assignment. He said, "Just don't go. You don't have to." Several other of the officer personnel in the 133rd asked me not to go. I said, "No, this has come up. This is the way it's headed, so I'll go." I never looked back. In other words, I went on up there, reported. Of course, our first job was to get that unit ready for overseas. It had to be fully equipped, all of the equipment replaced, all of the clothing, everything.

Marcello: Why did they select the 131st to take this assignment overseas?

Heinen: Of course, I don't know how the 131st was selected, but I imagine that the 131st had earned a sizeable record among the training program of the National Guard. In other words, you had regular officer personnel who were supervisory personnel over the National Guard, and they, I'm sure, rated units. For a French 75 unit, I guess the 131st Second Battalion had a high rating, so it was asked to fill the job.

Marcello: What sort of training did this unit undergo at Camp Bowie?

Heinen: Well, we underwent the same type of training that an Army unit would undergo. In other words, we were out on daily training programs, learning how to shoot, and learning how to protect yourself. You went on maneuvers once a month or something. You'd have an overnight or two-day maneuver that you'd go out and play war games again out in the actual field. You had actual firing of your equipment on ranges where you fired live ammunition. It gave the men a chance to learn their job. I mean, it's one thing to simulate all of this. It's another thing to take some live ammunition and stick it in that thing and hit something with it. The officer personnel needed a lot of training in firing the equipment. Again, it's like you can know it book-wise pretty darn

good. But you get out in the field and you've got to do it now, and you don't have the book there. You could have a book there if you wanted it, but then you don't have time to use it. But you got to start hitting what you're shooting at, too. So that was an intensive training for field duty, I mean for war purposes.

Marcello: In summary then, how would you rate this unit as a fighting unit at the time that it embarked for the Philippines?

Heinen: Well, of course, as far as I knew the Army and the National Guard units, I would have rated it equal to a regular Army unit, at least 80 per cent. I don't think that the officer personnel would rate as high from lack of training. In other words, a National Guard officer once a month or twice a month or something just couldn't compete with the constant, everyday training that the regular Army officer is getting in the same type of artillery outfit. In other words, they did this day in, day out. They had their own classes constantly, so that I feel as far as actual training is concerned that the National Guard didn't compare 100 per cent with a regular Army unit.

Marcello: What was discipline like in this unit at the time that the unit embarked for overseas? I'm thinking in terms

now of the unit made up of National Guardsmen, all of whom came from the same general area, people who were citizen-soldiers, I suppose we could call them.

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: What was discipline like in this unit?

Heinen: We had no discipline problems. We really didn't. You had an occasional outbreak of drunkenness. I don't remember any dope problem at all. I never saw one. I never saw a deal that involved dope at all. But I'd say discipline was good just right straight down the line. Actually, the National Guard was made up of people who came into the National Guard for primarily, I guess, the same reason I did myself. In other words, you just wanted to be part of it and possibly had a high sense of duty to your country or something. I don't know, but they were all volunteers.

Marcello: Also, I would assume that especially among the enlisted men, the joining of a National Guard unit was more or less a type of community or social activity, also.

Heinen: It could have been, yes. Yes, they had their own set-up from that standpoint. They really did.

Marcello: As you look back on that unit, what was the average age of the enlisted man?

Heinen: I'd say about eighteen years old (chuckle). They darn sure weren't very old. Even your noncom people were young kids. We'll get into that later when you get into the actual camp experiences of some of those kids. But they weren't old.

Marcello: Well, so you left from San Francisco aboard the USS Republic, and you were a part of "Operation PLUM"-- isn't that correct?

Heinen: As far as I remember, yes.

Marcello: Do you remember anything about "Operation PLUM" or what it was or what it involved?

Heinen: About all we knew is that we were going to try to go join MacArthur. Of course, there was nothing else to know, really. In other words, we knew we were on the way to the Philippines. We knew that from the day that we started in Bowie. There was never any secret about where we were going.

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

Heinen: Well, as I expressed previously, it was just another assignment. I had no particular thought about it at all. If you're going to the Philippines, you're going to the Philippines. This is the way I thought about it. I wasn't as acutely aware of the seriousness of

the situation. I don't think anybody in the National Guard outfit was. You just didn't think about war coming.

Marcello: Even if you were aware of the situation, I would assume that most eyes were turned toward Europe rather than the Far East.

Heinen: Well, I'm sure that that'd be true, too. The war in the Pacific really wasn't expected. We didn't expect it. Of course, there was a whole lot about it that we didn't know. The Navy damn sure expected it. They were gunned and ready long before all of this took place.

Marcello: This brings up an interesting point, I think. On your way to the Philippines, you did stop at Honolulu for a very, very brief period of time.

Heinen: Surely did.

Marcello: Now what preparations did you see taking place in Honolulu for the eventuality of a Japanese attack?

Heinen: We saw nothing because we hadn't an opportunity to see anything (chuckle). Let's see. We got into Pearl Harbor one afternoon, about noon, I'd say, if I remember correctly. We were told we could go ashore for the afternoon, and I think we actually got ashore in part. I don't know whether everybody got ashore



or not, but we actually were starting out on the town. About the time we got started out on the town, the MP personnel in Honolulu rounded everybody up and herded them back onto the Republic, and the Republic moved out of the harbor then, not ten minutes later. It moved out at the time the last man got up the gang deck, it moved. That was what we saw of Honolulu. That was it.

Marcello: Well, when you left Honolulu, you were a part of a convoy, isn't that correct?

Heinen: Oh, we were part of a convoy, meaning that the Republic was being escorted by a cruiser, if I remember correctly. That was the convoy.

Marcello: When did you pick up the Dutch ship, the Bloemfontein? Wasn't that a part of the convoy somewhere along the way?

Heinen: Oh, no. We bought the Dutch ship, the Bloemfontein, after we got into Australia.

Marcello: Oh, you didn't have any contact at all with the Bloemfontein until you got to Australia?

Heinen: No, we bought that ship.

Marcello: Well, we'll talk about that a little bit later on because I know that was the ship that eventually got you into Surabaja, Java.

Heinen: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Well, you were out around the Fiji Islands or pretty close to the Fiji Islands, I guess it was, when the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor. What were your reactions when you heard the news? What were your own personal feelings?

Heinen: Well, my own personal feelings were that we were in one helluva position because we had a cruiser with us. But then we were the only troop carrier moving in that whole part of the world, so if the Japanese knew that they could hit Pearl Harbor, they damn sure knew that we were in the high seas someplace (chuckle). So everything that they had in that part of the world has to be looking for one thing, and that's us. No matter how you slice it, that's not too comfortable.

Marcello: Did you have any idea of the extent of the damage at Pearl Harbor?

Heinen: No, no, we heard nothing about Pearl Harbor except that it'd been attacked.

Marcello: What seemed to be the reaction of the enlisted men when they heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

Heinen: I don't think that there was any great upheaval. You just don't equivocate that situation. In other words, you're there and you're standing gun watches. You've

got your own job to do to try to protect the Republic, which you're not going to do. In other words, the guns that were on the Republic were equal to a . . . I guess they were about a 4 or 5-inch gun. I don't know what they were, but they weren't too damn big. They're surely not going to match a war ship of any description. Nobody's familiar with them. But anyway, you were standing around-the-clock gun watches. You had the ammunition. We had several antiaircraft pieces mounted someplace on the Republic which we were also manning, but nobody'd ever used one of them, meaning about a seventy-five or something, a 3-inch or something of that caliber, which I doubt that anybody could hit anything with. Had some machine guns on the turrets. They were .50 caliber. Again, we had no experience with a .50 caliber, none. So you just sit there and hope like hell you get to where you're going. That's all you can do (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you think that the war would be a relatively short one?

Heinen: I didn't think anything about it. I just didn't think in those lines. I never did think about it.

Marcello: At that particular time, what was your conception of the typical Japanese?

Heinen: Well, my conception of the Japanese wasn't that far apart from other people. In other words, your first impression would be to down-rate a Japanese or a Chinese or anybody else other than. . . knowing that they have not had the same background as the average American, neither in food nor education or anything. In other words, their culture, their whole thing, is foreign to you. You don't know about it. But then your idea of a Japanese or any Asian was one that he wasn't too smart. But you can sure be wrong about that.

Marcello: Did you think of the typical Japanese as a person who had buck teeth and was constantly smiling and had the thick, horn-rimmed glasses? In other words, did you have the usual cartoon character impression?

Heinen: No, I didn't go that far. I just didn't think that they would be as smart as the average American and that we could take care of them. That would be my impression. I figured that we could outfight them and that we were better equipped, that we were in better physical shape than they would be. That's the way I felt about it.

But as far as thoughts about people, the Republic had in its storage just one whale--I never knew how many--whale of a lot of torpedo warheads. So at times when we were in groups and bulling around, we used to

kid about how high the Republic would lift out of the water if they got a torpedo into those warheads (chuckle). This made some of the people nervous. Some of them didn't like to joke about such matters. But the general feeling in my opinion was that nobody at the time concentrated on the real seriousness of your situation, and I don't think you would again. In other words, in the first place, there's a natural protection within a man that kind of keeps him from just dwelling on the drastic. Otherwise, everybody'd have ulcers and die at an early age. You wouldn't have to be hit by a Japanese shell or anybody else's shell. So there's a natural protection to situations. Of course, you're with people who are schooled and trained, and this is where training shows, too, incidentally. In other words, it just wasn't that much confusion. However, people did get nervous, especially when you'd bring up the fact about those warheads sitting in the bottom of that ship (chuckle). But to me, it was just a deal where you just had to hope. You don't have a fighting chance if you're approached by warships. You have nothing. You're just there, so you just hope and don't think about it too much.

Marcello: Well, so on December 21, 1941, you put into Brisbane, Australia. In the meantime, you'd been diverted from

your course toward the Philippines and were on your way towards Brisbane.

Heinen: Oh, yes. Well, we diverted, as far as I'm concerned, and as far as I know, we diverted when we left Honolulu. In other words, we took an entirely different route out of Honolulu than what I'm sure that they intended to take. I think that the captain was advised to divert at that time because we headed to Australia. If you're going to the Philippines from Honolulu, you don't go to Australia.

Marcello: Not by way of the Fiji Islands, anyway.

Heinen: No, no you sure don't (chuckle).

Marcello: I mentioned the Fijis because you did stop there very, very briefly to take on some sort of supplies, did you not?

Heinen: Yes, yes, we did. I'd forgotten what we. . . I guess it was water or food or. . . about the only thing we could take on would be some staples that we might need because we've altered our route. I remember stopping at the Fijis. But, again, you don't know. . . we never got off the ship.

Marcello: It was a very, very brief stop.

Heinen: Yes, and it's just another point in the trip.

Marcello: So what happened and what did you do when you got to Brisbane?

Heinen: Well, the first thing we did when we got to Brisbane is have one helluva time getting into Brisbane because the harbor wasn't deep enough for the Republic. I've forgotten what finally was accomplished about that. But anyway, we had problems. But we unloaded all of our equipment off of the Republic at Brisbane, and the Republic took out back to the United States.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you get there at the hands of the Australians?

Heinen: Oh, fine, but then Brisbane wasn't a great, big, thriving metropolis. Brisbane is not too big a community. But we were given some barracks to stay in. They promptly started a flow of food and other supplies necessary to maintain the unit. I know for the first time in the history of the lives of most of these people you started eating mutton for breakfast, dinner, and supper. Mutton is something that the average guy just hasn't eaten a whole lot of anyway between now and the time he got there (chuckle). So the diet was changed. But the people in Brisbane were just as nice to us as they could be. There surely was no complications for the fact that we came into their city.

Marcello: You were put up at the Ascot Racetrack, is that correct?

Heinen: I believe that's right, come to think of it.

Marcello: Do you recall what the quarters were like there?

Heinen: Well, they weren't too different from a standard wooden Army barrack, if I remember correctly. It was a barrack-type deal, if I'm recalling it correctly. I think it was adequate for our unit.

Marcello: I assume that you didn't undergo any particular type of training during this stay here at Brisbane.

Heinen: No, we didn't. We didn't. We didn't stay in Brisbane that long. No, we made no effort to train. I think the effort was to see what they were going to do with us and how we were going to. . . what was going to become of us would probably have been. . . however, I wasn't in on any of that, nor was I advised directly. About the only advice I got was just like any other. The officers, when it was time to do something, we were told to do it. But I do know it was during that period there while we were in Brisbane that somebody made a deal, and we actually purchased the Bloemfontein from the Dutch government. So it became our ship, but their personnel to run the ship. How that was accomplished, I don't know.

Marcello: Well, you spent Christmas of 1941 in Brisbane, did you not?

Heinen: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: What was that like?



Heinen: Well, oh, gosh, we're reaching back now. I remember the Christmas. I think I was invited out to somebody's house for a dinner at that time.

Marcello: This was a standard procedure, I gather, among these Australians.

Heinen: Yes, yes, we were all taken someplace for the day. Some of the citizens and residents of Brisbane entertained us, so to speak, over the Christmas holiday. Their whiskey is terrible.

Marcello: Okay, so you stayed in Brisbane until I guess it was around January 11, 1942--somewhere in early January--and then from there, of course, you boarded the Bloemfontein and headed for Java. Describe the trip from Brisbane to Java, and let's pick up the story at that point.

Heinen: Well, of course, you're on the ship, and you don't see just a whole lot. What we did, we circled up and put in at. . . there's a port up on the far end of Australia that. . .

Marcello: Port Darwin?'

Heinen: Port Darwin. There were other vessels in Port Darwin. There was another ship with another Army unit at Port Darwin. I had a friend that I had been in training with with that unit. I never knew where they went

nor how they got there, nor did I ever see him again or never have heard particularly what unit that was or where it went to. But Darwin was nothing but a port. There's just nothing at Darwin. We stayed at Darwin for maybe a day or so. Then we pulled out towards. . . we were told we were going to Java then. We used the maneuvers of a ship that's unescorted now-- we're on our own--in getting there. Again, this is something that I knew nothing about. The only thing I know is that one night we were at their supertime on the ship, and the ship made a very drastic ninety degree turn and picked up a zig-zag course. It shook everybody up on the ship a bit.

Marcello: Was this a submarine scare, perhaps?

Heinen: I was told that a submarine had been sighted, or they thought that a submarine had been sighted. Anyway, the maneuver was accomplished. But that was the only incident of any type that we encountered until we got into Surabaya.

Marcello: Well, what happened then when you got to Surabaya?

Heinen: Oh, we just unloaded. There was an airstrip, and an airfield at Surabaya. We went out to the airstrip.

Marcello: This was kind of on the outskirts of Surabaya, wasn't it?

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: I think the name of it was Malang?

