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Interview with
Mr. Dean M. McCall
February 26, 1971

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. Dean McCall for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place in Denton, Texas, on February 26, 1971. I'm interviewing Mr. McCall in order to get his experiences and reminiscences while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. McCall, first of all, would you please give us a brief biographical sketch of yourself--where you were born, when you were born, your education, and so forth.

Mr. McCall: I was born January 28, 1921, Wellington, Kansas. Raised in Kansas until 1939. I attended one year of junior college at Arkansas City, Kansas, at which time then I entered the service on December 18, 1939.

Dr. Marcello: Now you said that was Arkansas College?

Mr. McCall: Arkansas City Junior College.

Dr. Marcello: I see. And Wellington, Kansas, was where you were born?

Mr. McCall: Yes.

Dr. Marcello: Okay, fine. Why did you decide to join the service?

Mr. McCall: Oh, I was getting a little impatient. It was considerable

time before the draft was even passed, but it was on a fluke. A couple of the other fellows wanted to go into the service, and I was the only one that left and went. But, by the way, I had to eat seven pounds of bananas to get in. I was underweight. And I thought about that many a time, too. But then I proceeded to March Field, California. And I was with the 19th Bombardment Group, Headquarters and Headquarter Squadron. And then we moved to Albuquerque Air Base in April of 1941.

Marcello: You were in the Army Air Corps then, I assume. Is that correct?

McCall: Yes, yes. I was in armament and then later on was sent to a transportation school as a mechanic and stayed in there until Bataan. We moved from Albuquerque in approximately September of '41 to Clark Field in the Philippine Islands. We arrived around October 31, 1941.

Marcello: Did you have any idea that the country would soon be plunged into war at that particular time, that is, when you were on your way to the Philippines or even when you first got there?

McCall: Well, yes, because we traveled blackout from Hawaii, and all leaves were cancelled. Nobody got off the ship. We traveled blackout, and we dumped our garbage at night. And then after arriving at Clark Field we began digging trenches.

Marcello: That was going to be my next question. What did you do upon arrival at Clark Field? Now Clark Field is close to Manila.

Is that correct?

McCall: Yes, about eighty kilometers. We dug trenches and not too much defense was set up. But we just went about our normal routine until the . . . well, we did have some blackouts the last two weeks.

And, of course, we heard about the war at four o'clock in the morning. Nobody was awake, of course, but . . . I wasn't. And then about 12:30 we were taking a nap, and we had an air raid, and of course, my partner and I decided maybe we better go into our station. And we looked out and counted twenty-one ships, looked like the B-18 class. We never saw that many before in the whole United States Air Corps. So everybody ran right to their stations, and they ran into all the main fire power. I guess there was strafing and bombing, and more casualties were received there than if they stayed at the barracks, really.

Marcello: Okay, let's go back just a little bit. What were your first impressions when you had heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor? Do you recall off hand?

McCall: I had no idea what to expect.

Marcello: Obviously, like you say, this happened on December the seventh, our time and our date, and then the Japanese hit Clark Field on December the eighth, is that correct?

McCall: I thought it was the seventh.

Marcello: Maybe it's the same day. Oh, wait, it would have been the

seventh, your day.

McCall: Yes, I believe it was. Because it was four o'clock in the morning when they were hit at our time in the Philippines. And of course, it was about 12:30 in the day, and I was thinking it was the seventh. But it could have been the eighth. It's hard to say, really.

Marcello: Okay, so this was your first initial contact, I guess you could say, with actual war--these planes coming over. You referred to them as B-18's. This was a Japanese-type bomber?

McCall: They were two-engine bombers. They resembled in the air a little bit of the old B-18 that we used to have.

Marcello: Oh, I see. That's why you called them B-18's. Is that correct?

McCall: Right, right. When I first went in the Air Corps, B-18's were all we had. And we had, I think, the only complete group of B-17's available at that time. Some may have been sent to England. I believe we had the B-24 and B-25 at Albuquerque Air Base there for a while. That was the first ship I'd ever seen with a nose wheel. But I think we had thirty-six, thirty-seven B-17's. These had no tail gunners. And if my information is right, we lost approximately half of them on the ground that day.

Marcello: Just how prepared was Clark Field for any type of, well, let's say an air attack?

McCall: Well, not too much. They had some antiaircraft guns and, of

course, they had some machine guns set up here and there. They had the old Marlin round guns, and they had antiaircraft shells that would go only so high. Truthfully, as far as modern equipment, there wasn't too much.

Marcello: This is the impression that I received from several other ex-prisoners who had been captured on the Philippines. They all complained about the fact that much of the equipment was obsolete, and one of them even mentioned the same thing that you did, that is, that the antiaircraft guns, the shells, couldn't reach the airplanes. They exploded at altitudes under the airplanes, actually.

McCall: That's true. And then, of course, remember that your old Marlin with the case, the round case, was the sum of our machine guns. Of course, later on they took the .50 calibers of the B-17's and used them in some cases when they could. Of course, the rifles of the day were the Springfield and Enfield. I've seen one Browning, and I don't believe I've seen any . . . what are they?

Marcello: The Garand.

McCall: Garand?

Marcello: The Garand, yeah.

McCall: I don't recall. I understand we had a few, but I've only seen one Browning. And the rest were Springfield and Enfield rifles. And the Springfield was much better than the firing mechanism on the Enfield as far as I'm thinking.

Marcello: What were your first reactions? What were you thinking when you heard the air raid sirens go off?

McCall: I just figured it was another drill. And, like I say, we had no intentions of going to our designated stations.

Marcello: Now, you said that Pearl Harbor took place sometime during the night. So obviously you hadn't known anything about Pearl Harbor yet. Is that correct?

McCall: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Oh, you did?

McCall: We knew it the next morning as soon as we got up.

Marcello: Oh, I see.

McCall: At breakfast we were told. And, of course, we just went about our duties as normal until around 12:30, approximately 12:30, when we had the alert. Then, like I said, we didn't think much about it until I counted twenty-one ships. Then I knew that something was wrong. So we went ahead to our designated stations.

Marcello: Well describe the action as it took place, or as you remember, that is, the actual bombing raid.

McCall: As I remember it, I can remember that I was heading for this foxhole where I was supposed to be. And I remember a man sticking his foot in a P-40 and a P-38, and he got a direct hit. And, of course, we were bombed and dive bombed and strafed there for quite a while. And I can remember what I thought were flying ants, but it was termites in the whole sky. We had some tents in back of us where the oil drums were blowing

up. I'd say it was ten or fifteen yards, maybe not that far. And I believe the only thing that kept us alive was the fact that the wind would catch the flame as they blew up and blow the flame away from us.

Marcello: You were talking about termites. I don't quite understand.

McCall: Well, the sky was full of what I call flying ants.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: They were termites. I guess. That's what I was told. But they were just thick. And, of course, I guess the bombs had hit their nest or something. And I can remember one gun over here firing. This guy just had a dug out. And it stopped during the course of the action. And I was next to a man by the name of Lieutenant Burgess. He was an officer from A & M College here. He went to flight school, and I guess he flunked out, and so they were going to make him a navigator. I'm not sure about that. Now, some of them at that time were made navigators. And he was on one side, and "Doggie" was on the other. I don't know the man's name. He just joined our outfit.

Marcello: Well, was this man you referred to "Doggie?"

McCall: Yeah. He was a private.

Marcello: D-O-G-G-I-E.

McCall: That's what they called them.

Marcello: Oh, that's just a general name?

McCall: General name. And I can remember him praying. And I wished

he'd shut up. (Chuckle) And, of course, we got strafed. They made several passes right by our trench where they were hitting. In fact, they bracketed us twice. And I guess there were fifteen-twenty men in that trench. And this Lieutenant Burgess . . . we had a little lull, and I thought, boy, I'm thirsty. And somebody said, "Do you want a cigarette?" And I took one. Burgess took one, and he didn't smoke. And the sort of humorous part was . . . so they started strafing us again, and Burgess would look up like this (gesture). I remember looking at him. He just started puffing. And as fast as those planes would go by, why, he'd puff it. Just made a hot coal out of that cigarette. In two passes, why, he'd smoked the cigarette up. (Chuckle) And that was about the extent of it.