Heinen: Malang, that's right. Oh, it must have been ten or twelve miles out or something like that. Malang was an airfield. It had barracks of the native-type barracks, where you just had a roof and a floor, and they were concrete. They had housing for their officer personnel which our officer personnel did use. But the barracks itself was kind of like a horse stall arrangement (chuckle). They had separations by separating boards rather than individual rooms. The remnants of the B-24. . . no, the 17's. I think the 19th out of Clark Field had occupied the airfield and were using it.

Marcello: This was the 19th Bomb Group, which had been caught at the Philippines, and this was what was left of them.

Heinen: Yes, that's right, left of them. The ones that were able to get out of there came into Malang, and we actually became their. . . they had no personnel of their own so we became their service unit, so to speak. We were supposed to set up a perimeter defense, which was not much. For the first time you learned that a French 75 with no ammunition was one helluva piece of equipment to have amongst a bunch of rice paddies. In fact, it's useless.

Marcello: In what way?

Heinen: Well, hell, how can you get any place? You're confined to the road. So if somebody's looking for you, they just come down the road, and that's it. You're not going to get out in the rice paddie with a fieldpiece.

Marcello: What in particular was your function in this unit?

Heinen: My function in the unit was. . . well, it was kind of a catch-all deal. Now we've got to go back a little bit. Now, of course, I come into a. . . and we're also going to have to go back into some time, too. I just have to back up here now. In the first place, when I joined the 131st, I'm a big city boy. I'm from Dallas. Most of the personnel are from Lubbock and Plainview and another town right out of Lubbock. It's a good-sized place now. Some of them were from Jacksboro and in that area. Now we're talking again about how many years ago?

Marcello: Thirty some-odd years ago.

Heinen: All right, now at that time, the average person out of Lubbock, which was a very small community thirty years ago, or any other places, Wichita Falls, which was bigger, but still not that big, were very clannish. So you can imagine my personal reception among the officers and the men of being sent to them as a highly

qualified, trained officer from the big city. I found it difficult to have any real close friends. This is something I'd never run into before. But it happened.

Now to further add a little bit of fuel to the fire, so to speak. . . again, I'm not mad at anybody, wasn't then and am not now. I'm just saying it as it was, so to speak. When the battalion was ordered to go overseas, it had to re-equip itself, and re-equipping itself is involved in a whole bunch of red tape. Now at the end of the Louisiana maneuvers, my particular battery--or the battery I was assigned to--was assigned as a special battery to come up to the State Fair of Texas as a show-off piece to the people of Texas. My job was to equip that battery from head to foot with everything brand new except the cannon.

So I had been through this re-equipping deal. I had learned that you didn't have to pay attention to all this red tape. If you went and talked to the right people at the right time and told them what your job was, you could shortcut a whole bunch of this. Now we were taking forever getting anything accomplished. So I went to the supply officer who was the captain and told him, "Well, at the rate we're moving, we'll still be here two years from now without the equipment."

Why don't we go do it this way?" I was promptly told to mind my own business. I said, "Well, I'm not going to mind my own business. I'm going to equip my battery." Well, it wasn't my battery. See, I'm not the captain. The captain doesn't even talk to me. Now he has placed his other first lieutenant in the superior position to me even though I'm the ranking lieutenant. So he has the position, but I have the authority under the captain. So the captain was kind of lost. I re-equipped our battery before the next two days came by, or three days. I had mine ready to go because I'd already been through this.

Well, of course, that opened the gate, and everybody else followed suit immediately, and we got the job done. But this didn't leave the best taste in the world on down the line, see (chuckle). So among the things that they knew about when we got into Malang was that I had been certified under my schooling program with the Army as a mess officer. So I got the job of being the mess officer or any other officer where it kept you away from everybody else, so to speak (chuckle). In other words, if there was a detail that needed to be done, I was always assigned that detail, which is all right with me. So I went in and supplied the food,

bought the food and things that were necessary, and I didn't stay too often with the unit while they were supposed to be protecting the airstrip at Malang.

Marcello: What sort of special problems were involved in procuring provisions for the unit?

Heinen: At that time we had none. It was no chore. You'd just go in and order it just like you would now. The island was free and easy at that time. They commenced bombing the airfield. We were having daily daytime attacks on the airfield. No one was aware of three convoys of 100,000 Japanese each approaching Java. There was no way for them to know it.

Marcello: How did you go about paying for this food? What was the process that's used to pay for this food?

Heinen: I didn't have to pay for it. But we had a supply unit, a supply officer. He had money, and he had United States credit. He had the authority to spend the money. He actually had money with him. But better than that, he had the authority to use credit.

Marcello: But within the unit there was a substantial amount of cold, hard cash to purchase necessities.

Heinen: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Of course, this came in handy later on, I gather.

Heinen: Yes, it had its use.

Marcello: Were you ever at the airfield when any of the air attacks did take place?

Heinen: I sure was. I set up the first machine gun position. One of the B-17's had been destroyed on the ground. There was a sergeant in my outfit who had been in the Marines and was familiar with .50 calibers. So we went over and grabbed a .50 caliber out of the burnt plane and mounted it on the back end of my jeep, much to the concern and disgust of everybody else because they figured that a piece in position firing would attract a return fire from the opposing forces. I told them to kiss my foot and mounted it anyway. This sergeant. . . we got some ammunition, and we mounted it up and dug ourselves a hole out there in front of the officers' quarters and set it up. In the meantime, Frank Fujita set up a machine gun right in the middle of the field. I think he finally knocked down a plane or his group did. So we had two machine guns in action the next time they came over.

I remember that a plane came circling over. He was flying real low, just over the treetops. The sergeant wanted. . . I wasn't. . . I should have listened to him. But he was coming right in. We had a clear shot at him. The sergeant wanted to open up a long



way sooner than I let him. But we opened up on him. He apparently saw the tracers because he then side slipped and ducked in behind and under the trees. It was a kind of a valley or something in there, and he circled around and came right at us and opened up with everything he had at our little nest. But, of course, we were well-protected, too. We couldn't fire in that direction though. We couldn't fire at him coming back at us. Before we could get up from our positions, he had circled. I think Fujita got a shot at that guy, too. But I don't think that's the plane that they think they knocked out. In fact, I'm sure that they knocked one out of the sky because one of them was supposed to have crashed down the island someplace.

Marcello: What was it like being under these air attacks?

Heinen: Well, again, there's a natural instinct to a man that . . . it's exciting, naturally. You're keyed up. Normally you don't have that fright that you'd think you would have. I remember that we were caught one day laying right out in the field. They were dropping twenty-five pounders out of those planes. They were fighter planes with bombs swung under. . . they weren't bombers as such. They were fighter planes with bombs

swung under their wings. One of those hit very close to two or three of us that were lying right together. I remember that we actually. . . I actually fell down into the crater. It was that close! But it didn't hurt me. It didn't even stun me. Other than pick myself up out of the hole it made, well, that was all there was to it. There were some Dutch and British-- I don't know how they got there--at Malang, a few of them. They'd stand in the doorway and watch it. They just looked like they were spectators of the deal. We finally got one or two 75 shots off at them. I think Major Rogers finally got a gun mounted, and he pulled the trigger. But a French 75 is sure no anti-aircraft piece (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, on March 9, 1942. . . well, let me just go back here a little bit before I get into that. What happened when the Japanese eventually landed on the island of Java? Somewhere during the midst of those air raids, the Japanese must have landed.

Heinen: Well, we received orders one day for the. . . where the orders. . . the orders had to come out of Wavell in India. He was the supreme commander of all Allied forces in the Far East. So any order that we received would have to come from that source. But anyway,

one time. . . one day there. . . the remainder of the 19th was ordered into Australia.

Marcello: What did this do for your morale when the 19th was getting out, and you were remaining behind?

Heinen: Well, I had a specialty along that. One of the pilots flying the bombers for the 19th. . . incidentally, I think that unit did catch a good lick at the Japanese coming through one of the straits. I believe they paid for themselves on that particular raid. This was shortly prior to them leaving out because that was the first time we knew, anybody knew, that Java was going to have it (chuckle). He begged and pleaded with me. . . he told me that the 19th was flying out to Australia. He said, "J. B., come on, let's go." I said, "No, I'll have to stay here." He said, "No, you don't have to stay anyplace." He said, "Just get on the plane and let's go." Of course, the only thing that I can't understand is that a B-17 would have carried quite a bit of personnel. I never knew why they didn't just airlift that battalion off of that island.

Marcello: Do you think they simply left the battalion there to perhaps fight some sort of a holding action, or at least to give the Japanese the impression that there

was a large force on Java and therefore divert their attention away from Australia?

Heinen: I don't think that. I think that what happened was far removed from anything planned. Actually, nobody knew we were on the island of Java when you just get right down to it. You could have asked anybody in the United States at that time where in the hell the 2nd Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery was, and they'd say, "What is it?" That still prevailed after the war, really. People didn't know we were there. The Army and the Navy certainly had more than its hands full in active fronts. They were mobilizing the nation. We were about as far removed from anybody's current thoughts as you could get.

So the decision to have flown out with the 19th would have been a deal between whoever was commanding the 19th, whom I don't know and didn't know, and our own battalion commander. Whether that was ever discussed or not, I don't know. But I do know that this young lieutenant who'd become my friend and was bunking in with me at night said, "Hell, let's go. Come on, go with me." I said, "No, I'm not about to do that. I'm not going anyplace that the rest of the personnel are not going to, but I appreciate the offer." But

they left. So in conjunction with them leaving, then the battalion was ordered to leave one battery at Malang, and the rest of the unit moved up to Batavia.

Marcello: Now this was after the Japanese had landed?

Heinen: No, the Japanese weren't on the island at that moment. They must have been real close. Now realize, we didn't know that there were any Japanese about to land on the island at that time. But shortly after we had gotten up to Batavia, then it was known that the Japanese had invaded the island. In one situation up there someplace, we actually sent our particular battery of guns out to a position and put them in a firing position. But they never fired much, if any.

Marcello: Well, there was very little resistance at all put up against the Japanese landing.

Heinen: We had nothing to resist with.

Marcello: How anxious were the Dutch to resist?

Heinen: The Dutch had nothing to resist with. It just wasn't there.

Marcello: I almost get the impression that the Dutch were hoping that no resistance would be put up because they thought that maybe if that were the case, the Japanese occupation would be relatively easy.

Heinen: Well, the Dutch had nothing to resist with. We had our battalion, and our battalion had about eight or ten rounds of pre-World War I, shrapnel-type ammunition. That's where you shoot out. . . the shell goes up and it explodes out a nose, and you got like a shotgun with. . .

Marcello: Jagged pieces of metal.

Heinen: No, they're lead balls in this case. They were loaded just like you'd load a shotgun. We had no high explosive shells. We had no machine guns. We had no particular ammunition for. . . I think we all had a rifle, but nobody had any real ammunition for it. An artillery unit is dependent on infantry units to protect its position. If you get down to where an artillery unit is supposed to fire its cannon and maintain its own defense, you're in a pretty sorry plight because the personnel won't reach.

So the Dutch had a few remnants of their native forces there. In this case, I don't think the native force was any fighting unit at all. You'd be better off being out there by yourself than have a bunch of those guys around you. There was some scattered English-Australian personnel there who had been shipped off. . . they had gotten out of Dunkirk. They were being sent to

Singapore for kind of a rest-staging deal from their experiences at Dunkirk. So they had nothing. They had no equipment at all. That was the fighting force on the island of Java. What do you fight with? You're just kidding yourself now.

Marcello: Well, on March 9, 1942, the order to surrender came down. What were your reactions when you heard about it?

Heinen: Well, of course, your first reaction was to act according to the procedure and destroy your equipment, which we did.

Marcello: Did you ever question the order to surrender?

Heinen: I didn't (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you ever think about going into the hills or anything of that nature? This sounds very romantic and. . .

Heinen: Yes, but you've got to be a little bit practical. In the first place, there's no hills to go into. In the second place, you're in a densely populated area--I mean, densely populated. There's more people on the island of Java by far than there is in the state of Texas and probably several other states combined. You don't speak the language. You're not of the color or the characteristics physically. You've never been on the island of Java.

Marcello: Even more importantly, I gather that the natives really owed their loyalty to nobody.

Heinen: That's right.

Marcello: In fact, probably people on Java disliked the Dutch more than any other area of the East Indies.

Heinen: That could have been. I didn't see too much of that directly. But, of course, recent events have. . . well, of course, any people that were, so to speak, owned by another people are always not too keen about their owners (chuckle). It's a natural deal. Of course, this you realized more later than you would at that time. But any native in that part of the world that's been starved to death and has a hard life, so to speak, and he has an opportunity to make a dollar by telling somebody where you are, he's going to make the dollar. There's no other way. The only thing that was of a possibility was that the cruiser. . . the one that. . . the Marblehead. . . not the Marblehead either. . .

Marcello: The Houston.

Heinen: Oh, the Houston. Yes, the Houston was still there, and also the Perth. We had heard that they were to swing around to our side of the island and pick us up. But they got trapped in the Sunda Straits, and



that ended that. Of course, we didn't know that at the moment. But anyway, they didn't show, and that ended any chance of us leaving the island.

Marcello: Well, talk about the procedure then that led to your original contact with the Japanese.

Heinen: Actually, that was before the surrender though.

Marcello: Yes.

Heinen: In other words, we were told that we were going to be picked up by some ships. I guess it was after they got clobbered that Wavell then surrendered, that we got the order that the island had been capitulated. Of course, everything in Java had been declared an open city so that they wouldn't come in and bomb it. In other words, under the convention they just said, "Well, these are all open cities" which meant that they'd put up no defense. By the same token, they weren't supposed to be bombed.

Marcello: Well, talk about the procedure that took place concerning the surrender. You had been ordered to surrender. The first thing that you did was to destroy your weapons.

Heinen: The first thing I did was go to sleep. I'd been up quite a few days. I had been on the pre. . . in other words, they always send out somebody ahead of the unit on a survey or run into a trap or find

out what's in front of you. I had been doing that, and I hadn't been to sleep for a long time. So I told them, "Well, I'm going to go to sleep." That's what I did (chuckle). Of course, in the meantime they came to my vehicle--I was driving a sedan that we had gotten from the Dutch. I think we just took it. They came and said that they wanted to tear it up. Since I was sleeping in it, I took a dim view of that, but they prevailed, and I had to go find someplace else to sleep. We destroyed everything though.

Marcello: Well, describe what took place from that point. You destroyed most of your equipment. Sooner or later you were going to have to come in contact with the Japanese.

Heinen: Well, we were ordered by the Japanese to go to a certain spot, which we did, which was an open ground. I've forgotten just exactly. . . it must have been another racetrack itself. I believe it was. We camped in the middle of that racetrack and just waited there until the Japanese arrived. They finally sent an officer or a sergeant or something who came into the camp and told us that we were to be moved up to Batavia. At that time, we still

had our transport vehicles, our personnel vehicles which we hadn't destroyed. Of course, I think we rolled into Batavia on those, if I remember correctly. Then, of course, at that point, they took them. We were put into a barracks in Batavia which had been strung up with barbed wire.

Marcello: Now was this the Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: Yes, the Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Up until the time that you had your initial contact with the Japanese and until you got into Bicycle camp, had the Japanese roughed you up in any way?

Heinen: Not a bit. We hadn't seen a Japanese.

Marcello: In other words, they really had not looted you or anything of that nature at this point yet either.

Heinen: Never. No, they sure hadn't. In fact, the Japanese never looted us. They strictly left us with every possession we had.

Marcello: Now we're dealing with front line troops here, isn't that correct? These were front line Japanese troops?

Heinen: No, we never saw a front line Japanese troop. What we saw was the personnel that would be comparable to our own. It would have been probably out of a police force unit, MP unit or something like that. I'm sure it would have been that. In other words, the

prisoners-of-war were turned over not to front line troops. Front line troops get rid of the prisoners-of-war just as fast as they can. They can't be bothered with them. So you're under the jurisdiction of people whose job with their Army was to take care of that type of situation.

Marcello: When you got to Bicycle Camp, was there any sort of an orientation given to you by the Japanese? In other words, did they tell you what you could do and what you couldn't do and what was expected of you?

Heinen: Yes. Yes, they put us into a . . . of course, we didn't really go into the Bicycle Camp directly. We went into a barracks-type deal that was filled to the gills in the heart of Batavia. We were right in the middle of it.

Marcello: In other words, is this the period when you were working on the docks?

Heinen: No, this was before all of this commenced. When we moved from where we were after the surrender into our first position, it was into a school or something, compound, much smaller than the Bicycle Camp itself. We stayed there for maybe a month. We did no work during that period. In other words, we just were confined there. I remember I had my twenty-eighth

birthday, I believe it was, while we were there. Two people, a British officer and a native officer, actually left out over the wall of that. It wouldn't have been difficult to get out of it. But we just sat there till whatever provisions were ready to take care of us were made by the Japanese or however they accomplished it. Then from that compound, we were moved into the Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: While you were at this particular compound, again, you didn't have very much contact with the Japanese?

Heinen: I never saw a Japanese.

Marcello: Okay, so you moved into Bicycle Camp. We were talking about the rules and regulations the Japanese laid down. What were some of the do's and don'ts that were expected of you when you got into Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: Well, of course, you weren't supposed to try to escape. If you tried to escape, they just told you they'd shoot you. They didn't ever come right out and make a bunch of rules which they prescribed as such. You learned the rules the hard way, other than the fact that they just said that anybody trying to escape they would shoot. You were to have no radio. They were very adamant about a radio. We were not told we were going to have to go to work.

The next morning they just sacked us up and loaded us in and took us out, and we started cleaning up the docks.

Marcello: What did the Bicycle Camp look like from a physical standpoint? Can you describe it?

Heinen: Yes, it was a barracks. It had been an Army barracks set up, I'm sure. Again, you had the long huts that house quite a few men and are separated with your partitions. In that part of the world, it was a permanent-type construction. It had two rows of barracks and a street down the middle. There was an enclosure. In this case, they had wired off an enclosure, and they kept some high-ranking Dutch personnel separated from us in that separate enclosure which originally had been part of the total camp we were in.

Marcello: These were probably part of the Dutch administration on the island--the governor and things like that?

Heinen: Well, I remember the Army chaplain who was a priest was in that enclosure, and I used to slip through the wire to go to Mass. They had their highest-ranking personnel in that enclosure. I met them but it's been so long ago that I've forgotten exactly who they were.

Marcello: What were the officers' quarters like in Bicycle Camp? I assume you were all segregated from the enlisted men.

Heinen: Oh, no, they were the same deal.

Marcello: But you were not really in the same quarters with the enlisted men?

Heinen: Well, there was part of one barracks that would be the same as the enlisted men that was designated, I guess, as officers' barracks. Yes, we were all together. But in the Bicycle Camp, there was no differences at all, as far as I recall, in the huts. They were all the same deal.

Marcello: What was the chain of command in Bicycle Camp? When I say chain of command, I mean, let's say, starting at the top with the Japanese commandant down to the prisoners-of-war. How did things get carried out?

Heinen: Well, of course, you had a sergeant as camp commander normally. You used to have an interpreter who could be an officer personnel but not considered as such. I mean, he was a civilian deal with a . . . whether he was an actual officer, I don't know. He carried a sword though. But your normal camp commander was of no greater rank than a sergeant. Now the man

over all of the camps was an officer, but you rarely saw him. Your sergeant personnel was quartered in the compound or the very near vicinity, right outside the wire. You always had the same setup in the Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. They had a guard hut as such, where the guards that weren't on duty and that weren't out walking the posts were always seated in two rows of chairs, and they stayed there. Of course, they could leave to go do this or that. But most of the time they were always sitting there. So the sergeant would tell the guards what they wanted to do, and the guards would come and do it. Of course, they were instructed to. . .

Marcello: Well, in many cases didn't the officers act as a type of go-between, however? Didn't the sergeant's orders come to the officers and then to the prisoners-of-war?

Heinen: Oh, yes. Yes, that would be true. In other words, our colonel would be told what to do. Of course, you're a little bit ahead of your story with that question. That actually came more defined when you got out on the railroad itself. At this time, the normal work procedure would have been for an officer to go with how many men they requested. You'd have



fifty men in a . . . it wouldn't be fifty. They'd usually have a truckload, whatever they figured they could shove into their truck to take you to the docks. You'd have that many men and an officer. Your officer was in charge of the party and responsible for everybody in the party. But that responsibility was more hearsay than actual. The officer would be held strictly responsible for any act of any man. But by the same token, the officer could never tell the man to do anything. In other words, if I ordered a man to do something, and they understood I was doing it, they would have jumped on me with both feet.

Marcello: What sort of work details were engaged in by the prisoners while you were here at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: Mostly just clearing out junk and moving stuff on the docks and making them usable again. It was clean-up work. There had been some bombing of the harbor.

Marcello: Under what conditions would the company funds be used?

Heinen: Well, the company funds. . . there was no opportunity to use company funds as such (chuckle). In other words, there was not that much to purchase. If

there was a quantity of something, the company funds would have purchased it, and it went into the mess. But you didn't. . . I mean, you're talking about a guy being able to buy one can of something, not a quantity of something as such.

Marcello: Well, what I'm leading up to is something that I think needs to be a part of the record or needs to be corrected. But there have been accusations made that officers were using company funds in order to fatten themselves.

Heinen: No, that isn't a fact. I didn't know that. . . Captain Taylor was the man with the funds. He was the supply officer. I didn't know he had the money for a helluva long time, until finally, at one stage of the game where we were being split up, he divided all of the funds, so to speak, into people who were then responsible for using them for the well-being of everybody.

But at the time you're talking about. . . now here's what did happen. On the cruiser Houston, they had four Chinese personnel who were servants. They were hired. It was a custom of the Navy, and it was on every ship that they hired these Chinese. Well, four of those guys--or three of them, I forgot which it is--survived the sinking and were along with

us as prisoners-of-war, considered American prisoners-of-war. I think some of them were actually Americans. I don't know how that'd work. They had the privileges, but they couldn't have been American citizens. But they were highly respected people. Those guys would stay. . . that was a life career with these people in conjunction with the Navy. Now those boys were out of this world in making things and using things that we didn't know of ourselves. They would dig up snails, and they would find special stuff growing around there and make salads. They were able to concoct things that the rest of us didn't know about. Now these people were always servants. . . that's not the right word. . .

Marcello: Messboys.

Heinen: Messboys, yes, for officer personnel or even on the ships. They weren't about, nor would they have been able to. . . there wasn't that much snails to find or anything else (chuckle), and they wasn't about to try and take on the whole battalion and feed it, see? They took care of the Navy officers, and, of course, we were housed with the Navy officers there. So in selected circumstances and at times, I possibly ate some things that the enlisted personnel did not

eat. But at no time was it of any particular significance. Now how many snails are there, or how many things can you find growing in a camp? Or how stupid are the men that they don't understand that and start following suit for them own selves, see? They were doing likewise as anything became available. When you get right down to the real truth about it, there were enlisted personnel who, in the aspect of doing black market trading, are so far superior to any officer personnel that no officer personnel even could touch them with a ten-foot pole.

Marcello: Black market activity was flourishing at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: Oh, why, the black market flourishes any place at every time. There's no such thing as there not being a black market. But there were kids who. . . as a matter of fact, some of the things that we could be accused of having in addition to what they may have had would have had to come from the enlisted personnel who went out and got them to start with. That's the only way we could have gotten them, see?

What you're talking about really--since I have a little keener knowledge of this than the average officer in the deal--really involves itself down to not too many men, one man in particular whom I won't

name, who felt very strongly on this point. I used to talk to him in the camp and used to take him over there and show him. But at no time where money was a problem was any enlisted man denied. If he had a chance to buy something and needed money, he got the money. There was no lack of money. It wasn't money; money wasn't the deal. Who wanted your money anyway, really? What you were doing to get these things was swapping. It was a bartering situation more than money.

Marcello: When you got to Bicycle Camp, I gather that most of the Houston people were already there.

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: They were a rather sorry lot, weren't they, when you got there?

Heinen: They were beat up. They had had one whale of a time. They had had to swim about twenty-two miles to even be there to start with, and their losses had been staggering. They had about 287 of them got to shore out of 1,100 or something.

Marcello: From what I hear, a lot of them had very, very little clothing, maybe underwear.

Heinen: They had nothing. They had nothing!

Marcello: Some of them were covered with oil and hadn't been allowed to take a bath yet.

Heinen: I don't remember that. I remember being greeted by them when we were driven into the camp, which was the first time we knew they were there. In my recollection, I'd say that by the time we really got up with the Houston personnel, they were established in the camp. It may have been only a day or so, if I recollect it, there would have been no reason for them not to have had a bath or something like that, other than the fact that they just may not have been able to take a bath. They may not have had soap, or they may not have had other necessities that would allow them to take it. Or they may have been so damn pooped out, they just didn't want to take it.

Marcello: What efforts did. . .

Heinen: They didn't have any food. They'd been on their own for. . . now, well, we're talking about some time. It took time for them to be rounded up. They were scattered out through the countryside the best they could. Of course, just trying to make your way to some place must have been--I hadn't thought about this--it must have been pretty terrifying in itself for them.

Marcello: What efforts did the "Lost Battalion" people make to help out these Houston survivors? They were obviously in much worse shape than what you were. You were in pretty good shape, in fact, here at Bicycle Camp.

Heinen: Oh, yes. I hadn't done some of the things that some of the people had done when they first announced. . . I didn't throw away a damn thing. I just said, "No, till they take it away from me, I'm going to keep every possession I have." Some people started stripping down things, feeling that they may have to carry it or something and got rid of a lot of stuff they shouldn't have gotten rid of and just abandoned it when we left the first enclosure that we were ordered to. Well, I didn't do that. I just held on to every piece of possession I had. So when we got there, well, of course, everybody assisted all of the personnel, officer or enlisted men. We gave them clothing, and we gave them shoes. We gave them underwear, we gave them. . . in other words, we just fitted them out out of our own personal belongings. It wasn't considered. It was just natural. You're not going to sit there and say, "Well, I've got three shirts, and I'm not going to give you one." I don't know of anybody that didn't offer them something.

Marcello: What sort of bathing and sanitary facilities were available here at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: We had whatever the facilities were for whatever the Army personnel there had used before us. But it wasn't too bad. We were able to maintain hygiene and take a bath. I don't recall that we had any difficulties at that point.

Marcello: In other words, you were able to take a bath whenever you wanted to.

Heinen: Well, you're never able to do anything whenever you want to.

Marcello: I mean when you didn't have duty or things of that nature.

Heinen: During the time that bathing was prescribed, you were able to take a bath, yes. I think the water supply held up. I don't remember us being short of water.

Marcello: From what I've heard, there were no personnel lost here at Bicycle Camp.

Heinen: None, none. Now we had some pretty bad beatings go on at that camp. Of course, at the Bicycle Camp's where you really first became aware of the disciplinary actions. We had several occasions I can recall. We were asked at the Bicycle Camp to



sign a pledge that we wouldn't escape and agree that if we did, we agreed that they could shoot us, which we all rejected for a while. That'll bring on another story. But you were guarded by Koreans.

Marcello: Now were you guarded by Koreans here at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: As far as I remember it and understand. Always the corporal and a sergeant. They may have had two corporals and one sergeant who were Japanese. Now every other personnel that walked the post there was a Korean.

Marcello: I hadn't realized that there were Koreans at Bicycle Camp. I knew they were in the railroad camps later on.

Heinen: Well, they were the same. . . these were not. . . these kids couldn't count. The Japanese didn't put anybody in command of a camp or have them in there that couldn't even add up to four. So your guards, your actual guards, were always Korean. Now they were instructed that every personnel in camp, any time they came in contact with you the prisoner had to stop, stand at attention, and salute in the form of a bow. Did we have to make a greeting of some damn word or two that we had to say? I believe

we did. I've forgotten now whether we had to make some kind of "arigato" or some expression showing that they were superior to you. Any infraction of that disciplinary procedure was jumped on severely. You really got kicked around. They wore hobnailed shoes, and, of course, they always kicked you in the shins or your privates or someplace designated to really do damage or hit you with the rifle butt and talk at you in very loud and very rapid Japanese, which you didn't understand, but you got the meaning of it. So you could get yourself punched around pretty good by failing to comply with this saluting deal.

Marcello: I would assume that it took awhile--I shouldn't say awhile--but it was something that one had to get used to.

Heinen: Yes, but then, of course, it got even worse than that. You can be walking in one direction, and the guy could be standing on the hill, and you don't even see him, and you happen to walk by him, and he took the occasion to remind you that you didn't salute him. This got to be serious when we got into the jungle. But it didn't make any difference whether you saw him or not. If you didn't do it, you were in for it.

Marcello: I would assume then that at Bicycle Camp the punishment usually took the form of the kicking or hitting with this or gun butts or things of this nature.

Heinen: No, they racked us up in another manner, which is. . . they would make you kneel on your knees, and they'd stick a stick in between right where your leg bends back there and cut off all the circulation. The same way with your arms. They'd tie a stick through back there. That gets to be pretty hairy in itself. It's a pretty drastic form of torture, especially if it's continued for any length of time. You're always out in the hot sun while you're doing all of this. Well, during this time when we refused to sign this deal saying that we agreed to be shot if we tried to escape. . . there may have been one or two things that they were insisting on that I don't recall, all of which were against the Geneva Convention rules. They handled that. We had some Australians in the camp; we had some English in the camp along with the Houston personnel and our own personnel. We were all in the same camp. That stayed pretty well all through the deal. Now there were other English from Singapore who we met at scattered times that were separated from these English and Australians.