Marcello: About how long did this raid take? How long did it last?

McCall: Well, I would say around forty-five minutes to an hour.

Marcello: Probably felt like it lasted a lot longer than that.

McCall: Yes. And I'm not sure it lasted that long, but it was quite a while.

Marcello: What did the field look like after you emerged from the trenches and after the planes had left?

McCall: Well, it . . .

Marcello: What sort of damage had been done?

McCall: Quite a bit of aircraft wrecked. Quite a few trucks. Had been quite a few men killed. A few gasoline tanks had had

direct hits. I understood that out of our group, or squadron, we lost between 200-300 men. But they run right into the field of attack. And this was bad.

Marcello: Apparently, the Japanese were after those B-17's . . .

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: Those "Flying Fortresses."

McCall: And as I understand, Colonel Eubanks had . . . Colonel Eubanks was the commander of the bombardment group. But I understood that he took some ships down to Mindoro. That was the only reason they didn't get 'em all.

Marcello: Why were the B-17's remaining at the field anyhow? Don't you think it was quite obvious that, if the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, the Philippines were certainly a likely target, and those bombers would have been a target.

McCall: Well, it was my understanding that this was Eubanks' orders until they told him what to do. And, of course, you can hear a lot of rumors. Knowing Eubanks and hearing the rumor that he wanted to attack Formosa, however, they say that he was refused and told to stay put. I understand that he took half of these ships off the ground without an okay from our government. And I feel that's the only reason why we had any of them left.

Marcello: What did you do after the raid?

McCall: Well, we started taking carburetors off the trucks and, you know, getting as much of the equipment as we could. And then

actually we went into the jungle that night and stayed.

Marcello: You mean you were salvaging the trucks. Is that what you were doing--gathering parts off the trucks?

McCall: Gathering all we could, yes. And then, of course, picking up a few of the dead, and then we moved into the jungle that night.

Marcello: What did you do in the jungle?

McCall: Well, we just dug the trenches.

Marcello: Oh, I see. You were just there for the night.

McCall: We bivouacked there.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: In fact, we bivouacked there the rest of the time. Then we'd go back to the field and work.

Marcello: In other words, you simply assumed that the Japanese probably were going to come back sooner or later to finish off the job, and consequently it was best to be at least away from the field part of the time anyhow.

McCall: Well, this is true. They strafed the barracks. And some of them had been bombed too. Mainly they bombed the field.

Marcello: When did the Japanese come back again?

McCall: You know, I'm trying to remember. It don't seem like it was until the next day. A lot of things happened then that I can't recall. They hit us several times after that, but I can't recall the date or too many incidents . . .

Marcello: How many times? Do you recall how many times they did come

back to the field and try to finish off the job?

McCall: Well, they didn't come back that day. They done it pretty well. They hit us several other times with dive bombers, but the job was pretty well done by that time. And, of course, I was in and out of Clark Field. I went on a detail up towards Baguio. The idea was to try and get as much of this high octane gas out. We put it in barrels.

Marcello: Were you a truck driver of some sort? What was your function?

McCall: Mechanic.

Marcello: You were a mechanic.

McCall: So we went up and we got two or three loads out, and then they had to blow it up. They was moving in that fast. Then we come back to Clark, and they were evacuating to Bataan at that time. It was around Christmas time when we were evacuated to Bataan. I didn't think we were there that long.

Marcello: In other words, after the Japanese had landed, it was at that time then that you moved to Bataan. Is that correct?

McCall: Well, within a few weeks after that.

Marcello: Right. Surely, right. What was the purpose in sending everybody to Bataan?

McCall: The purpose?

Marcello: Right.

McCall: Well, it was a plan, I guess, that was drawn up years before. It was the only logical way that we could defend the Philippines--with Corregidor, Bataan, and so on. There was no

other way to actually defend it, was my understanding.

Marcello: What was the trip like from Clark Field to Bataan? Did anything eventful happen during that trip?

McCall: From Clark Field?

Marcello: Right.

McCall: No. Actually, when we were hauling a load of gasoline, they had a pursuit plane over us, and the . . . he come down low several times, but he never did strafe us. And then we went into Clark Field one night after something. I don't know what it was. We couldn't find anybody, so we left. And that's about all. It was just normal routine.

And the big thing I can remember is Christmas eve and seeing a tree with fireflies in it. It looked like a Christmas tree going off and on. And there was an ole boy sitting in that truck singing a war chant--a Hawaiian war chant. Nothing really eventful happened there.

Marcello: Well, you said that you went back to Clark Field after one of these fuel runs, and there was nobody there. Had you known what would have happened to the people? Had you know that they had already evacuated to go to Bataan?

McCall: Well, we got suspicious and sent in a group, and they couldn't find anybody. And they weren't sure whether the Japanese were coming in on the other side or not. So we turned around and went back.

Marcello: When you say you went back, you went back to Baguio?

McCall: Well, beyond Baguio. We went on down . . . we were on the far end of Bataan. We were just beyond Baguio--between Baguio and Mariveles, I believe. Is that right?

Marcello: Mariveles, uh-huh. Well, how did you find out then that everybody was at Bataan?

McCall: Well, we were ordered down there, and then we went back. We went down, and then we went back on this trip. See, we'd already been . . .

Marcello: Oh, I see. You had gone from Clark Field to Bataan.

McCall: And then went back.

Marcello: Oh, I see. And then went back to Clark Field.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: What was the purpose in going back?

McCall: To pick up some kind of supplies.

Marcello: I see. And by that time the field had been completely evacuated.

McCall: We didn't find anybody.

Marcello: Right. And then you made your way back to Bataan again--back to the peninsula. And all transportation was by truck, I assume.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: Or car or some sort of motor vehicle?

McCall: Motor vehicles, yes. Mostly by truck.

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

McCall: Well, we were assigned to certain areas, and we were sent out

on trips of hauling supplies and bringing them back. And one group went into Manila and was cut off, which I luckily missed. I was supposed to go. And they proceeded to sit in a bar and get drunk that night. And then the next evening we had fall-out for beach defense. It turned out that all the people from Manila had got the bancas and started across to the bay. And these boys that were trapped there got back okay even though they weren't sober. (Chuckle) They spent the night in the banca. Anyway, that was our beach defense. And primarily that's about all except, you know, just hauling supplies back and forth until Bataan fell.

Marcello: Approximately how long were you on Bataan altogether?

McCall: I believe it was 'til the end of March, first of April, if I'm not mistaken. And at this time I went to Corregidor.

Marcello: So in other words, you were on Bataan for about approximately three months maybe?

McCall: About that.

Marcello: Two and a half-three months, something like that?

McCall: Uh-huh.

Marcello: I assume that you never really made any contact--you personally--did not make any contact with the Japanese on Bataan. Because you said you escaped over to Corregidor.

McCall: Right, right.

Marcello: What exactly . . . what were your feelings, you know, when you were told that the Japanese were obviously overrunning the

Bataan Peninsula, and that you were now ordered to go to Corregidor?

McCall: Well, now wait a second. (Chuckle) Of course, we knew it was coming. There was no doubt about this. We didn't have any airplanes, and we were down to moldy rice. And beriberi began to creep up along with malaria.

Marcello: Dysentery?

McCall: We didn't run into too much dysentery. I'm sure there was quite a bit there. Malaria was our big bugaboo in most of us. Of course, we were up to the front and back at different times, and we had a pretty good feeling of what was going to happen.

Marcello: I see. You were running supplies, in other words, from the beaches or from that rear area up to the front and so on.

McCall: Right.

Marcello: I assume that as time a . . . went on the amount of supplies that you were running up to the front became less and less.

McCall: That's true. That's true. It cut down considerable. Of course, there wasn't much there after a certain time. We were paying two hundred dollars for a carton of cigarettes--if you could buy 'em. Of course, a lot of this was being sold to the civilians, and the black market was already in operation.