All right. They hauled us out to an enclosure that was a building of some description. It had a concrete area in a U-shape. That concrete area must have been maybe 300 feet square. What they did is that they carted everybody from the Bicycle Camp and shoved them into that 300-foot square.

Marcello: About how many personnel are we talking about?

Heinen: Everybody we had. There was over a thousand personnel. There were the Australians, English, Dutch, Americans, anybody that they had in that camp. There were Dutch there, too. They shoved you in there to where there is no facilities or no nothing, and there really wasn't room to turn around real good. That ended the resistance to signing that damn pledge.

Marcello: How long did they keep you out there?

Heinen: It didn't take very long. A day or so was about all it took. Why fight it? You know it's wrong. You know it's against the Convention. You know that it doesn't make any difference whether you sign it or not. You're trying to fight for a principle that you might as well forget. What the hell, if I had to do it all again, I'd say, "Sign it." I wouldn't even bat an eye: "Just give it to me and let me sign it."

Marcello: While you were in Bicycle Camp, did you think that the war would be a relatively short one? Were you expecting help to come at any time?

Heinen: Oh, well, of course, if you didn't have that in mind . . . I didn't think it would drag out, no. I didn't think it'd take as long as it took. But year by year you had to live with that particular hope. But, of course, you also realized that time was going by--one year, two years, three years.

Marcello: Well, how did you live? Day to day?

Heinen: I didn't. I looked at it differently, personally. It never occurred to me that we wouldn't get out. I just didn't ever think that we weren't going to get out. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't come back home. Of course, my actions and efforts were beamed at seeing that the other people maintained a similar line of thought. Again, this is where my training, my particular training, came in to a very high degree. My background and my religion and everything else was such that I never. . . I just knew I was going to come back home. I knew that a lot of the rest of them were going to come back home. I just never gave it a thought otherwise.

That gets complicated down the line with other factors. Men who felt the same in the Bicycle Camp, as they become ravaged by diseases and privations and other things that happen to people. . . the most drastic. . . this is something that makes it difficult, very difficult. Very few people in the world today have--this is kind of ahead of the story, but we'll say it anyway--have been reduced in the function of life. In other words, you finally get down to one basic reason, and that's the will to live. That's a natural instinct. Now when a man has been stripped of all of the other instincts down to that basic survival instinct, then he starts his thinking processes differently from anybody he talks to. So I can say to you one word, and you understand one word. But you and I never understand the same meaning of that word because I'm thinking from a plateau that you've never reached, and thank God you didn't. Let's hope that nobody else ever has to reach it. But from all the rest of the time now, every time I think or say something, in fact, I always know--but you really don't know what I'm saying unless you were there. This comes in when you get down the line and these same things we're

talking about come into focus. In other words, a man that's been working on the railroad gives up hope because of his body having been deteriorated by diarrhea or malaria or every other damn thing. There's nineteen different diseases that we had at one time. So his mind is not capable of resisting. But at the Bicycle Camp, I think the general man, the general person at the Bicycle Camp, certainly assumed he would be freed. We had hope.

Marcello: In other words, things really wouldn't have been too bad if you could have spent the whole war at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: They wouldn't. No, no, they wouldn't have been. It wouldn't have been drastic.

Marcello: Well, things changed pretty fast because I guess it was in October of 1942--you moved into Bicycle Camp in May of 1942--and then in October of 1942, you received word that you were going to move. I assume that at the time you received those words, you really didn't know where you were going.

Heinen: No, sure didn't.

Marcello: What was it like to learn that you were going to move, that you were going to change surroundings that you had more or less become rather used to? Was this a rather unsettling experience?

- Heinen: Again, we have to. . . I can speak for me. I can't speak for the next guy.
- Marcello: Well, I want you to speak for you.
- Heinen: Yes, well, to me it's another deal. So we're going to move. Where I didn't know. There's an apprehension, naturally. I don't think we were told where we were going to be moved to. About the first time we knew we were going to be moved is that you woke up in the morning, and they said, "Pick up all your stuff" and they put you in a truck and took you down to the docks, and there's the ship. That's the way things normally happened. That's about the schedule of things. They didn't bother to acquaint you with all of their doings. They could care less (chuckle).
- Marcello: Well, anyhow, I think it was on October 11, 1942, that you finally ended up at Changi Prison Camp in Singapore.
- Heinen: Yes.
- Marcello: Do you remember the trip from Java over to Changi?
- Heinen: Very vividly, very vividly. We were put on a vessel that wasn't too big. It was a cargo ship. Maru was part of the name, I think.
- Marcello: Di Nichi Maru.
- Heinen: Di Nichi Maru, and there was a sister ship that we joined, or was there, that was loaded with Japanese.



I don't know where we picked them up or whether they started out with us. But anyway, now when you got aboard the ship, they had taken the hold and put in two platforms.

Marcello: In other words, they divided the hold into two compartments.

Heinen: Into three compartments. In other words, the floor of the hold itself would be the base. Then there was a wooden platform which would be in the center, and then there was a wooden platform above that. Now that was about three-feet or four-feet intervals between those platforms. They started the people down in there. They made them take up their places and lay down. Now as they filled up the bottom, then they started filling up the center, and then they started filling up the top. Now when all of that was full and you thought you were cramped, there were still men with no place to put their body that had to get down that hold. So they made space. They just took a rifle butt, and jammed it at the guy who was closest. Well, of course, his reaction was to try to get away from the rifle butt that was coming at him, and he moved backwards with as much force as he could, and that left an area where another man

could get in. So you were jammed into that hold as jammed as you can possibly put people. There was just no way to put anybody else.

Marcello: Were you still allowed to bring along your equipment and so on?

Heinen: Oh, yes, yes, which complicated matters.

Marcello: I'm sure it did.

Heinen: Again, they never attempted to take any equipment away from us.

Marcello: How long did this trip take all together?

Heinen: Oh, golly, I've forgotten. But it wasn't a fast-moving ship. I think its top speed was about six or eight knots. We moved from Batavia, must have moved around through the straits, came up . . . I can't recall what the length of time was, but it wasn't fast.

Marcello: While you were on this ship, did you ever receive . . . well, what sort of food did you receive while you were on the ship?

Heinen: Oh, our food was terrible on this ship! The water was the problem. They didn't have enough water. Of course, down in the hold of that ship, it must have been "umteen" hundred degrees. Of course, it was terrifically hot. Everybody got completely dehydrated. I know there was one engine up on deck

where there was steam leaking out around the valve or plunger, and the kids would sit there and collect that drop by drop for whatever water they could get. But it got to where nobody could urinate because there was nothing in the body to urinate. Of course, everybody got constipated naturally. There was just no fluid. There just wasn't any fluid for. . . so drinking was the problem. The food was. . . oh, of course, the food never was worth a darn (chuckle). It was rice. But I don't remember us really being short on food. Our problem was water.

Marcello: Were you ever allowed to go above deck during this trip?

Heinen: Oh, yes, yes. At first we weren't, but then they . . . after we got out in the sea itself, it relaxed and you didn't have too much problem getting up on deck.

Marcello: Well, you got into. . .

Heinen: Yes, but you're forgetting. . . you're overlooking the big deal on the Di Nichi Maru. I told you we were joined by another ship.

Marcello: Now if you're referring to the air raid, that didn't come at this time yet. That didn't come until you had already left Changi and were on your way to Moulmein. That came later on.

- Heinen: All right. We went in. . . we stopped in at. . .  
oh, yes. Wait a minute. Well, the Di Nichi Maru  
. . . let's see. We went from Batavia to Singapore.
- Marcello: Right. You were at Changi Prison in Singapore.
- Heinen: Yes. Then we went from Changi to Rangoon. Then  
you're right. That raid was right out of Rangoon.
- Marcello: Yes. Changi to Moulmein, actually was where you  
went, was it not?
- Heinen: Yes, well, Moulmein was just in there close to  
Rangoon. In other words, I think we went into the  
Rangoon Harbor, but we never went into Rangoon.  
In other words, we went on down to. . . they didn't  
take us into Rangoon. They took us to Moulmein.  
But I believe your ship course would be the channel  
or the port that you'd go in to go to Rangoon on.
- Marcello: Okay. But anyhow, that air raid took place then.  
We'll talk about that. So I gather then that on  
this trip between Batavia and Singapore, there was  
perhaps just this one vessel.
- Heinen: Yes, and the water incident was on that other trip,  
too. The water incident was on the trip between  
Singapore and Rangoon. So I don't recall. . . just  
stopping here, I just hadn't ever really thought  
about that particular trip. I don't think that  
there was too much exciting about that trip.

Marcello: I don't think it really took too long either.

Heinen: No, that wasn't. . . I had in mind and was recalling the more drastic trip we took later.

Marcello: Okay, so you got into Changi Prison Camp around October 11, 1942. Describe what Changi was like from a physical standpoint.

Heinen: Well, Changi was like a. . . actually, it would remind you of a resort setup. It sat on the hillside overlooking the channel and the sea, the bay, or whatever it is. It had a big swimming pool out there.

Now there's a peculiar thing about all of this that started out. When we were on the Republic, I had a dream one night. It was a very vivid dream. It was so vivid that I actually wrote it down the following day. In this dream I dreamt that we were on a ship that was traveling in waters, and the bank of the waters was overgrown with a bush-type, vine-type growth that extended out to us, and that we passed what I thought was a resort. For some reason or another, suddenly we had Marines with us, and we went into this resort. Part of that dream was a bunch of. . . a row of black caskets made of crude wood but painted black. The ship suddenly

sank, and we had to get ashore. I wasn't familiar with that undergrowth we had.

But, of course, Singapore was the resort that I saw in that dream. The mangroves along the shore of all of the islands in that part of the world actually grow out from the island. That's the mangrove swamps or whatever they call it. The black caskets were identical to the ones that they made and I first saw in the Bicycle Camp. The Marines, of course, joined us with the personnel off the cruiser Houston. So what I actually had in that dream actually was a preview of what flat happened to us.

Marcello: Well, again getting back to the description of Changi, what were the barracks like there?

Heinen: The barracks were modern, well-constructed buildings that housed the British troops. They were a barrack-type building, but it was not uncomfortable. I thought they were pretty good barracks, actually.

Marcello: How did they compare with Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: Oh, of course, you're talking about a native setup against a British setup, and there would be no comparison at all. In other words, the huts. . . the barracks at Changi in the main were comparable to what you'd expect to find in our own setup at that time of. . . period of history.

Marcello: How did you like Changi?

Heinen: Well, Changi, it's a pretty place. Of course, as I say, it overlooked the channel. Again, we had not too much inconvenience at Changi. It was a staging area. I don't remember whether we did a whole lot of work at Changi or not.

Marcello: Did your attitude toward the British change at all when you were at Changi?

Heinen: Well, it changed. We met and encountered the kids off of the Prince of Wales and the other British vessels that were sunk.

Marcello: In general, I think you were encountering a bunch of losers here, were you not, so far as the British were concerned?

Heinen: Well, yes (chuckle).

Marcello: They had been kicked out of Dunkirk. They had been defeated at Singapore.

Heinen: That's right. That's right. Then all of the Navy personnel had had all their ships blown out from underneath them.

Marcello: This was a rather unhappy lot, and I gather discipline wasn't exactly too keen among the British troops here.

Heinen: The British had their problems over and above our problems. But in the main, I wasn't particularly aware too much of it at that time of their situation.

Marcello: I understand from time to time sanitary facilities or sanitary precautions weren't exactly the best among the British.

Heinen: That's true (chuckle). That's true right down the line. One area where the American soldier was better equipped and qualified and trained than anybody was in this area. We obviously stressed the need for cleanliness a whole lot more than other peoples and their armies.

Marcello: How were the Japanese at this particular camp?

Heinen: Again, at that particular place, I don't recall too much troubles that we experienced. We were kind of left more to ourself there. I don't recall that we . . . they may have sent work crews out at Changi. But I just can't. . . somehow I don't ever remember going on one of them. As I remember my stay at Changi, we were free and easy to do much as we pleased.

Marcello: It was a very short stay while you were there. I know from time to time the enlisted men had trouble



with the British officers, so far as stealing or taking coconuts or fruit and things of this nature?

Heinen: Well, of course, the subject is something that I'm not as familiar with as would be the enlisted men themselves. Now my association with the British officers was more pleasant. But a British officer, especially a British Naval officer, would be more demanding and more dignified in his officer bearing than were any American officers. We were freer and easier with our men always than what they were. You're also talking about two different types of personnel. Now we're with personnel who in our own home towns are of equal standing in the community. One of you might be the officer and one of you might be the private, but when you left the training barracks of your National Guard, well, you might have been neighbors. The British naval personnel grew up in an atmosphere and joined their navies, and it's a career with them more so than we think about it. It's more in their minds, I guess, from the time and they. . . it's just a different deal. It's just a different deal. I'm sure that there'd be many an American enlisted men that took advantage of many a British officer.

Marcello: I can just imagine one of those British officers telling one of those West Texas boys that he couldn't eat any of the king's coconuts.

Heinen: Oh, well, I know what answer he got. The only thing that I remember distinctly is that you can't eat a monkey. We tried that. I don't know who cornered the monkey. But there were some running around the trees there, and somebody managed to catch one and kill it. We tried to eat it, and there's no such thing as eating a monkey. You just can't eat it.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were eating monkeys. Does this imply that by this time the food situation was getting as such that you were looking for other ways to supplement your diet?

Heinen: Well, of course, from day one to the day we got out, everybody looked for ways to supplement their diet because as I related before, the furnished diet was mainly and primarily rice, gourd, and fish heads.

Marcello: What was the second thing you mentioned? Rice. . .

Heinen: Gourd. A gourd is a. . .

Marcello: Oh, I see what you mean. Gourd, yes.

Heinen: It's a. . . it's like a. . .

Marcello: It's related to the pumpkin family.

Heinen: Yes, but there's one thing about a gourd that would be different from a pumpkin. A pumpkin has good nutritional value. A gourd doesn't have any. It gives you bulk, but it doesn't really have enough food value to fool with it. It'd be like eating a piece of watermelon rind in taste and in texture, but even a watermelon rind would have more food value than a gourd.

Marcello: I would assume that by this time food was perhaps the thing that occupied all of your time, was constantly on your mind.

Heinen: Yes, of course, you get hungry, and then you don't get hungry. You finally reach a degree of knowing that you have so much to eat, and you must adapt to it. This is something that's got to be automatic. This is something that is going on today, it went on a thousand years ago--let's hope it would end someday--that every, practically every, person in the Far East still has to face. All the Chinese multitudes, all of the Malaysian multitudes, all of the people in Indo-China, all of the people of Viet Nam and South American people to a large degree still, they still don't have enough to eat.

Marcello: Was the diet basically the same here at Changi as it was at Bicycle Camp?

Heinen: It never changed. Occasionally we were able to supplement some meat in there. Maybe the Japanese furnished some at times. Maybe we were able to purchase some at times. Oh, pork! They gave us pork, pig, instead of beef. What meat we got was. . . and it was part of the regular diet. In other words, there'd be enough pork to put a flavor into the rice stew which you'd make. You were always hopeful that you would be one of the guys that actually got a little hunk of pork in your particular serving or something.

Marcello: Now by the time you left Changi, had the men been picking up any of the usual diseases or maladies that one might expect to encounter under these circumstances?

Heinen: Not at that time.

Marcello: How about malaria?

Heinen: Well, of course, malaria is with you, and could be with you, in any part of that part of the world. In other words, from Java on you're subject to malaria. But even the malaria would have become particularly bad when you get into the work camps, and that's when that began to really knock them out.

Marcello: How about dysentery?

Heinen: Same thing with the dysentery. I don't recall that we had any real serious medical problems among the troops by this time. In other words, I don't recall that we had any particular amount of suffering. We had still enough of the build-up we had gone in with to still be tiding us over. We weren't doing that type of labor at that time. In other words, we weren't just killing. . . in other words, I don't remember working at all while I was at Changi. I don't recall working at all. I remember at Changi I was bunked with Charles. . . C. D. Smith, who was from the Houston and Leon Rogers who was from the Houston and Miles Barrett who was a Marine officer off the Houston. We had a room about as big as this kitchen, I guess.

Marcello: Which is about how big?

Heinen: Oh, fourteen by ten or twelve. It was a fair-sized room. We had a bunk. I don't think there were windows. I think everything's kind of open-air out in that part of the world, as I recall it, and a balcony. I remember that it was at Changi that I took everything I had and divided it into four parts and gave Rogers a fourth and Barrett a fourth and C. D. a fourth and kept a fourth for myself.

Marcello: Was there a black market activity of some nature going on at Changi?

Heinen: Oh, there's always a black market. Again, I wasn't . . . we were able to buy tobacco at Changi. I think we were able to buy what I'd classify now as a few goodies while we were at Changi. After all, Singapore was still there. It was not torn up. So I'd say that relatively speaking everybody had kind of a resort deal at Changi.

Marcello: With regards to these black market activities, I would assume that in most cases, the enlisted men acted as the middleman. In other words, they probably did most of the trading, did they not, with the natives, and then eventually it came down to you?

Heinen: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Some of those enlisted men made a pretty good profit in this little trade.

Heinen: Oh, yes. They got quite affluent. They had all the money, if you want to speak of it in that way.

Marcello: This is what I gather.

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: Anyhow, in January of 1943, you left Changi, and you were on your way to Moulmein in Burma. Now I gather that most people weren't exactly sad to

leave Changi. It hadn't exactly been the best place in the world, especially for the enlisted men, I gather. Of course, it was on this trip between Changi and Moulmein that you were talking about the ship where drinking water was at a minimum. Now as I recall, you went from Changi by train up the coast a little bit until you caught the boat or the ship that took you to Moulmein. Was there anything about this railroad trip that you remember? How did they put you on those cars?

Heinen: Of course, when you're talking about getting on a railroad with them, you're talking about being crowded into boxcars.

Marcello: This is what I wanted to get into the record.

Heinen: Yes, they just crammed you in there to where there was no room left. You're just packed in there just as tight as you can possibly be packed. Of course, the hull of your car is of steel, and you're in a hot country, so it's got to be 140 if it's a degree inside that boxcar. It gets to be pretty harrowing in itself. In other words, on the ship you at least could have a break and get out and walk and get away from the guy that's crowded next to you. But on that boxcar there's no place to go. So, of course,

if you had to relieve yourself, well, you're just out of luck, more or less.

Marcello: Fortunately, that trip was only a short way, a short distance.

Heinen: It wasn't that long. Yes, it wasn't that long. But we were crowded into those same situations later on that we'll describe.

Marcello: Well, so you take the railroad from Changi up the coast. Then you board a ship once again, with some of the conditions of which you described. Then the point that we need to get into the record now is that somewhere between the time you boarded that ship and your docking at Moulmein, you, of course, were attacked by I don't know how many B-24 liberators.

Heinen: I know very well, most explicitly. I was on top of the deck, up on the deck, talking to my sergeants who were in my particular unit, Prunty and Worthington. They had gotten word that we were getting close to where we were going, that we were about a day out, is the way I got it from them. Prunty and Ed and I were bulling, and I remember Luther Prunty saying, "Well, we ought to be out of the danger zone." I said, "Luther, I figure it just the opposite. The closer we get into India, the closer we are in the



range of whatever's flying of our forces, and the more danger that we were going to encounter." I said, "Just incidentally, if you'll look up in the sky right over there right now, you're going to see three planes, and I'm going to bet you that they're ours." We looked up there, and there they were.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you saw these planes coming? In other words, were you hoping that they would just bomb the hell out of those ships or. . .

Heinen: I knew what my reaction was. I said, "Prunty, those damn planes are going to make a run on these ships."

Marcello: There were two ships, is that correct?

Heinen: Three ships.

Marcello: Three ships.

Heinen: I said, "As a matter of fact, they're zeroed in on that lead ship right now." We watched that run, and we watched the bombs walk right across the back end of that ship. In other words, the ship's here (gesture) and the bombs were here (gesture) like that. One hit right in the tail of that ship, right on the back end of it. The ships started circling, and, of course, in the meantime, our ship is starting to maneuver. We had a little gunboat, Japanese gunboat, that was convoying us. So when they made that

run, the planes circled. I said, "Well, kids, there's only one target left, and that's us." I said, "Now I'll tell you what. You go down into the hold." My part in the hold was in the back part of the hold, and there was a center place where you went down, so that there was an open area right in the middle. They were up here (gesture). I said, "Now you go down in the hold, and you blow your whistle, and you tell everybody to take off their shoes, tie their strings together and be sure they don't lose them. Get their stuff up into a bundle, and stay still and quiet. Just don't panic. Don't get in an uproar." I called down in the hold and got C. D. Smith, who was an ensign from the cruiser Houston, who was decorated for bravery twice, I believe. I said, "C. D., you take care of it up here. I'll go down in the hold and try to take care of it down there." So C. D. did what was necessary to get the people on the top part of the ship protected.

So I crawled down in the hold, and, of course, there always has to be something funny happen. I happened to come right down, and there were Doc Lumpkin, Captain Taylor, Captain Parker, and Elvin Schmidt, who was a first lieutenant, I think, playing

bridge. Being a bridge player myself, I said, "Say, who's bid is it?" Schmidt said, "Well, it's my bid." The hand was laid down. They were just getting ready to play the bid. I said, "What's the bid?" Schmidt said, "I bid four spades." I said, "Well, let me see." I reached over and looked at his cards. I reached over and grabbed Taylor's cards and looked at them. I looked at Parker's cards, and, of course, they were looking at me like I'd lost my mind, naturally. I said, "Well, Schmidt, if you play that hand correctly, you could make five spades. But I don't think you've got time to finish it." I said, "They're making a run over us with three bombers, and they've already sunk the ship ahead of us. We're just not going to have time to finish this hand." The cards went up in the air just like you see in the movies (chuckle).

Then I blew my whistle and told everybody on my end of the ship what was happening. About the time that I had finished that, C. D. Smith, who was from the cruiser Houston, said, "Well, they're coming in at. . . ." and you describe the run at so many degrees. He said, "Well, they're about thirty degrees."

He said, "Forty degrees." I think that about fifty-five degrees from you is when they'll release their bombs. So he was bringing the planes in on degrees, which we weren't too familiar with. That was a Navy deal. Then he said, "Well, they're about at fifty-five. Well, they've released their bombs. I can see them." Then he said, "Jesus, these are close!" About that time the ship lifted out of the water and settled back.

Marcello: Was there panic among the men?

Heinen: No, there wasn't. Now there's another part of this story. As those ships started their run on our ship, our ship was equipped with one of our French 75 guns on the front end and one of our French 75 guns on the rear end. They had long-nosed or very sensitive fused shells. All you had to do was breathe on that son-of-a-gun and it would go off. Now a 75 is a gun as contrasted to a howitzer. In other words, its elevation at maximum was about, what, thirty-seven degrees or something? So there isn't no way in this world to shoot a 75 shell up 4,000 feet high, much less whatever height the planes were flying. But nevertheless, both guns started tracking the planes and shoving shells into the gun and shooting

them, where the planes were coming in across the ship, crossways to the ship. Of course, as those planes approached the ship, you're always bringing a gun in, and about the time the ships had already released their bombs and were overhead, the gun had tracked towards the right--the ship's going this way (gesture)--it'd be the right-hand part of the bridge, and they blew off the right-hand part of the bridge.

Marcello: Now the Japanese were manning these guns?

Heinen: That's right. But that didn't slow them down. The planes had crossed over and were going away from the ship now. In the meantime, they'd stuck another shell in that gun, and they tracked their gun, cleared the ship, but that shell hit a guide wire right in front of them, and it blew up and killed the crew.

Now the gun on the back part of the ship had been firing, also. On the first one or two rounds that they put in there, they didn't close the breech properly, and they fired the gun, and it backfired and caught the ship on fire.

In the meantime, you have live ammunition that's getting hot and beginning to explode itself. You've got all the Australians and Dutch back on the back end of that ship.

Fortunately, the ship itself was not damaged by the bombs by reason of very accurate bombing. When you're bombing or shooting with artillery or anything else, if you straddle a target. . . in other words, if you got a shot on one side and a shot on the other side, that's as good as you can get. Well, fortunately, the bombs straddled the ship. In other words, one bomb hit here (gesture), and one bomb hit here (gesture). That's what lifted the ship out of the water. Otherwise, we'd have caved in the side of the ship. But the equal force on both sides is the only thing that saved us.

Marcello: Well, in the meantime, here's this one ship that's already been hit, and there are people in the water.

Heinen: Yes, well, of course, we weren't worried about them then. We have a ship with the bridge blown off and that has got the Japanese personnel who are asking for our doctors. We got a fire on the back end of the ship with more shells exploding back there, and you've got people back there who are Australian and . . . the little corvette or whatever it was that the Japanese had was over picking up survivors, and, of course, they finally loaded on our ship. But that was the advent and the deal with the planes.

Marcello: Well, this apparently just made your ship all the more crowded after you had to pick up these survivors.

Heinen: Oh, yes. We picked up about 500. Of course, fortunately, we were right there. At that time we were in very close to where we were going, and that condition didn't last. But it didn't make any difference. Conditions couldn't have gotten any worse anyway.

Marcello: Okay, so you went into Moulmein, and you really didn't stay there any length of time at all. Now at this point, after a very, very short stay in Moulmein, the prisoners then fanned out and started working on the railroad.

Heinen: That's right.

Marcello: Now some of the prisoners, I know, went through the base camp first, Thanbyuzayat. Others didn't go through that base camp but rather bypassed it and went directly on. I believe it was to the 15 or the 18 Kilo Camp. Do you recall what you did?

Heinen: As I recall the deal, all of the Americans settled first at the first camp.

Marcello: Thanbyuzayat?

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: This was a base camp.

Heinen: We were all there originally. Now at some stage, as the work progressed, a sizeable part of the Americans along with the other nationalities were removed from the camp and sent to another camp, which was also a work camp. They were separated from. . . the two groups were thus separated, which means that you now have three parts. You have the Battery E, which is never with us during this time, which has a separate history. Now you have our own remaining forces, part of which are in one camp and part of which are in the second camp. I always stayed in the first camp.

Marcello: In other words, you were at Thanbyuzayat?

Heinen: Yes.

Marcello: This, like I mentioned earlier, was a base camp. Here they had a great many of the supplies that were going to be used on the railroad. There was a hospital of sorts here. To some extent, I think it was kind of a showplace camp because whenever any Red Cross inspectors did come, this is usually where that they brought them, I think.

Heinen: I never saw a Red Cross inspector.

Marcello: Well, this would have probably been after you left the camp and were out in the jungle. When you got



to Thanbyuzayat, do you remember a Japanese colonel  
by the name of Nagatomo?

Heinen: Well, I remember a Japanese colonel, yes. I wouldn't  
have remembered his name. Yes, we went to Thanbyuzayat,  
which really wasn't a work camp.

Marcello: No, it wasn't a work camp. It was more or less just  
a transit camp.

Heinen: Yes, we weren't there too long.

Marcello: No.

Heinen: Then we started down the road.

Marcello: Well, how about Colonel Nagatomo? Do you remember  
him?

Heinen: Yes, I recall but not too vividly, really.

Marcello: Do you remember what sort of a pep talk he may have  
given you with regard to the type of endeavor that  
you were undertaking?

Heinen: No, not specifically. But, of course, everybody at  
this stage of the game can imagine what it was. If  
you've seen a show, or a Japanese, or anybody else's  
officer gave a pep talk, that's the way it was. They  
were pretty accurate in telling you about. . . that  
would always be portrayed pretty accurately. You  
could read a book, or you could see a show, and you  
can imagine the pep talk you get about serving the

great imperial Japanese and what an honor it's going to be, and what'll happen to you if you don't do it right. But I don't recall the specific talk now at all. I can't remember any of it.

Marcello: Well, like you mentioned, you were only at Thanbyuzayat for just a short period of time, maybe just a type of orientation deal.

Heinen: Yes, I've even forgotten I was there, to tell you the truth.

Marcello: Then I think from Thanbyuzayat, most of the prisoners in your particular group went out to the 18 Kilo Camp.

Heinen: Well, which one it was I wouldn't remember either. We all went to a work camp. But I remember that we all went to the same work camp and worked at the same work camp for a considerable period of time, possibly a year. At that time then, the camp was divided, and part of our forces were sent into a farther out camp, and part of our forces remained at the first work camp.

Marcello: Now this was even before the railroad was completed?

Heinen: Oh, yes. This is while we were. . . this was in the stages of working on the railroad. It would be in the initial stages. In other words, this is when

we first started the work. As I recall, we all worked together in the first camp for maybe a year. Then as that particular area was approaching some degree of completion, then part of our forces were separated. At that time, our doctor stayed with our part. You'll hear a lot about a Dutch doctor who took care of the Americans in the other part, who has since been invited over here by the battalion as an honored guest. So some of us knew him better than others. As I say, I stayed with the initial camp. I did not go to the second camp.

Marcello: Well, to begin with, what exactly was the purpose of having the Americans in Burma?