Marcello: Near the end what were your rations consisting of? When I say near the end, I mean the end of your stay on Bataan.

McCall: Watery rice and I remember we shared an eight-ounce can of salmon with eight men. And we were down to rations once a day.

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

McCall: I was fine, except for malaria. I kept having bouts of this. In fact, I was put in the hospital, and the next day they put a bomb in our ward. It didn't level it, but there was no room for malaria patients. Then I went back to the outfit. We were . . . this buddy of mine and I were on the top bunk-- about the fifth bunk. About as high as these shelves here. And, of course you can tell. You can hear bombs coming. And I hit a cement floor first, and him on top, and the rest of them on top of me, and it didn't even hurt. (Chuckle) But then we made it outside, and we got into some kind of a straddle fence with a metal deal over the top. And then two or three big boulders had lit on top of that after the bomb was over. And then we returned to our outfit after this, because there just wasn't much of the hospital left.

Marcello: This was still on Bataan now. Is that correct?

McCall: Oh, yes.

Marcello: When you got the orders to go to Corregidor, was the trip over to Corregidor eventful, or what happened there?

McCall: Well, we had Filipinos coming through our area, and we knew Bataan had fallen. And so the lieutenant took us, and we started out. And the road was jammed. And we got almost to Mariveles, and he said, "Well, everybody can go on their own." And not having any food to speak of, we had already made up our mind that we were going to the mountains because it was

all jungle or Corregidor. And we got a ride on a tug at the last minute. Then they blew up the Canopus or an ammunition ship as we were going across. I thought we'd had it then. So that was about it. It was every man for himself, really.

Marcello: And you just happened to get on a tug that was on its way to Corregidor. Is that correct?

McCall: It was lucky. I guess it was lucky. No, it was lucky from this fact that I could have never made that march due to malaria.

Marcello: When you say "that March" you are referring, of course, to the Bataan Death March.

McCall: Right. And I didn't even make it fifteen miles.

Marcello: At this particular time did you have any thought of possibly surrendering?

McCall: No, at no time. I think we always felt that maybe there might be some miracle that would come through. I don't think anybody really knew how bad the situation was.

Marcello: Were there rumors going around that the Japanese didn't take prisoners?

McCall: No.

Marcello: I just wondered if there was anything such as this going around.

McCall: No, I don't think anybody thought anything about being prisoners. I remember on my birthday having a can of beans, pork and beans that night. That's all I'd had. I had turned twenty-one, and I wondered if I would ever vote or if I'd ever get

married. That's quite a feeling. (Chuckle)

Marcello: I guess so. What was Corregidor like when you landed there?
I assume it had been hit a couple times by this time, also.

McCall: Well, yes. It had been hit a lot by bombers more than anything else. It just looked like a big chunk of rock to me. And the fortifications that went around some part of the islands . . . you know, if you looked at it and it was all cement trenches and this. And it's my understanding that they started to fortify the island with pillboxes and everything, but they made some type of agreement with the Japanese in '28 or something of that type, and they stopped all fortification.

Marcello: They did. This is true. This is true.

McCall: I believe Malinta Tunnel, I forget what was out on the Navy Point. It was a Navy tunnel. Anyway, I put on a beach defense with the 4th Marines at Henderson Field on the lower side, Monkey Point.

Marcello: Monkey Point, right. Now where is this in relation to Manila Bay? Is this looking into Manila or was this on the outside?

McCall: I would say looking on . . . into the Bay.

Marcello: What did you do while you were on this beach defense duty?
Dig trenches and that sort of thing or . . .

McCall: Well, there had been some trenches dug already, and we just mixed with the Marines. They had assigned us definite areas. Of course, we were under considerable shelling, so mainly there wasn't too much bombing after that.

Marcello: Now you were, of course, subjected to both the bombs and artillery shells. Which did you consider the worst? I mean they were both bad, of course. But which one was the worst?

McCall: Well, the bombing in one way I always figured was the worst. The shelling was for the time.

Marcello: What do you mean when you say the shelling was for the time?

McCall: Well, it would go on for several hours where the bombing would be over quickly. You could hear bombs hitting, and when you heard them hit on the other side, why, you were safe. They would be gone, anyway. But I believe I had more fear of the bombs than anything. The air raid siren or just a siren used to bother me quite a bit for years after the war. And the bombing, I believe, was worst to me. Now shelling could have been, but at the time it didn't seem to effect me.

Marcello: Had you been subjected to very much shelling on Corregidor, that is, in your particular areas?

McCall: Yes, yes.

Marcello: There was quite a bit. Was it daily?

McCall: No, I wouldn't say it was daily, but it was often enough. It would last for several hours. I didn't even record how long.
(Chuckle)

Marcello: I'm sure you didn't. Well, after you had established your beach defenses there on Monkey Point, what exactly was your role? Now you'd been a mechanic. Obviously, there wasn't too many things you could do so far as being a mechanic on Corregidor.

McCall: They had assigned us as riflemen.

Marcello: I see. You were given a rifle . . .

McCall: Right.

Marcello: . . . and were set up on beach defenses.

McCall: With the 4th Marines.

Marcello: Well, as time went on in Corregidor, of course, rations grew pretty low there, too, did they not?

McCall: Well, they were considerable better than ours. We just got fed once a day. And it was real good food, better than what we'd had.

Marcello: It was better than what you had on Bataan?

McCall: Much better.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: They used to send a truck out at night, and then we would get fed around eight or nine o'clock.

Marcello: I'm sure they did that because it was much safer at night, I assume.

McCall: Well, yes . . .

Marcello: . . . safe from the bombers or the artillery for that matter.

McCall: On Bataan, they put these . . . it's my understanding, and I wouldn't doubt them . . . they put the 155's hub-to-hub over there. And I've seen the sausage balloon observation post. They leveled Corregidor, and it was no trees standing, no wildlife, nothing left. It was leveled.

Marcello: You were talking a while ago about a sausage balloon. This is

something I've never heard of.

McCall: It's really just an observation balloon . . .

Marcello: I see.

McCall: . . . for the artillery.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: It was looking right down our throats.

Marcello: I see. Oh, the Japanese had put up this sausage balloon.

McCall: Oh, yeah.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: You didn't move around much in the daytime.

Marcello: From what I gathered, apparently there were no ways that the artillery on Corregidor could reach the Japanese. Wasn't it true that most of the armament on Corregidor were naval rifles which fired a flat projector. And of course, the Japanese had set up those howitzers behind the hills, did they not? And they were lobbing shells up over the hills down on to Corregidor.

McCall: This is true. And there was only a few guns that they could fire . . .

Marcello: Really Corregidor was . . .

McCall: . . . towards Bataan.

Marcello: Right. Corregidor was essentially fortified to guard Manila against naval attacks.

McCall: This is true.

Marcello: And I guess about the only thing on Corregidor which could be

used were those mortars.

McCall: Yes. And I'm not sure they were used, but I never did hear too much return fire, really.

Marcello: I think they were knocked out of the war relatively early. I guess the planes had taken care of those mortars for the most part.

McCall: Well, they did quite a bit of bombing. In fact, Corregidor took quite a beating.

Marcello: Did you get to see very much of the island, or were you more or less attached permanently to that particular beach defense?

McCall: No, I was in Malinta Tunnel for three or four days with malaria and then went back out to the beach.

Marcello: The beach again? What was Malinta Tunnel like? That place has always fascinated me. Apparently it's a rather interesting place. Can you describe it?

McCall: It's a big old dark cement tunnel, and they had lights with wire over them and sort of cold in there. It was a tunnel is all.

Marcello: It was able to withstand any sort of a bombing attack or artillery attack.

McCall: Oh, yeah. They had the hospital there, and I think Wainwright had his headquarters there.

Marcello: It was fairly big, was it not? I had heard that perhaps two trucks might be able to pass in there. Is the place that big?

McCall: That's true. That's true. I think a train could have went through there with ease. You know, it was high enough and wide enough. Dimensions? I couldn't give you any idea of it at all. But it was a good-size tunnel, and it was well fortified.

Marcello: Did you come down with any other afflictions while you were there, other than malaria--which you had for some time of course?

McCall: At this time, no. No, I injured my knee on Corregidor during a shelling. It was in the night, and I went over a cliff. And when I finally hit the ground, it bent my leg up under, and I had the cartilage removed later. I nearly killed my damn fool self. It was a real drop. (Chuckle)

Marcello: About how far did you drop?

McCall: Just guessing, it was about a story. I hit a couple of times on the way down. It's a wonder it didn't kill me. I laid there for about ten minutes, and then I finally got up and made it back to the top.

Marcello: A couple of other questions come to mind. I'd interrupted you a while ago while you were describing what Corregidor looked like as a result of this constant Japanese shelling and bombing. What exactly did the island look like? How would you describe it, you know.

McCall: It's just looked like rocks with broken trees with dirt all over them. Have you ever seen a tornado go through and

lower a bunch of trees? Well, that's the way it looked when they got through shelling. I mean, it was just flat and full of holes.

Marcello: There wasn't a thing standing, in other words, or very few things standing.

McCall: Very few, very few.

Marcello: Rations got very short near the end on Corregidor, also, did they not?

McCall: True, we were still eating better than we were on Bataan.

Marcello: What did a typical meal consist of on Corregidor?

McCall: Oh, I know we had some meat and potatoes, which we hadn't had any meat and potatoes for a long time on Bataan. And that's all I could tell you. I think I even got a piece of bread maybe.

Marcello: I see. Can you describe the events leading up to your capture?

McCall: Yeah, let's see. I'm trying to think what time. We never did get fed that night. But, anyway, we were in defense of Henderson Field, and they bypassed us mostly after they once got established. We were not on a beach defense on that side.

Marcello: In other words, the Japanese didn't land where you had set up your beach defense?

McCall: No, no. We were taken, and we joined another group on the other side of the island which was very narrow.

Marcello: What were your thoughts when you heard that the Japanese had

landed on the other side of the island? Well, let me put it to you this way first of all. What prior bombardment occurred before they actually landed? Do you remember that, or can you describe that action?

McCall: Yeah, that's why we missed the meal, because we were shelled that evening. Just shelling.

Marcello: Constant shelling.

McCall: That was about the extent of it. And then we were told to fall out, that they were landing on the other side of the island. We set up a perimeter on Henderson Field, and there was very little action there. I guess I fired around twenty rounds. And they bypassed us and went over to the main part of the island. They just sort of pinned us down and held us until orders came through to surrender.

Marcello: What time did the Japanese hit really, that is, the actual landing?

McCall: I'd say it was around ten o'clock.

Marcello: Were you able to observe the landing itself?

McCall: No, no. The land invasion was at night, and I couldn't see the beach at all even though it was only a short distance away. But they landed just a little bit to the left of us, and they took the main part of the island. Course, there wasn't much there to take anyway.

Marcello: What did you think when you got the order that you were to surrender?

McCall: That was a hard thing to believe. You don't know what to think. You don't know what's going to happen. I can't recall exactly what my feelings were. But I felt sort of sorry about the thing. And I felt ashamed that we lost. I know that. Don't ask me why. I carried that with me for quite a while.

Marcello: One of the persons . . .

McCall: That was one reason why I dreaded coming back in a way-- because it was a defeat for us.

Marcello: One of the individuals that I interviewed said that the thing which he remembered most was the sudden calm or the sudden quiet which more or less spread over the island after the surrender. Did you notice this?

McCall: I felt a relief, especially the next day. I mean, I just felt like a different person. I felt like I could sit down and relax a little bit. And the quietness didn't bother me as much as . . . I just felt sort of, let's say, safe again. That was the next day. I mean, more or less. But, of course, when they told us to surrender, why nobody knew what was happening. We just got up and went out, and more men joined us all the time. They took us to Henderson Field.

Marcello: What did you do with your arms?

McCall: We took the bolts out and threw them away, and that was about the extent of it. And the first thing we did was throw our . . . after they got us in a line and grouped up, we threw our helmets away. That was the best thing in the world--to get

rid of that heavy helmet. You know, we had the old type.

Marcello: Right.

McCall: And then they had us stand out there on Henderson Field quite a while with our arms up.

Marcello: This is the Japanese? Okay, well, you've got the orders to surrender. Where did you go?

McCall: Well, they said just put your arms down and put a flag up. And there was fifteen of us in the group, and that's what we did.

Marcello: You put up a white flag, and then obviously you met some of the Japanese. Is that correct?

McCall: Yeah, they came out of the brush once we exposed ourselves.

Marcello: Then they accompanied you back to Henderson Field, or did they tell you where to go?

McCall: We were only a hundred yards from Henderson Field.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And then they started bringing in the men from all around, and grouping us. And I can remember one fellow asking if he could take his arms down. He was getting tired. And they killed him. And they jerked another one from the group that had a tatoo--that's the only reason we could figure out--and killed him. So the . . . my arms wasn't too tired then.

Marcello: I see. About how long were you standing at Henderson Field with your arms in the air?

McCall: A good ten or fifteen minutes anyway--maybe longer. It's hard

to measure time that's long in the past.

Marcello: I'm sure it is. I'm sure it was even hard to measure time while it was taking place.

McCall: It seemed like we slept there on the field that night. I don't recall getting any thing to eat until the next day. I don't remember when we did eat. Then we had to go in there, and we started cleaning up the rubbish and burying the dead. And I don't know how to describe a burning body, but that's something that's out of this world. It's all puffed up and all that.

Marcello: I assume in that tropical climate it didn't take long for the body to decompose. Did it?

McCall: No, no, it didn't from what I had seen.

Marcello: You were on one of the burial details.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: Or several of them.

McCall: Well, during the first day, anyway. And I noticed these Japanese soldiers were sitting around there, and they had oil on them. I understood some of the fellows dumped oil over the side of the cliffs, trying to set them on fire. Nevertheless, they were combat troops, and we got down in this group . . . we went after something, and some of them jumped up like they was going to kill us. And a Japanese officer stopped them. So from that time on, well, I always stayed in the center and in a group if I could.

Marcello: Tried to avoid as much contact with the Japanese as possible.

McCall: At that time, yes.

Marcello: You said on these burial details they burned the dead.

McCall: No, they were burning from fires.

Marcello: Oh, I see, from the actual combat.

McCall: Yes. In a couple of cases. We just shoved them in holes and covered them up as best we could. And I guess the rest of the time there we went out on details. We was in the 92nd Garage, as they called it.

Marcello: Now, this was an open area, was it not? Wasn't this a big open area--this 92nd Garage?

McCall: Yes, it's just a tin garage in a cement area. And I know the first night I got down there--that was the second night--I took off my shoes. And I hadn't had my shoes off in, I don't know, maybe a month or so. And somebody stole them. (Chuckle) Then the other fellow that I was with . . .

Marcello: Well this is pretty serious, I suppose. Was it not? Losing your shoes.

McCall: It would have been unless another fellow happened to have another pair of shoes. And they were a half size too big, but they were shoes anyway. But I can't imagine why anybody would want to steal my shoes. It was an American--had to be.

Marcello: Probably he didn't have any either. (Chuckle)

McCall: Well, we went out on a little . . . little details after that from time to time. And then a good friend of mine that I'd

been through the war with went on the detail. And I missed it because I was trying to make a pot of coffee in the back. I had a can of instant coffee I got hold of somewhere. And I never did see him; I never have found out what happened to him. And I heard that he was taken to another island and whether this is true or not, I don't know.

Marcello: Well, now, while you were in the Garage area did the Japanese make any provisions for your care at all? In other words, were they seeing to it that you got any rations, or were they caring for the sick or the injured or anything like that?

McCall: We were getting some rations there, but what they were I don't even recall. It wasn't a lot, but they fed us something. I know one time they had us cleaning out a tunnel. And I was eating jam. Every time we'd go in to bring out their food . . . they were loading this food on their ship, and we were carrying it to the docks. And I'd eat jam one time and green olives the next time. (Chuckle) Tasted good.