Heinen: Well, any prisoner-of-war as far as the Japanese were concerned--and this would be true of the Chinese and the Russians or anything else--became a labor force, pure and simple. It not only becomes a labor force, but it's a very expendable labor force in that the main purpose is to get the maximum amount of physical effort out of a man, and whether he dies or not is of little concern and of no importance at all, really, other than their need for labor. So it was never intended that any prisoner-of-war ever return alive. It was intended that you do the work of the Japanese

until you could no longer work and were dead. That was the intention. Now if you happen to have managed to have finished the railroad, which we did, then they had a nice road that they were going to build from. . . that the Vietnam situation was all over. In other words, we ended up on a location to prepare to build a road from just. . . of course, I get it mixed up, it might be south. I call it north since it'd be going up from the map of Saigon into China. If you think anybody was going to come off of that road, you're just wrong.

Marcello: Well, let's just go back and talk about this other thing first of all. So quite obviously, you were going to be building this railroad. Describe what the work was like in the building of this railroad-- some of the more specific instances.

Heinen: Well, of course, in the first place, the Japanese had acquired a survey of a route to build a railroad from Rangoon to Indo-China, which is Saigon, which would cross that jungle which had never been crossed. Now the British didn't ever start that deal, as being impractical. In other words, they figured it was insurmountable. But the Japanese, using native labor which they forced to work for them and prisoners-of-war

that they happened to have accumulated, were determined to build that railroad and did build it. So you start out. Of course, when you're starting out, you're starting out close to civilization, and it's not as rugged. But you're finally just cutting your way right through a jungle.

Marcello: Now you were making primarily cuts and fills in your end of the railroad, isn't that correct?

Heinen: That's right. That's right. Our job was to move dirt, either fill in a hole or dig out a hillside, whatever was necessary. In other words, we were to make it level enough for the power of the engines to get across. Now this was done with a pick and a shovel and a yo-yo-type deal that you made out of bamboo. In other words, you made what looked like a stretcher with two bamboo poles through it. So people would dig the dirt if you were digging a cut, put it on the stretcher, and then other people would pick up the stretcher and carry the dirt whatever distance was necessary to either get rid of it or to fill in something with it, depending on what the terrain was. Sometimes it was just a matter of getting rid of it. Sometimes you were doing two jobs at once. While you were digging the cut, you were filling in

a hole ahead of you. That settled down to 2.2 cubic meters of dirt per man per day.

Marcello: That's what it started out as?

Heinen: That's what we finally were.

Marcello: Well, it started out much lower than that, and I gather they found that the Americans were fulfilling their quota quite early, so the quota was continually increased.

Heinen: Yes, that's true. In other words, the deal was that you got to go in when you got whatever your quota was done for the day. It did increase because at the start we were able to move the dirt. Then the particular dirt we were moving wasn't as rugged as some of the dirt that you. . .

Marcello: You were in much better physical condition at this point than you would be later on.

Heinen: That's true, yes. We were just beginning to be drained at this point. This was the start of the ulcers and all of the other hardships that you finally get into.

Marcello: Awhile ago, you mentioned the yo-yo holes, or I've heard them called yo-ho poles on occasion, also. How did they get that name?

Heinen: Damned if I know. I imagine it was some GI must have made it up. It was probably ours (chuckle).

Marcello: What was the terrain like that you were building this railroad through?

Heinen: Jungle.

Marcello: You mentioned, of course, that it was jungle--flat, hilly, mountainous?

Heinen: In the main, we were in more flat country. As you got farther into the jungle, you finally got into more rugged country. But we didn't. . . I don't remember working in country that rugged. I crossed over some of it. In other words, some of the bridges that other prisoners-of-war or other forced labor built were quite big.

Marcello: Describe what a typical camp was like.

Heinen: Well, a typical camp was like any. . . well, what they'd do is they'd just go in and clear out an area, preferably one that was relatively flat, of the size that they would need. Of course, everything is built of bamboo. You built your own huts at times, and at times the huts were already constructed by somebody else. But you split the bamboo, crush it, so to speak, longways. It'll flatten out and make, depending on the circumference of the bamboo,

it'll make anywhere from. . . cover six inches across to maybe a foot across. You'd tie that down with more bamboo that's shredded in a coarse, vine-type deal. In other words, it'd be much like. . . what's the brown cord that we used to tie things with?

Marcello: Binder's twine.

Heinen: Binder's twine, coarse binder's twine. However, this was natural. In other words, it wasn't a made thing. It was stripped off of a tree or whatever they took it off of. An atap is much like a palm leaf, a palm branch. You just take and layer those on top, and it makes an efficient roof.

Marcello: All of the buildings in the camp were constructed this way.

Heinen: That's right. Yes, that was it.

Marcello: Now were these buildings. . . were these camps. . . had they usually been prepared before you arrived?

Heinen: Mostly, yes. Somebody had gone in before us. I guess the Japanese, using native labor, had probably preconstructed those as they cleared the right of way of trees.

Marcello: Now in addition to building this railroad, there was also a road constructed beside it, was it not,



so that supplies could reach these camps as they progressed into the jungle?

Heinen: Yes, of course, we didn't spend a whole lot of time on the road.

Marcello: No, it was quite obviously a very, very primitive road because at times there was a lot of trouble getting supplies up to you.

Heinen: Of course, a road really consisted of just making a trail down. . . a useable. . . dodging stumps and right down the right of way that becomes the railroad. They cleaned out an area large enough to build their railroads, and they had access. . . it wasn't just exactly wide enough. It was a relatively wide area actually that they cleaned out. They must have moved one helluva lot of timber out of there. But your road would just be made by simple usage like a farmer does over his field. Of course, there would be places where you don't make a road because you can't get by (chuckle). So then we made a road.

Marcello: Did officers have to work on this railroad right alongside the enlisted men?

Heinen: We were divided into what they called a kumi. A kumi consisted of fifty work personnel and one officer. When you got out to the job, depending upon your

particular guard, you would be assigned either fifty portions of work or fifty-one, depending on who was your particular guard for the day, probably. Sometimes you could talk them out of it, and sometimes you couldn't. But I don't know of any officer who didn't work right along with the men, in the main. Quite often it was a whole lot more prudent for the officer not to work and sit up there and keep the damn guard out of everybody's hair than it was for him to work.

Marcello: In other words, the officer would, if he could, act as a buffer between the guards and the enlisted men.

Heinen: That's true. That's true. But I imagine that just day in and day out that I have personally shoveled as many shovelful as the next guy and personally. . . . except for one guy, who was a pick expert. He never did get on a shovel. He always used a pick, and he was good.

Marcello: This wasn't Charlie Pryor, was it?

Heinen: No, Charlie may have been another one, but this was a kid from Jacksboro, I believe. I know his name.

Marcello: As a result of trying to act as a buffer between the enlisted men and the Korean guards--and these were

Korean guards at this time--did the officers have to take quite a few licks?

Heinen: Oh, yes. I've gotten myself punched around quite often. But sometimes you couldn't take the licks. The man also had to take some licks. But in the main, with the guard, unless there was some higher personnel close by, you normally were able to circumvent quite a bit of the unnecessary beatings that would have occurred. You could kind of get to the guard.

Marcello: How would you do that?

Heinen: Oh, just by using common sense, just talk him out of it, so to speak. Let him hit you once or twice to satisfy himself. They didn't hit that hard all the time. Sometimes they. . . they're human beings, too. When you got right down to it, a Korean wasn't treated just one whole lot better than we were. So he was available, with a little soothsaying and a little savvy and a little human kindness even.

Marcello: Did you ever see any evidence of compassion on the part of these Korean guards?

Heinen: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Can you think of any examples?

Heinen: Oh, yes, I've seen them do things that were quite human and quite all right, such as pass a guy some food or something that he had on his. . . that he hadn't eaten. But that never lasted too long because anytime that the guards became available to the prisoners, then the Japanese worked over the guards. In other words, they were very careful that the guards didn't become associated too closely with the prisoners. If they noticed a guard being too lenient in their opinion or too friendly, they worked him over.

Marcello: Were most of the Japanese in these camps part of the engineering section? I use that term engineering loosely.

Heinen: They had. . . no, they had an engineering officer there. I recall on one instance where I was out on a deal, and I had a simple problem. I was cutting off a square, and I was trying to show the guard that the amount of dirt in this particular part was equal to a square hole. Well, that's kind of difficult to do. When I was doing that, a engineering officer of the Japanese came up on the scene. You had to be very careful now, most careful, because you're about to get yourself clobbered real good

because you can't show that you have too much knowledge because of fear that you might embarrass the Japanese personnel in front of that Korean guard, and then you're in real trouble. Well, in this particular instance, I was caught in a trap because I was kind of being baited a little bit. So I only recall that I got out of it without getting myself clobbered. But I didn't like it, I'll tell you that. That guy came up, and I didn't want to make the guard feel like he was. . . you had a real touchy deal. So I think I finally did it by kind of passing the buck to the engineer, telling him that we needed the amount of work to be described and let him draw it on the ground and forget it. You're going to quit arguing about how much he was. . .

Marcello: Did you ever have any nicknames for the Japanese or Korean guards?

Heinen: We did, especially in the first camp. You had the "Boy Bastard" and "The Basher" and. . . I've forgotten . . . we had a name for each one of them, I'm sure-- "Moon-face" or "Dog-face." There was one little guard that we called "Boy Basher."

Marcello: What did you call him?

Heinen: "Boy Basher." He was forever using his prerogative to knock a guy down for not saluting. But they all had names. I'm sure that we all had names among the guards.

Marcello: Did you ever try and sabotage the work on this railroad?

Heinen: I didn't, no.

Marcello: Did you ever see any evidence of this sort of thing taking place?

Heinen: Not just a whole lot. The only sabotaging that you could really do or get away with was just not finish your allotted work, which was possible. In other words, you could finally move the stakes and move in. Of course, the guards weren't too much opposed to this. They didn't want to stay out there any longer either. So in other words, if you've been working about fourteen hours, well, they were willing that you move the stake a little bit so that they didn't have to stay out there sixteen hours. But if you were building a bridge or something like that, there may have been a chance to sabotage it. But in my analysis, it didn't need to be sabotaged anyway. Their construction was held together by what would be equal to a big staple,

the same shape as a paper staple. Only in this case, they were usually about a half-inch cold-rolled iron bar, sharpened, bent, and sharpened on each end. You would stick one end of that into one log and one end into the other log. They're supposed to hold together, plus the weight factor holding them together. But when you watch the termites and other predators of the jungle get after a piece of wood that's been chopped down, and you watch the weather effects on the wood, you don't have to sabotage it. The son-of-a-gun's not going to stay there any length of time anyway. The first time something goes over it, you're bound to vibrate quite a few of those pins and things out of place to start with.

So the fear wasn't of sabotaging the damn things. The fear was that since you were going to have to ride over it to get to the next camp, the son-of-a-gun'd hold together. The people who were supervising that construction were still the Korean guards. Somebody came up and finally laid a pattern, but there wasn't that much supervision. But most of us felt like that we might have to ride over them. For God sakes, let's don't let them fall down with us on top of them! They're not going to stay there that long anyway.

Marcello: How about the railroad ties themselves? Did you have to cut those?

Heinen: I think they cut some of them. But what they did for track and ties and trains and engines and parts and switches was they just simply stripped all of that out of their. . . like Java. Java was just simply. . . all of that was just uprooted and shipped in for this railroad.

Marcello: I gather they were keeping a great deal of that material at Thanbyuzayat, which was the base camp, and then they would bring it up as the railroad progressed.

Heinen: I'm sure they did. Yes, that's right. That's right. But I don't remember us cutting too many ties. In the first place, it'd have been forever trying to cut the ties.

Marcello: Yes, because they would have been made out of teakwood, isn't that correct?

Heinen: Yes. Well, you had other types of wood. But no matter how you slice it, it would have been. . . you couldn't have made enough ties to count with an ax. The whole labor force couldn't do it.

Marcello: Was there ever any secret radios kept in any of the camps you were in?



Heinen: Oh, yes, yes, and much to my horror, really. A radio was a dangerous instrument, and there was no joke about what happened to the personnel who were caught with a radio, and it was not pleasant.

Marcello: Had you ever seen anybody that was caught with a radio?

Heinen: No, but I heard about them. I knew where the radio was at times. But there's something that you ought to learn, and I learned right quick. If you don't know, you can't tell, no matter what they do to you. In other words, if I don't know who had the radio, or if I don't know where the radio is, it don't make a damn what you do to me because I can't tell you. But if I do know, then I don't know--and I don't think any man knows--in fact, I don't think any man can really--or very, very few men--could really not finally be forced to tell something. So my personal philosophy was just don't know. Then no matter what they may suspect of me, and no matter what they do to me, I could never jeopardize anybody else. So I just didn't know. I didn't even try to find out.

Marcello: But there were radios in camp.

Heinen: Oh, yes.

Marcello: How did the news from the outside world get scattered among the prisoners?

Heinen: The British were probably responsible for this. The British are pretty damn clever about lots of things. Now a piece of news was never released to anybody that wasn't at least, say, three months old. Again, you may have been told by the Japanese themselves within that period of time, but if anybody happened to relate a current happening in the world, then. . . the Japanese had a force of like the Gestapo. Some of our officer personnel were actually picked up by them for buying a newspaper and held. Captain Parker and Major Rogers, I think, were picked up. But I've forgotten the name of their Gestapo or. . .

Marcello: Kempei.

Heinen: Kempei, yes, the Kempei. They were actually picked up.

Marcello: You mean these two officers had bought some newspapers from some local traders or something?

Heinen: Yes. That's right. The Kempei got a hold of them and took them into a special compound, worked them over a little bit. So radios were something that just didn't make sense. You're risking too much

for no real advantage, as I saw it. What you don't know is not going to hurt you. Sometimes if you know too much, you might get yourself into real trouble.

You can't beat the jungle. There's nobody going to get away in the jungle. Hell, you couldn't last two days in the jungle. Even if you got out of the jungle, in Rangoon or in Moulmein or any part of India, the first native that saw you would turn you in for two bits of their money, and there were millions and millions of them. So what are your chances? In the first place, you can't beat the jungle. In the second place, if you beat the jungle, you can't go anyplace anyway.

Marcello: How about clothing? By this time your clothing must have been wearing out. I'm sure the jungle just deteriorated the clothing pretty quickly.

Heinen: Clothing got real simple. Primarily you made yourself a pair of wooden clogs. You'd find some rags left of your clothing, which you never threw away, that made the hole. You'd drill a hole and make a thing to stick your toes through, just like you see them here on the market today, made out of rubber. Same thing. We cut them out of soft wood. That became

the shoe. Your clothing was a G-string. It was a coarse piece of material, usually dyed black, given to you by the Japanese. That was it. That was your clothing.