Marcello: I'll bet it did. I guess anything would have tasted pretty good at that time. Now, were you being closely guarded by the Japanese while you were in this Garage area?

McCall: Oh, yes, yes. I mean there were quite a few men in there, and they were pretty close, yes.

Marcello: About how many men would you estimate were in this Garage area altogether?

McCall: I'd say three thousand.

Marcello: About three thousand. Was there any evidence of atrocities or cruelties being committed by the Japanese at this time? Now you did mention those two people who were shot right after you had first surrendered.

McCall: They weren't shot; they cut their throats.

Marcello: They cut their throats. Is this what they did with them? With bayonet I assume, samurai swords. What did you think when you saw that? I assume that you were a witness to this.

McCall: No, I say it happened behind me.

Marcello: Oh, I see.

McCall: I was told that's what happened to them. And, of course, we never did see them anymore. I remember one man's name was Brown, and that's all I remember. But the burial detail had found him later. That's why I knew it happened. But I remember the one guy they jerked out from behind me. The only reason, I know, was because he had a tatoo on. But I didn't actually see it, no.

Marcello: But apparently, then, you got the message. You knew that the Japanese meant business after these things had taken place and that you were going to be in for a pretty rough time.

McCall: Well, that's true.

Marcello: Did you still hope at this time that you might possibly be rescued? That help was perhaps on the way?

McCall: No. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You had no hope at all at this time?

McCall: No, not at all.

Marcello: How long did you remain on Corregidor altogether after you were captured?

McCall: Maybe a week. They took us on sampans as I call them. And they put us on the ship, and they took us to Manila, and they took us on sampans again. And some of the fellows had barracks bags, etc. They were carrying gear, and they lost a lot of it getting off because they were in deep water. And then they had a . . .

Marcello: They just took the ship in so close and said, "Okay . . .

McCall: That's right.

Marcello: . . . get into shore the best way you can."

McCall: And some of them were in close enough, but some of them weren't. To my knowledge, nobody was lost. And they had a victory parade down Dewey Boulevard. And I saw a lot of this along the way. And a lot of people were beaten over this too.

Marcello: A lot of Filipinos, you mean, giving the 'V' sign, the victory sign?

McCall: And if they caught them, they'd beat the devil out of them.

Marcello: This is very interesting. Why do you think the Japanese paraded the American prisoners down Dewey Boulevard?

McCall: To prove to the Filipinos that they had their victory.

Marcello: I see. I think it was also a way, was it not, of informing the Filipinos that, well, "Look what we have as Asians have

been able to do to the white man, to the Western man. They're not as invincible as they thought they were and as we thought they were." You think that this might have been one of the reasons, also?

McCall: Well, I'm sure, propaganda purposes that they had finally taken Corregidor and had defeated the Americans. I'm sure this was their purpose. Bataan was cut off from Manila for quite a while. It was right at the very first that we went to Bataan that they cut off Manila, as I remember.

Marcello: Is there anything from the trip from Bataan to Manila that you remember or that stands out in your mind? I assume it was a very short distance. Wasn't very far, was it?

McCall: Oh, no, no. It took us just a few hours to get over there.

Marcello: And they just herded you on a regular ship?

McCall: That's right. They had straddle trenches--that's where you went if you had to go to the bathroom. And, you know, down on the side there was a drain, and that's where you went to the bathroom. And that was about all. It was pretty crowded, and of course I don't recall some of the other things that happened. But that was about the size of it. And we made that march to Bilibid Prison. Then we were taken a couple days later to another camp by train . . .

Marcello: Well, before we get that far ahead, how long were you at Bilibid Prison? Just for a couple of days?

McCall: As I recall about two or three days.

Marcello: During the march up Dewey Boulevard to Bilibid Prison, would you say that most of the Filipinos were rather sympathetic toward the Americans and so on? In other words, they were still rather loyal, were they not? They were very loyal.

McCall: Yes, this is true.

Marcello: Did they do anything to help any of the American prisoners--let's say those who perhaps may have fallen or anything like that?

McCall: Nothing--not that I'd seen.

Marcello: You were being pretty closely guarded by the Japanese.

McCall: Yes, and I think mostly this was a healthy group. I think the sick and the wounded were still on Corregidor. I'd see a lot of emotions, a lot of people crying, and it was sort of an emotional deal.

Marcello: Was there any . . .

McCall: It made you feel good, anyway.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in Bilibid Prison while you were there?

McCall: No, no. I hustled some quinine, and that was about the size of it.

Marcello: How did you hustle that?

McCall: Well, a fellow had some, and I traded him some cigarettes or something for it--I don't know what it was at this time. I traded him out of about ten tablets. And that was the extent of it.

Marcello: You still had your malaria pretty bad at this time?

McCall: Yes, off and on. In fact it went with me all the way through until the last seventeen months which I spent in Japan at that time.

Marcello: What exactly was one of these malaria attacks like?

McCall: Well, the small of your back starts aching, and it gets more severe, and then you start chilling. And then after the chills the fever comes. In other words, they can put ten blankets on you, and you will shake a cot to pieces, and then you'll start getting feverish. And when the fever stops, well, then, it starts all over again. I mean, you'll go a few days.

Marcello: How long does one of these malaria attacks usually last?

McCall: Oh, several hours. The fever especially will last a day. I'd say a good day for the whole thing to really complete its cycle. And when you're weak as a calf for two or three days after that.

Marcello: I see. What was Bilibid Prison like? Do you recall?

McCall: Yeah, just a bunch of cells, individual cells, with a high wall around it. Green in color to some extent and cement. They had individual buildings that had, you know, bars on the windows and doors. And, of course, they weren't shut; we weren't shut up in individual buildings. But it used to be a prison.

Marcello: In other words they . . .

McCall: It used to be a Filipino prison is what it used to be.

Marcello: In other words, they kept you out in the open prison grounds for the most . . .

McCall: Right.

Marcello: . . . part. Is that correct?

McCall: Well, yes. Or you could go in the . . . some people went into the barracks and slept if there was room.

Marcello: Okay, so where'd you go from Bilibid Prison, then?

McCall: We went to Cabanatuan Three. I don't know why they called it 'Three.' But we were loaded on trains . . .

Marcello: Well, I think there were a couple of camps at Cabanatuan.

McCall: Well, there was Cabanatuan One and Three.

Marcello: But there was no Two.

McCall: Well, the way I understand it, there was three former Filipino Army camps there and we by-passed two. Now, some people may call that two instead of three. But that's what I always called it. I was there six months.

Marcello: By what means did you travel from Bilibid to Cabanatuan? Did you go by train?

McCall: They had boxcars to . . . I can't recall the name of the town. Right now it's hard to remember. But a lot of dysentery began to break out at that time.

Marcello: What was the trip like from Bilibid to Cabanatuan? Can you describe it?

McCall: Well, it just . . . was just crowded in with a bunch of sick people and dysentery. The smell was bad, the ventilation was

bad. And we had one stop. And I remember people going out to take a crap right in, you know, public. People were standing out there, and they just went out to the bathroom before all these civilians. Then we went into this one camp, and I had another attack of malaria. And I don't remember eating too much. I drank some water. Then we walked, which somebody said was fifteen kilometers.

Marcello: This was after you got off the train now?

McCall: This is the next day.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: They fed us rice, I believe, that night.

Marcello: Did they really pack you into those boxcars?

McCall: Very crowded.

Marcello: Was there room to lie down?

McCall: No. No room to lie down. You sat up or stood. And then we started out the next day. And I remember getting it hotter all the time, and having this malaria, it was getting to be a struggle. I found a toothbrush on Corregidor somewhere out in the field, and I had one blanket and a towel and a bar of soap. And I was with this Clark, a fellow from my outfit. And Clark said, "Why don't you throw that away? You can't carry it." And I was thinking about it, and about three or four fellows said, "Well, I'll take it if you don't want it." And it made me so mad to think that nobody offered to help me, I decided to carry it. And I had a canteen, too.

Marcello: Was there anything else you had? Besides the towel and the soap and the canteen?