Marcello: In working on this railroad, did you ever encounter any sorts of . . . were snakes or anything like that a problem?

Heinen: No, the only snake I saw was a pretty good-sized one that somebody caught and tried to eat--a python. It was about ten feet long, maybe two or three inches big. Wildlife, we never encountered. I never saw a wild animal out of the jungle. But I'm very sure that you wouldn't have had to gone very far into the jungle to start picking up some snakes. But probably more damaging to you in the jungle than the animal would be the insects. A swarm of flies could wreck you right quick. Gnats were hot. Mosquitos could actually suck your blood dry. You'd get into a real thicket of them, and you might just get yourself just completely drained of all your blood by mosquitos alone. That's kind of hard to imagine that much insects, but, boy, you're talking about a jungle, not something that you see around the city or something that you've experienced!

You're talking about mosquitos that are in swarms!  
Nothing like you've ever seen.

Marcello: Did you ever see any evidence of any collaboration, that is, Americans who would do favors for the Japanese, such as informing on fellow prisoners in order to get better treatment?

Heinen: No, no, no. No, we didn't have that problem at all, to my knowledge. I don't think it happened in a single instance among the Americans.

Marcello: Let me get down and talk about a specific experience in the building of this railroad. It would have started in May of 1943, when the Japanese started their "Speedo" campaign. Now describe how things changed when the "Speedo" campaign was initiated.

Heinen: Well, of course, when the "Speedo" campaign was initiated, we were getting pretty ragged. The reason or the need for the "Speedo" campaign was that our work personnel had reduced itself to about 50 per cent. Of course, the first real drastic deal with the "Speedo" campaign is that for every sick man in camp, they cut the ration in half.

Marcello: That is, a sick man got half-rations.

Heinen: Half-ration instead of a full ration, which is just the reverse of what it needed to be. In the second

place, whereas we had been able to. . . say a man had his leg wide open with an ulcer or something, and maybe he had been able to be maintained in camp. They came out and said, "Well, there'll be twenty-five men per kumi, and we don't give a damn if he's dead. He'll be out here at four o'clock in the morning, or three o'clock in the morning, whenever we started." I personally had to go select those men and that becomes a hairy deal. So you're taking all of the available men who can walk. It's not a pleasant deal to try to select from one sick man to another sick man who's the sickest. So you know you can't be right. Quite often the problem would alleviate. Somebody'd get up off his bunk and say, "I'll go." Sometimes you just couldn't physically produce the men. You'd just tell them, "I just can't do it." You'd take your licks and let them go find out for themselves.

Marcello: How did you go about selecting the men?

Heinen: Just go in and just say, "Well, you're not as sick as he is. Get up." That makes you God. So it got down in my kumi to where there were two men and myself that could get out in the morning, and that was it.

Marcello: Now I gather also at the time that this "Speedo" campaign initiated, you were mainly at either the 80 or the 100 Kilo Camps.

Heinen: We were pretty far. . .

Marcello: I think they were perhaps the worse ones of the whole bunch.

Heinen: Well, we were into. . . among the other things that we were fighting. . . something else that the average man never understands--doesn't have to understand-- is that the monsoon season's something that's real and terrific. In the part of the world we are, the year is divided nearly exactly into two parts--one when it's raining, and one when it's not. That's nearly exactly, I mean, right to the day, nearly to the hour. Now the rain starts as a drizzle. One day when the rainy season starts, it starts drizzling. Misting would be a better word. The mist becomes a drizzle, and the drizzle becomes a rain, and the rain becomes a downpour. Then it'll reach its center point and go back down the line. Then it never rains again, not one drop. Now today you're standing in a camp that's built on a flat, that's completely dry. You can't find any water. After a month, after the

drizzle has become a rain--now this is twenty-four hours every day, see--then you're living in a swamp, actually physically going through about a foot of water anyplace you want to go. So there're fish swimming around in your camp that have been hibernated into the mud. They're too bony to eat, and they taste like mud. They're nearly impossible to eat. They are impossible to eat.

Marcello: Even as hungry as you were, you couldn't eat them.

Heinen: No, you couldn't eat them. So you got that condition. So you're going in to try to find some well men. You've got your sickest men and your men who just have no way to get up in what you call a hospital hut. Now the hospital hut is a foot and a half deep in water. The benjo or the potty facility's about maybe 100 yards out on a hill, but how in the hell do you get to it? It gets to be a rough deal. There are no well men. You have no well men. Everybody's got malaria. Most people have dysentery. I missed the dysentery, how I don't know. I never had dysentery.

Marcello: You were very fortunate.

Heinen: Yes, but I had the rest of it.

Marcello: Did you ever have any of the tropical ulcers?



Heinen: Yes, I had two.

Marcello: What particular remedy did you use to get rid of those tropical ulcers?

Heinen: Well, I'll tell you my remedy, which is an experience in itself. The first tropical ulcer I had was on my right big toe. It was just really starting, and I'd say it was about as big as a quarter. But it was very painful, and it was spreading. I went to the doctor and asked him if we had anything at all. He said, "No" which we didn't. I asked him what I might do about it, and the only remedy he had was warmth.

Marcello: What was the only remedy he had?

Heinen: Warmth.

Marcello: Warmth?

Heinen: Actually, we were doing it wrong. We should have put dry heat; we put wet heat. In other words, we'd boil water and soak a rag in it, and put it on the deal. Modern medicine would have frowned on that. If you used heat, it would be dry heat, not wet heat. So I laid down on my bunk and said, "Well, Mary, it's time to take care of your child." I said, "This is an ulcer. I can't stop it. I have nothing to stop it with, and I can't walk." I went into a very deep

sleep. I woke up the next morning, and there was only a scar left, just as if any wound had been cured for two years, and you have a white scar. Now the second ulcer I had was. . .

Marcello: But you have no idea what happened to cure it?

Heinen: Yes, I have an idea. A miracle was performed for me. I went to sleep with an ulcer that was beginning to spread--we were already beginning to have people become disabled completely with these ulcers--at four o'clock one afternoon. I woke up the next morning at six o'clock, and there is no sore. There is only a scar, as if it had been cured for two years.

The second one was on this right hand, maybe two years later. Our doctor had died. Our medical personnel were doing a terrific job. But somebody had to take over. So I took over and. . .

Marcello: This would have been in August, 1943, when Dr. Lumpkin died?

Heinen: That's right. We were, oh, I would say 50 per cent of our personnel was laying on its back in what we called the hospital hut. The other 50 per cent weren't in the hospital but should have been. I scratched myself on this. I was scrounging wood from the wood-cutting detail to make hot water for the kids in the

hut. When I couldn't scrounge. . . they wouldn't let me scrounge too much. The Japanese wouldn't let me scrounge too much. I was out cutting myself, which was about the biggest\_\_\_\_\_. I was washing the blankets. A guy'd have a bowel movement from dysentery all over everything he owns, and there was nobody to take care of it. So I was doing the normal routine deals that you try to do. Of course, you couldn't keep ahead of it. You couldn't keep up with it. I was allowed no help. The medical personnel were doing all they could do. You had a sergeant and a couple of enlisted men who were doing a terrific job.

Marcello: About how many people did you have in the hospital on an average, would you say, during this especially bad period that we're talking about now?

Heinen: Well, we had what we called the hospital hut. You couldn't move a guy out of the auxiliary hut into the hospital hut where the medical sergeant stayed with his two aides until somebody died. So I would guess that we had at least one-third of all of our personnel in those two huts that were still alive at that time. We had lost some men already. We were losing some pretty well right along. What happened

was that the ulcers finally get wide open. A whole man's leg would be open to where you can look in and see the bones and the tendons. There's no flesh except around the edge of the sore. But that's not what kills him. What kills him is that there's a poison set up by the sore itself that's being absorbed into the body, and the body finally just can't take any more of it. You have nothing to offset it with. So he finally. . . he just finally dies.

Then along with that, there's something else that very few people understand. Malaria's a heck of a deal. Malaria just knocks the crap out of you when it hits you. We had malaria on a twenty-one day cycle. So every twenty-one days, you're going to come down with an attack of malaria, and it lasts three or four days. Now I've taken a man's temperature, personally, myself--and the man did live, and is alive today, as far as I know--at 109°. At 109°! I carried him in myself at the end of the workday. The man would get up the next morning and go to work. At three o'clock in the afternoon or 2:30 in the afternoon, when I knew and he knew when that chill and fever were going to hit, he'd come out of the hole. We'd lay him down in the brush, and he'd go into a coma with his chills

and his fever. We had to carry him home because it'd still be with him. Then he'd get up and go to work again the next morning. This happened with many men.

Marcello: What substitutes did you use for medicine in the jungle? Quite obviously, there was no. . . the medicine had given out a long, long time ago, what little bit you had.

Heinen: That's right. You don't use a substitute because there were no substitutes. There were no substitutes. You just sweat it out, that's all. I got detracted from the malaria, which is very important in this sweating it out. The side-effect of malaria is a very depressing thing. Malaria itself brings on a depressed feeling in a man. It makes him not want to do, see. The thing with anybody with malaria, like for myself, it has. . . for a long many years, it seemed to have burned out. But the last few years as I've gotten older, it's come back. For about two years--when you first contacted me--I was having these malaria deals. You wake up in the morning and say, "Well, I'll go get something to do. I'll really get something done today." About ten o'clock, you begin to have a side-effect of it. About twelve o'clock,

when the wife comes home and says, "Well, why aren't you doing something?" you just tell her to go to hell. You won't do it. This is what you've got to fight. So you have these men sitting here with these tropical ulcers with all this poison going in there, and they're also being hit by malaria attacks, and they lose the will to live. You can't stop it!

Marcello: What is it like when somebody loses the will to live, when a person just gives up?

Heinen: Well, when a person just gives up under the conditions we were in--and I've faced this many times--you can just know he's going to be dead the day after tomorrow. You just know he'll be dead the day after tomorrow! You know he gives up when you can't reach him. In other words, you might try to reach him with sympathy. If he responds, well, okay. If sympathy doesn't work, you start calling his mother a whore and his grandmother a bitch and his daddy a drunkard. You just pick out the worst possible personal situation that you could imagine that might make him angry. If he won't get angry, he won't live. In other words, if you can't raise some response to some emotion, he's dead. You'll bury him the day after tomorrow.

Marcello: How did you take care of the dead people?

Heinen: Well, we went over and dug a grave on the hillside and wrapped them in their blanket and buried them and put a crude marker over them.

Marcello: Were records kept of these burials?

Heinen: No, we tried to. But who keeps the records when you get down to the will to live? Who gives a damn about records? You've got the whole kit and caboodle, and there isn't ten guys in the whole deal that aren't just trying to live. It's a stinky, nasty situation.

Marcello: Had Dr. Lumpkin been the only medical officer with your particular group?

Heinen: Right.

Marcello: Then when he died, you, in effect, became the medical officer?

Heinen: Well, I tried to help the medical staff to the best degree I could. At least I was an officer, and at least they respected me. They had somebody they could come to. They quite often wanted religious comfort. I was also the chaplain.

Marcello: How great a factor was religion in these camps?

Heinen: Off the surface, you would say that not very much. But deep down, it was more than you would also suspect. The great need. . . what bites you the worst was the fact that a man wanted to get with his God. He felt. . .

and he didn't know how. Since he didn't know how and couldn't really be simple about it, he put a shell around himself, so to speak, a little bit. To himself he may have been doing beautiful. I don't know. He probably was. But to realize that you had that many people who really didn't know how to pray was really something.

Marcello: How much sustenance do you feel that you yourself drew from religion?

Heinen: Well, I don't think I'd have. . . I don't think that it would have been different with me than it would have been with anybody else except for one thing. I think my belief was the difference. I'll put it this way. There were four or five Catholic priests of different nationalities--three Dutch, one Australian, and one British. The British, I didn't know too well. He was a young fellow. The Australian was pretty well with us in the camps. The two Dutch was pretty well with us in the camps. They weren't always in my particular camp, but I knew them, and they were in the camps. The Australian priest was the only guy who just walked in and out among the guards, without the guards and with the guards, and them threatening to shoot him, and walk into a hut where there was cholera. He'd



just flat go in and take care of the people and walk out. He didn't give a damn about nobody. I've seen the little Dutch priest, who was of small stature-- he couldn't have been over five foot seven or eight at the most. He weighed 120 pounds at his death, and 130 pounds when he was fat--do physical feats that you can't do. Do physical feats that you can't do! I've seen that larger Dutch priest do things that. . . you just can't do them. You just can't do that. He did them. They both did them. All three of them did them. You can't do them. I don't give a damn how well you are or how strong you are.

Marcello: Were these priests made to do the physical labor that the regular prisoners were?

Heinen: No, they were allowed to be priests. They were not interfered with. We weren't allowed all of the services that possibly they would have liked to have, but they weren't restricted, really. The Japanese were funny. Just like I told you, they never took a damn thing away from a man that I know of. With not only the priests, but the ministers--there were other ministers there that also did chores--but they weren't restricted from doing what they could, just like the doctors weren't restricted.

Marcello: How much contact did you have with native traders as you were building this railroad?

Heinen: I didn't personally have too much with natives, but again. . .

Marcello: I would assume that the farther you get into the jungle, the tougher it was to have any contact with the natives perhaps.

Heinen: Yes, yes. Of course, the natives were working right alongside of us most of the time. Not right along. . . but they were doing the same type of work under a different situation. They were forced to do it, just like we were forced to do it. But your trading was . . . of course, the farther you got away from the source of supply, well, the tougher the trading was. It got down to where I'm sure there was very little trading.

Marcello: This was especially true, I think, during the monsoon season that we talked about during the "Speedo" campaign because the monsoons washed out what road there was in many cases.

Heinen: Oh, yes, yes. That's right. We were there by ourselves there now. It was hard to get. . . I think we ran out of rice even.

Marcello: Well, this brings up an interesting point. I wanted to mention this next. During this "Speedo" campaign, the monsoons did wash out the road, and a lot of times, you didn't receive your food.

Heinen: That's right.

Marcello: Incidentally, what did your food usually consist of?

Heinen: At that time strictly rice, fish heads, and gourds, and that was it, strictly.

Marcello: Did you ever have any way of supplementing your diet in these camps?

Heinen: Every now and then somebody would find a leafy, green deal that'd be much like spinach or something, that was edible. Of course, you had to be kind of careful.

Marcello: What were some of the more exotic things that you ate?