McCall: That was it. And then we stopped one time. And they went after water, and I was too weak, and I handed the canteen to somebody. And I recall a Japanese soldier getting up to feel of my head. He was an older man. So I didn't get any water at that stop. And we got up and started out again, and I was getting weaker all the time. And somebody said, "Why don't you lay down? They'll pick you up." And so I kept on going, and finally I didn't think I could make it anymore. I just went over to the side of the ditch and laid down in the hot sun. And I came to when this Japanese was hitting me in the stomach with a bayonet. And I began to get the idea . . .

Marcello: He just jabbed you in the stomach.

McCall: And I began to get the idea that I should get up. So I started to get up, and this Japanese that came over and felt my head, this older man, come back over and stopped him and told me to lay back down. Then I passed out, and I guess they put crepe markers up. And the truck came along that was picking them up. They picked me up and put me on the truck. It was only about a half mile from camp. And I remember that I went in and laid down under a tree. I was assigned to a certain area after they searched us. And the doctor came around and felt my head. And we supposedly had one doctor to 1,500 men.

Marcello: This was an American doctor?

McCall: And he gave me a handful of salt and a drink of water. He said that's all the medicine he had. And I know I slept out there that night, and the next morning the fever wore off. And then they started feeding us and organizing us into work crews, etc.

Marcello: Now, apparently, then the railroad got you as close to Cabanatuan as it could, and then you had to march the rest of the way from the railroad siding to Cabanatuan, which you said was fifteen to twenty kilometers, perhaps?

McCall: This is what I was told.

Marcello: Okay. Was this a pretty rugged march for the other people, too, from what you could observe? In other words, were the Japanese prodding them along, forcing them along, this sort of thing . . .

McCall: I was too sick . . .

Marcello: . . . using rifle butts and what have you?

McCall: I was too sick to notice anything. I never seen nothing of that type at all. But I was just half-conscious, I think, most of the day. It was a long day.

Marcello: What was the camp like at Cabanatuan?

McCall: Well, it was hilly, had grass, and a few trees. And the barracks, of course, were made of thatched roofs, and we slept on . . . it had a wooden run-way down there and then they were double-tiered, and they had bamboo poles, split, that they nailed on to two-by-fours, and then they had, oh, two or

three inch cracks between each one. Very uneven and hard to sleep on.

Marcello: Made it easy to sweep the floor, I guess, though.

McCall: Right. (Chuckle) The only thing you had to worry about was the ramp going down the center.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: But they were old Filipino Army barracks. And I remember at one time they took us down to a river and let us swim and clean up. In fact, I think that was the first bath I'd had in many months. It was at least thirty days.

Marcello: Was there a fence around this camp of any sort?

McCall: Yes. A fence and barbed wire.

Marcello: Was it closely guarded by the Japanese?

McCall: Yes, plus the fact that . . . I don't know if it was at this time or not. But anyway, later on we were assigned to groups of ten men. And if one man escaped, the other nine were shot. So we had guards of our own walking the fence as well as guarding the barracks.

Marcello: Now this was purely voluntary. I mean these guards . . . each group decided this was going to take place. Is that correct?

McCall: Well, everybody was assigned guard duty. We were assigned to watch each other, I guess.

Marcello: This was something that was worked out among yourselves, though, that is, among the prisoners.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: This sort of thing.

McCall: Yes, yes it . . .

Marcello: Obviously, there must have been some escape attempts, is that correct?

McCall: There was some. I was in one camp where there was, but they didn't shoot anybody.

Marcello: I'm speaking now of this initial camp at Cabanatuan.

McCall: Oh, there was an initial attempt on this march because they brought these boys in and tied them up. There were five of them. And I guess they was mistreated pretty badly, beaten. And then they sent us all to the barracks, and just a little ways from the barracks, I lay there and watched them execute them.

Marcello: They shoot them or . . .

McCall: Yeah, they shot five of them, as I recall. And they stood in the trench, and it was about knee high, I guess, and they offered them a cigarette. I don't know if they blindfolded them or not. It seems like a couple were. Seems like to me they fell one on end, and then they went up and gave them a mercy shot with a pistol. Those five had tried to escape, and they were turned in by a Filipino sheriff, and that's, I guess, how they got caught. So I'm sure there were a few others that did escape because we were getting into a mountainous region at that place.

Marcello: In other words, these people were hoping that they could

perhaps escape and join guerrilla units or something in the hills?

McCall: Possibly. I had no idea of what they were thinking of because we hadn't been in touch with any.

Marcello: Did the thought of escape ever cross your mind even as weak as you were?

McCall: No. No.

Marcello: I assume that you simply figured that you couldn't go very far anyhow were you able to escape.

McCall: No, I was too sick and weak to even think about it at that time.

Marcello: How long were you in this initial camp at this time?

McCall: I think six months.

Marcello: About six months. Was there ever any evidence of collaboration while you were there?

McCall: None that I know of.

Marcello: What sort of discipline was there among the prisoners? Now, you've just mentioned, I think, one phase of the discipline, the fact that you more or less guarded one another to make sure that nobody escaped. Were you still more or less listening to your officers and what have you?

McCall: Yes. Yes. There was a few that would refuse command, but we knew we had to work together to survive--and we did.

Marcello: What was a typical day like at this initial camp?

McCall: Well, actually, the hardest part was, I believe, sitting around doing

nothing, and at this camp I went out on a few wood details. And then I went out on a detail to kill carabao, which they divided among us, in the camp, along with our rice. And the funniest part was when we were getting on a truck to go out. The Japanese handed me a loaded rifle; I guess it was loaded, his rifle. Then he got on the truck, and I gave his rifle back to him. (Chuckle) And then we was in the brush, and they shot one of these carabao, but they didn't kill him, and I guess it was pretty funny because of the way we all went up these trees when that carabao come out. It was a Brahma, that's what it was--a Brahma--it wasn't a carabao.

Marcello: These are all domesticated animals, are they not?

McCall: Yes, but this one was charging, and, of course, we were all climbing trees, trying to get out of the way. I guess that was about it. But at that time a good many of the men were kind of going blind, and . . .

Marcello: What caused this?

McCall: Well, they claim vitamin deficiency, and I'm not sure, but I think it was just a temporary thing. But I know I've seen at least fifty men that had blindfolds on, and, of course, your beriberi began to crop up, and your dysentery.

Marcello: Now, these were all mainly dietary deficiencies, are they not, the beriberi, and the pellegra, and things of that sort?

McCall: At this time I contacted yellow jaundice. And they set out some pork soup, you know. Actually, it was rice with no salt,

and it's tasteless, and you could eat a ton of it, and never get full--no satisfaction. And of course, the doctor told me not to eat anything greasy, and I thought he was kidding at the time, and they did have some pork soup, and, well, it was a mistake, and I went ahead and ate my cupful. And I had dysentery and was quite sick there for a few days.

Marcello: You had dysentery, or yellow jaundice, which one--or did you have both?

McCall: I picked it up after I ate that soup, but I did have yellow jaundice; my dysentery only lasted a couple of days.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And we used to chop firewood so we'd get the rice that was burnt on these big iron kettles. Well, that would be extra rations for us if we'd cut the firewood to cook the food.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: That was a special detail if you could get on it. You had to be lucky to get on it.

Marcello: In other words, as I recall from one of the other interviews that I conducted, apparently the rice was cooked in these big cauldrons, or whatever you wish to call them, and there would be a crust which would form in the bottom of this thing. And this had quite a bit of nutrition in it, I suppose, and . . .

McCall: By the way, it's sorta crunchy, brown, and it had a little more taste that . . . than just straight rice.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And then they served us fish soup. I always thought the eye-balls were quite crunchy. (Chuckle) They would float to the top. And you had all the bones in there that you had to strain through, but it at least had some taste to it.

Marcello: I assume that if you were to name one thing that was constantly on your mind it was food, was it not? Hunger, that was probably something that was prevalent all the time.

McCall: This was very true. All the way through there was very little talk of women.

Marcello: Right.

McCall: And this was true. It was just all food. You were "quaning" this or "quaning" that. I don't know where the word came from, but we sat around and talked about dishes and how you could make a dish up of this or that. And the primary talk was food.

Marcello: There was another question that I was going to ask along these lines. Was there anything that you could do to supplement your diet? In other words, did you eat anything in addition to the daily rations that the Japanese were giving you?

McCall: I didn't. There were some other people that did. But I've heard this. I didn't see it, but I'm sure that it happened, and I have no reason to disbelieve it. I never did.

Marcello: You never got quite that hungry to eat snakes or snails and so on?

McCall: I ate a little monkey on Bataan and a lizard tail or two, but

so did everybody else if he could get a hold of it.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: But during the camp, there was nothing to supplement the diet at all.

Marcello: Are there any individual Japanese that stand out in this initial camp at Cabanatuan?

McCall: No, no. There was only a few, and that was later on.

Marcello: What sort of atrocities did the Japanese commit here at this initial camp? What sort of cruelties and so on?

McCall: None that I could see that was out of the ordinary.

Marcello: When you say, "out of the ordinary," what do you mean?

McCall: Well, outside of no food and, you know, no supplies or anything of this type. We organized our own entertainment there at this camp. And then one time to get rid of flies before you got your rations you had to kill so many flies before they'd issue you rice. This was Americans that organized this. And this was the way we kept our dysentery down. Then they had big long trenches, oh, four feet wide, eight feet deep, thirty feet long, maybe, where people would go out at night and urinate. And several of them would fall in at night. This was quite an experience, I guess. And, of course, a lot of dysentery was popping up at that time. But we did get enough water to wash. I took a bath in a gallon of water. And, of course, water was scarce; we'd watch it pretty close. But we sort of got cleaned up, even if we didn't have the right food

and half-way organized. Like I say, we even got a little bit of entertainment going. And that was the first six months. Then I've seen a few of the fellows go out and come back with white hair. They went down to the "Angel's" camp at Nichols Field; this was run by the Japanese Navy. I guess this was one of the roughest details going. I was fortunate that I never had to go.

Marcello: I think I talked to another individual who had been to Cabanatuan and then ended up down at that naval prison or navy camp . . .

McCall: Well, Nichols Field was a pursuit base for the Air Corps, a pursuit base in Manila. I heard a lot about the "Angel" but I never did see him.

Marcello: Did the Japanese soldiers for the most part more or less leave you alone at Cabanatuan? In other words, they didn't harass you too much?

McCall: They didn't come in the camp.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: The only time we come in contact was when we was on details. And, of course, we had a different type of soldier, I think, too, than what we had on Bataan and Corregidor.

Marcello: A different type in what regard?

McCall: Well, they were noncombatant, I would say. They were more friendly than some of them. And some of them had seen combat. And they tried to strike up conversation.

Marcello: Did the Japanese have any particular set of rules or anything that you had to follow. By that I mean, in some camps, apparently, you know, the prisoners had to bow to every Japanese soldier that they saw and things of this sort.

McCall: This is true. This comes later in some camps, that . . . but at this particular camp it didn't. And then in some camps you're supposed to, yes--bow or salute, both maybe.

Marcello: Is there anything else from this initial camp that you would like to mention before we move on to another one?

McCall: No, I think that's all except, I know one time that they had church services. And I went over to the church, and the preacher said, "Would anybody like to join?" And I had a great desire to do it, but I thought, "Well, if I can't do it under better conditions than this, why I'm just not going to do it." So I decided I'd wait.

Marcello: I see. Something else comes to mind here. Now, you said, of course, that rations were obviously quite short at this camp. Now this wasn't the deliberate policy on the part of the Japanese, was it? Did they have very much food to give you?

McCall: I don't think it was. They ate rice and they were used to eating fish. It's just the amount that they gave us. I don't think it was deliberate in any way, shape, or form. It's just what they decided to feed us and what they thought they could spare because I'm sure they were shipping a lot out to their country and to their troops, too. And, of course, we were on

the short end of the stick.

Marcello: Now, you said you were at this camp about six months and then you moved. Is that correct?

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: Where did they move you to?

McCall: To Cabanatuan One. We marched . . .

Marcello: You were at Cabanatuan Three, and now they were going to march you to Cabanatuan One.

McCall: Right.

Marcello: Is that correct? How far apart were the two camps?

McCall: Well, let's see. I'd say it was about six to seven hours walking, six hours, maybe--I'm just guessing.

Marcello: I see. What happened on this little hike? Anything in particular that you recall?

McCall: Nothing, just . . .

Marcello: Was your health pretty good at this time?

McCall: Yes, it was pretty good.

Marcello: Did they harass the troops very much as they were walking along, the prisoners rather?

McCall: No, not that I had seen. Of course, we always had rumors in those camps, too, I might bring up, and one rumor was that some B-17's had flew over Cabanatuan and dropped some flour, and it went through the crapper and killed a couple guys. (Chuckle) The wildest rumors we had in the Philippines. We had no true . . . well, there was no basis for them being true. We had more truthful, up-to-date information after we

were in Japan. We got more factual information in Japan than we did in the Philippines.

Marcello: I assume that prison camps were rumor mills.

McCall: Oh, sure. There was always something going in the way of a rumor.

Marcello: What was your morale like at this time?

McCall: Well, it was all right. You learn to adjust; you learn to turn your mind off or on. I think this was a great thing, and it probably could have been used today a lot better than then. You took it day by day; you learned to live with it.

Marcello: Did you have hope that you were going to be rescued or eventually liberated?

McCall: Well, it depends how much you dwelled on it. I didn't dwell on it too much. Like I say, that was a luxury you couldn't afford. To me, you just didn't think too much about any of those things. You just took it as it comes. That's the easiest way. You get to really thinking, I think you can get so depressed that you give up.

Marcello: Did you see cases where prisoners really did give up?

McCall: Oh, of course, they moved them into another sick compound. I'm sure a lot of them did. I'm sure a lot of them did, but I can't say that I've seen a lot of them give up.

Marcello: You had malaria, you said. Were you getting very much quinine? Did the Japanese have very much to give to you?

McCall: I didn't get any.

Marcello: In other words, you just had to gut it out, in other words,
. . .

McCall: That's right.

Marcello: . . . everytime you had one of these attacks.

McCall: I don't recall any quinine at all until at a later date when I went back to Bilibid for an operation. But I don't recall getting any quinine at all.

Marcello: How much weight had you lost by this time?

McCall: Oh, about twenty pounds.

Marcello: You weren't in real bad shape, then, in other words . . .

McCall: No, I was working most of the time. I dropped from 140 to 120, and I . . . about 118 is what I came out at. So I was small.

Marcello: Yeah, right. I assume that a larger person would have suffered more than, let's say, somebody who was of your particular physical build.

McCall: Well it's my personal opinion that they did. And anybody that had been a football player or some kind of an athletic type of an individual seemed like they went first. Don't ask me why, but just several that I knew, they were the first to die. And it seemed like the skinny ones made it better, smaller people. And that again is just a personal observation and opinion.

Marcello: What was Cabanatuan One like?

McCall: Well, there was a lot of people that . . . I recall running into some fellows from my outfit. Well, of course,

we'd been split up quite a bit since leaving Clark Field. And it was sort of a reunion. And I think they were a little better organized. And they started their own garden there, and they had a little more food. It seemed to be the center of activity. It turned out to be this way, to be the central camp.

Marcello: This was the biggest one, Cabanatuan One?

McCall: Yes, it was the biggest one. And they closed Three out altogether when we moved out. And I wasn't there but about two weeks, and then I was shipped out on detail.

Marcello: During that two week period was there anything that happened at Cabanatuan One which stands out in your mind?

McCall: No, nothing outside of meeting a lot of friends from my organization, and I remember we had a cigar or two, which we hadn't had, and we got hold of a little more food down there.

Marcello: Was the treatment any different here, that is, so far as Japanese punishment, atrocities, this sort of thing?

McCall: No. No. It was no different that I could see.

Marcello: What did you do during these two weeks?

McCall: We visited mostly and sat around.