Heinen: Hell, I don't know. Specifically, I don't know. But I do remember one specific deal that I never will forget. I was with a Naval officer. We looked at a little old deal that looked much like celery. It had some thorny leaf on it, but it looked like it would be edible. So he plucked it out of the ground--I can't think of his name offhand, but I will--I said, "Now be careful about just taking a big old bite of that thing." So he took something--he may have had a knife--and cut the root off of the stalk. We were

after. . . Brussels sprouts, is what I'm talking about. Something like, not a Brussels sprout, but broccoli or something with a stem and then a leaf. He was going to take a bite of it. I said, "Just hold on. Just go ginger about it." So he stuck his tongue on it, and it paralyzed him. I barely, barely and most gingerly touched it to my tongue. Boy, I'm telling you, I thought my whole tongue was going to fall out of my mouth. He'd gotten a pretty good taste of it, see. So you see, you just didn't walk up and use everything you saw.

Of course, some of the natives knew what you could do and what you couldn't. Of course, we were always delighted to find something that would be in the way of a green. But that didn't. . . you'd think there'd be more of it than what there was. Or I'll put it this way: we didn't know how to look for it. Of course, anybody who's trained for this type of duty knows how to take care of himself. They teach him what they can do and what all to eat and what he ought not and a whole lot of things that we'd eat. . . that we should have been eating that we didn't eat, I'm sure.

Marcello: Well, finally in October or November of 1943--I've seen two dates on this--the railroad was finally completed. They had a ceremony at Three Pagodas Pass. Did you perchance attend that ceremony?

Heinen: I don't recall that.

Marcello: Anyway, the Japanese had memorial services there for everybody who had died constructing the railroad and all this sort of thing. It was a rather hypocritical affair, from what the other prisoners tell me.

Heinen: Yes, it should have been. Well, from the way I understand it, as somebody--it was probably the British again, who have a knack of keeping track of these things better than we do--indicated that there was a native dead for every time he laid down a wooden crosstie. There would be a British or American or a Dutch or an Australian dead for every time he laid down a steel tie, or a steel track, which is a pretty costly railroad.

Marcello: After the railroad was completed, where did you go next? Do you go to Kanchanaburi? Was that your next stop?

Heinen: Yes, I was there.

Marcello: That must have been in about January of 1944.

Heinen: Then they had another camp that they sent what was termed the sickest men to.

Marcello: Tamarkan? Tamuang?

Heinen: Yes. I was finally sent there.

Marcello: Which one was it? Do you recall?

Heinen: Tamarkan, I'm sure.

Marcello: How long were you at Kanchanaburi?

Heinen: Well, let's see. That was kind of a rest deal after we got through with the. . .

Marcello: Yes, I gather it was a big camp, a huge camp.

Heinen: Yes. I believe that's the one that they bombed out one time.

Marcello: Yes. Did they do that while you were there?

Heinen: Yes. That was remarkable bombing. They had two supply huts. They had a fence that they had constructed out of bamboo in between those two huts and the compound. They came through there and knocked those two huts out and didn't get one piece of nothing across that fence.

Marcello: What did this do for your morale when you experienced this air raid?

Heinen: Oh, of course, the only time we ever saw a plane it was. . . for a long time, they didn't realize that we were in those camps. So when the boys wanted to

play around in those planes, couldn't find their targets or something, they often paid some of the camps a visit.

Marcello: This is while you were building the railroad?

Heinen: Yes. The first time I ever saw a B-24, it opened up at me directly with its two forward .50's. I didn't appreciate that a damn bit. Fortunately, fortunately for me, I was too close to it. I wasn't in that convergence pattern. In other words, it was shooting on both sides of me. That was my first experience with a B-24. I thought it was a whole damn side of a mountain flying through the air. I didn't know that they had such animals.

Marcello: Now this occurred when you were out on the railroad yet?

Heinen: Well, this particular day I was sicker than a dog. We had a tenko, which was a counting ceremony every night to count the number of noses that were still in camp. The only difficulty with that ceremony was that nobody that was in charge of it knew how to count past ten. So it would take quite some time to count the prisoners because nobody really knew how to count. We had seen some planes off in the distance, and we began to get nervous. After all, it was a

whole bunch of people congregated in one big-ass mass standing out in the open. I'm sicker than nine kinds of hell. I said, "Well, the hell with this tenko," and I started out to the hut. I couldn't move very fast. So there was a shortcut over a bare knoll between me and the jungle. The shortest route for me to get to the jungle was to go through the hut and over this knoll. About the time I got on top of that knoll, that's when that airplane came flying over the top of those trees with everything wide open. Of course, everybody had beat it down into the jungle by that time. They just said, "The heck with this counting" and everybody scrambled. So that was my first experience. Once or twice they dropped some bombs down the tracks we were working on.

Marcello: Well, what did this do for your morale? At least it was evidence that perhaps the allies were taking the offensive and winning.

Heinen: Of course, it always helps your morale. You could have heard them bombing from a distance away, which would have been more of a morale-builder than them coming saddling up with their damn .50 caliber machine guns at you. We actually had a man killed in the raid. Not in this particular raid. It was not an



American; it was a Dutchman. He was the third man that was on behind a big tree. They were walking this way (gesture). He just didn't. . . he was always one man short, and a stray shot just picked him off at the end of that line. So we would be much more influenced morale-wise if we weren't the targets (chuckle). Well, I think we lost a man down in one of those first camps.

Well, of course, to me, my morale didn't need building. In other words, it never had. . . it never, never occurred to me that we weren't going to win the war and that I wouldn't come home. I just never, never had a thought. I got discouraged at the length of time at times. After all, you've been there three and a half years, and it's time for somebody to do something. I've often thought about these boys that just came back that'd been in North Vietnam for seven years. I don't see how they lasted seven years. But you've got to remember that every time we saw a plane that was ours, we were sitting on a secondary target. I never saw a plane of ours where I wasn't sitting on their target. So we weren't too damn keen about planes (chuckle). Now it's not that every time we saw a plane that they used the target. But every

time I saw a plane that was in seeable range, I'm subject to being hit.

Marcello: What was the Japanese reaction when these planes came over?

Heinen: They took out. They took out.

Marcello: Did you ever notice any change in their attitudes toward you?

Heinen: No, because that was pretty well controlled. Now again, we never saw the sergeant too often, unless it was drastic and he wanted to really work somebody over for some infraction. Or the corporals, as a matter of fact, we didn't see too often. We were always seeing the Korean guards directly. Now the officer, the colonel, would come by twice or three times during the whole "shebang." I believe that we physically saw him maybe three times in the whole period of time, as I recall it. The Japanese themselves were never, never there. But everybody, when the planes started flying in the vicinity of a camp, flat took out to the jungle, including the Japanese. So there was nothing there to fire at them. They had no weapons to fire at a plane and no personnel, really.

Marcello: After you left the railroad and got out of the jungle, you mentioned that you were at Kanchanaburi for a little

while and then maybe at Tamarkan or Tamuang, you can't remember. Were you only at each of these places for just a short period of time?

Heinen: Well, I was moved out of the rest camp. I didn't know why I was moved. I didn't think I was that sick, but somebody probably did. I was shipped out to what they called the hospital camp. I guess it was two or three months that I was there. It might have been longer.

Marcello: Where were you when the war ended or when you were freed?

Heinen: We were up in north--north or south, which depends on which way you look at it--toward China from Saigon.

Marcello: But you were not in Saigon itself?

Heinen: No, we came in. . . I say it's Saigon. . . which one's right on the coast there?

Marcello: That would be Saigon.

Heinen: There's another. . . there's another place in there that's not on the coast. It's inland from. . . it's friendly to our situation now. Which one is that?

Marcello: It wasn't Bangkok?

Heinen: Bangkok. . .

Marcello: Well, be that as it may, describe the circumstances leading up to your liberation.

Heinen: Well, we had been shipped up into the mainland. I remember we were shipped on a sampan up the river for quite a long ways. There was no room again. You were packed into that like you've been packed into everything else. We were being sent into an area where we were to start on a regular road presumedly to go on up into China itself, which would have been some undertaking.

Marcello: About how many of you were there at this time?

Heinen: Quite a few of us. They were being staged into this area. I guess we were all there finally. But we really hadn't done a whole lot of work on that road. We were just kind of sitting there stymied at the time. The actual work on the road had been curtailed, probably due to the course of the war and probably a lack of command or knowledge or instructions down to the people in the camp itself as to what. . . and maybe the engineers hadn't come out there to start the work program or lay out the route or whatever it might be.

Incidentally, before that. . . now when we were being moved. . . well, there are two or three instances. I remember being on the train coming back from the hospital camp to the staging camp or the rest camp

with the sick. Among the sick was a fellow by the name of John Stivers, who was a reserve officer, a pilot, that had been on the Houston. Stivers had a brain tumor. At the hospital camp was an Australian surgeon that happened to be a brain surgeon, among other things. We made an instrument out of a saw blade, a circular saw. We had found in this hospital camp an old dental drill that you hand pump to make the. . .

Marcello: What kind of a drill?

Heinen: A dental drill.

Marcello: Oh, a dental drill.

Heinen: They used to pump it to drill your tooth with. That was before you were born probably. But before they were powered electrically, you used to have like an old sewing machine. You'd sit there and the dentist would pump with his foot and drive his drill to drill out the cavity. We performed a brain operation on John Stivers in the camp.

Marcello: What'd you use for an anesthetic?

Heinen: Whatever they concocted or made. A Dutch doctor had made something out of. . .

Marcello: Sometimes they would give them a spinal injection, too, would they not?

Heinen: Well, this was a local. It was something he made out of some kind of herbs or something he found.

Marcello: Now did this operation take place while you were still working on the railroad, or was this afterwards?

Heinen: This is while we were in the. . . I had been moved from the rest camp after we'd been pulled off the railroad to rest up to the hospital camp. John was already at the hospital camp.

Marcello: Now this was after the railroad had been completed and everything of that nature?

Heinen: Yes, yes. In order to get there, we had to cross over the bridge on the River Kwai, which had two big holes in it. I actually walked across it. It'd obviously been hit by two bombers. It had two big chunks out of it, but they had walkways across the chunks. We actually walked across that bridge. We loaded on a train that we were going in from there but. . .

Marcello: Well, how did you get the word that the war was over and that you were about to be liberated?

Heinen: The first time I heard that the war was over we had crossed the bridge and had stopped at some other river. There was a native standing on the bank over there. He indicated that the war was over.

Marcello: This is why you were working on this road or were stymied while working on this road?

Heinen: No, we were enroute to it. Possibly he was indicating that the Americans had bombed Nagasaki with the big bomb or something and that the war was about to be over. Of course, he was a native, and the Japanese were hustling him away from there. It was kind of difficult to really understand, since we had no knowledge at all. Now we knew that they had perfected a nuclear device. We did know that. There was a fairly knowledgeable kid out of the Australians who had some nuclear training, and he tried to explain to us what it was. I remember laughing at him when he was describing the force that such a bomb would have. I kidded him along with everybody else as being out of his mind. But he wasn't (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, anyhow, what did the Japanese guards do when they got the word that the war was over?

Heinen: We actually were in the last camp, which was the staging camp for the commencement of the work that would have been to build a road into China. They simply walked over one morning and said, "The war is over, and you all are free."

Marcello: Did they disappear?

Heinen: No, no. We told him that we wanted a truck, and we wanted to go get some meat, which we went and did. We couldn't eat it because it was too tough. Just couldn't eat it. We bought a yak and killed it. It was not edible.

Marcello: What were your feelings when you found out that the war was over?

Heinen: Of course, they were great. Of course, we had been frightened. I mean, I had been. The fear was that if the war was going in your favor that they would simply open up with their damn machine guns and just shoot you all.

Marcello: Had they indicated as such?

Heinen: Oh, from time to time there had been some talk. But, after all, you're with a bunch of people who have a very strong belief in what they believe in. They were very capable of such an action, and you knew it. At least, I knew it. I'd always hoped that we'd be in a spot where that couldn't happen. But I couldn't realize how it would come about. You visualize being liberated by a bunch of Americans and soldiers coming in in their fighting uniforms. But that wasn't the case at all. We're sitting there one morning, and we all were expecting it then. We knew that something



had happened. The Japanese--in this case, it was an officer--came over--he wasn't that colonel--and told us that the war was over, and that we were free men. We told him that for the best sake of everybody he should take him and his men and stay in his compound, and we'd stay in ours. We said, "We want a truck," which he gave us.

Marcello: Was there anybody that ever wanted to exact revenge against these Japanese guards?

Heinen: At that moment, no.

Marcello: Did they hang on to their weapons?

Heinen: Yes, we told them to keep them.

Marcello: I guess the joy of liberation overcame any feelings of revenge.

Heinen: Well, what we were concerned with was the fact that we weren't going to have to go to work on that damn road and the rest of us die. The other concern was to get something to eat. The other was how in the hell were we going to get out of there.

Marcello: How long was it before the Americans finally came?

Heinen: Well, we got ourselves moved down to. . . immediately we went on back into Saigon and found a big warehouse where we. . .

Marcello: You were now on your own? You went back into Saigon on your own? You weren't with anybody?

Heinen: No, we all went together.

Marcello: Well, I mean as a unit, but the Japanese weren't with you or anything of that nature?

Heinen: We must have asked them for. . . or they furnished a train. I think we went back on a train, not the boat. Gosh, it's hard to remember. We must have gone by truck to a train, and then from a train we must have gone into Saigon.

Marcello: Well, be that as it may, what was your reaction when you saw your first Americans?

Heinen: Well, the first American I saw was an Air Force colonel who had flown in from Rangoon. He surveyed the situation. We'd set up a contingency for leaving. We had received word that they were going to come in and fly us out of there. Now at that time, the British figured that they'd fly all prisoners-of-war out. So the British had the senior officer, and he was separating so many British and so many Americans and so many of the other nationalities. That colonel came in and said, "The hell with that." He just picked up all the Americans and put them on a truck, went out to the plane, and loaded them on the plane. We went

and picked up John Stivers, who I'd put in the hospital there, and we were in Rangoon a couple of hours later.

Marcello: As you look back on your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as having pulled you through more than anything else?

Heinen: Oh, of course, I think that the biggest motivating force to me would have to have been that you had a responsibility to a whole lot of guys that needed somebody to be responsible for them and who reciprocated. Now in the first place, one man doesn't do anything by himself. In other words, I don't care who they pin a medal on, he doesn't do it by himself. My expression is that 10 per cent of the people do 90 per cent of the work. Ten per cent of the people in that camp were of equal importance in anybody's commendations as myself. So you just feel good as hell. Of course, that air trip back to. . . they flew us into Rangoon. Then from Rangoon we went over to Calcutta. Where did we stop? Where in the hell was the hospital? We landed someplace and then flew into Rangoon, didn't we? Then after the hospital at Rangoon, we stayed there several days. Then those that were cleared as having not worms or something else that they could carry back to the States with them were put on a plane

and flown all the way back around the world to the  
United States. I landed in New York.