Marcello: Literally nothing, in other words, . . .

McCall: That's right.

Marcello: . . . so far as physical labor and so on is concerned.

McCall: Right.

Marcello: Okay, now you mentioned that you were there two weeks, and then

you were assigned to a detail. Is that what you called it?

McCall: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Could you describe this?

McCall: Well, I think we went by truck and then by train. I can't remember the name of the town that this camp was close to. But anyway, we ended up at Clark Field again. And we slept in the same barracks as we did before the war, and the Japanese also let us have the latrines which was a luxury. They thought the water that flushed the latrines was what we washed in also, but this was pretty good living conditions considering that you had cots, lights, a few lights, not many, and you had a latrine with running water, and you had showers.

Marcello: Had they more or less cleaned up Clark Field? I assume it was practically in shambles, was it not, after the attacks and so on?

McCall: Yes, they cleaned it up, and they had a few personnel stationed there. And we were sent out strictly on details of different types--cleaning up some of the officers quarters, cutting weeds, and just sifting gravel, etc., just different details of that type.

Marcello: In other words . . .

McCall: A man in camp that was sick, though, did not get but half rations. Of course, we always shared with the sick. That was one rule that was set. If there was anybody sick, they didn't get but half rations.

Marcello: Why would they say that, or why would they do that?

McCall: I don't know. I guess to get rid of the goldbricks . . . try to.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: But there were very few goldbricks. That's when your dry beriberi started popping up at this time. Your joints ache, and they swell, and these people couldn't sleep much. They were up walking all the time. What they needed was vitamins B1 and B12, I guess.

Marcello: These were vitamin deficiencies. All of these things are caused by vitamin deficiencies.

McCall: And everything started popping up as time went on.

Marcello: Right. In other words, they sent you to Clark Field primarily to clean the place up again--make it useable. Is that right?

McCall: Yeah. We were just used on odd details. It was cleaned up pretty good when we got there.

Marcello: Did they supervise you very closely here?

McCall: Yes. Yes, they sent . . . of course, they had a fence around us like always, and they sent the guards with us on details.

Marcello: Were there any particular material possessions and so on that you were not allowed to have. I mean, of course, you couldn't have weapons of any sort.

McCall: Knives of any sort. I got hold of a mess kit, and that was about the size of it, as . . . a spoon, and I still had my same possessions, and that was it. And I don't think they really

issued us too much of anything at that time.

Marcello: Did they ever harass you very much physically at this particular camp?

McCall: Oh, I had one where this Japanese. . . . The funny part of it is that he was small, and he reminded me of my Jewish cousin. (Chuckle) His name is McCabe. I call him my Irish-Jewish cousin. And he did resemble him a little bit. They had these Filipino helmets that were made out of coconut shells, hardshell hats that they had issued us. He called me over at attention, and he had a broomstick, and he swung it at me, and I stuck out my hand and busted it, and he hauled off and hit me across the leg and it busted, and he turned around and hit me in the head and drove that helmet down over my eyes.

Marcello: With this broomstick?

McCall: Yeah. I pushed that back up, and he hit me again and busted it, kept jabbering and sent me back. And then he got me another time too. I had to do pushups, and he hit me on the butt of a pickhandle ax. I was sore for a while with that.

Marcello: What did he do this for?

McCall: Well, I think what really happened, we was out on a detail, and he was looking for trouble, and. . . . I don't know what they call it, but they draw a big circle, and these other Japanese were egging us on to wrestle with him. So I ended up like a fool, and I got out there in the circle, and you hit

three times and you come together, and the idea is to throw the other man out of the circle. I threw him out the first time, and they harassed him, and they kidded him.

Marcello: That is, his comrades were kidding him.

McCall: Yes, yes. So every detail I got on, I knew I was in for either a beating or I had to fight him again. And, oh, did he bust me after that. I never did lick him. (Chuckle)

Marcello: What did he do?

McCall: Well, we'd draw a circle and we'd go at it. And he threw me every time after that. Of course, that was his own . . . I had no idea what to do in that kind of . . . we had no training at all in that type fighting. And, boy, he sure got even, I'll tell you that.

Marcello: Did the prisoners have any nick-names for any of these guards?

McCall: Well, yes, but not so much as at these camps. This showed up more in Japan itself.

Marcello: How long were you at Clark Field altogether?

McCall: That's hard to say. Several months. The reason I left is partly due to the cartilage in my left knee. My knee locked, and my knee had swelled up, and this happened about three times before they decided to send me to Bilibid. They ah, had a Japanese doctor look at it one time, and he was going to put a needle in there and draw all the water off. And the camp commander wouldn't let him do it. So they sent me to Bilibid where I was operated on.

Marcello: Now, this must have been probably getting pretty close to 1943 by this time, are we not?

McCall: Could be, could be.

Marcello: I'm thinking now of the time that you were on Bataan and the time that you were on Corregidor, and you said you were at Cabanatuan Three for about six months, did you not?

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: So we're talking about at least a year or maybe even a year and a half at this time, isn't this correct?

McCall: This is true because, see, I go from here, I go to Bilibid, Cabanatuan, and then to Japan for seventeen months . . .

Marcello: Well . . .

McCall: . . . the last seventeen months of the war. So that would be pretty close.

Marcello: Now up to the time that you were at Clark Field, were you receiving any news at all from the outside world?

McCall: None. Just rumors.

Marcello: None at all, just rumor. Did you have any contact at all with any Filipino civilians?

McCall: None. They wouldn't let them close to us. No contact at all. I'm trying to think when we first received a Red Cross parcel. Seemed like it was after I went back to Bilibid, I mean to . . . maybe it was Bilibid. Oh, well, we're getting close to the time that we got our first parcel. We only got two or three in all the time that I was in the war.

Marcello: Were you allowed to write any letters at all?

McCall: The first letter that I was allowed and only . . . no, I had written several cards. The only letter was when I was going into Bilibid from Clark Field. That's the first that I had been allowed to send a message. In fact, I got a package from home there, too, come to think about it.

Marcello: I guess that was a pretty happy day when you got a package from home, was it not?

McCall: Yeah, but I wondered who advised them as to what to put in there.

Marcello: Well, what was in the package?

McCall: Oh, talcum powder, foot powder, and coffee--it was packaged out of the can. And every pot of coffee I made tasted like talcum powder. And there was a little bit of chocolate, cocoa, and that's all I recall. There was only three or four items in this package from home, wasn't too big. And I couldn't understand why anybody would send anything like that.

(Chuckle) The coffee was fine, but why the talcum powder?

(Chuckle) But that's what the Red Cross had advised them, and they were trying to give us what they were allowed. They weren't allowed to send too much.

Marcello: Was there anything else that occurred at Clark Field that you think ought to be a part of the record?

McCall: Well, we had an escape. A fellow left there and went over the fence one night. And they took us out and made us sit in a group and brought out machine guns, lined them up. And, of

course, we stood out there a couple of hours. And we weren't sure whether they were going to kill us or what. And it turned out that nothing happened, but it was quite a tense couple of hours there for a while. The joke used to be that if you're going to tell me, I won't stop you. I'll go with you. That was the truth. If the man would tell me that he was going, I'd went with him. But this fellow took off on his own, and he made it all right as far as I know. I don't know whatever happened to him. Of course, we were up there at the base of the mountains, and I don't think they were watching us too closely. Where would you go? In a strange country you didn't know and no food, no rations, no contact. You didn't know where to go. But that's about the size of it at Clarks Field. That's all I can remember. I remember one instance, the first time I'd ever heard about a Mason. And, if . . . you know, I'd heard of them, but I didn't really see it. I'd seen one Mason sharing with a sick Mason. And they were close as thieves from then on, which I thought was pretty good because nobody shared with another man as a rule. Everybody was on their own.

Marcello: I was just going to say, was it every man for himself more or less within the discipline which was laid down among the prisoners?

McCall: True. Most people were thinking of themselves.

Marcello: Was there very much thieving that went on? Stealing, I guess

would be a better way to put it.

McCall: I'm sure there was. There wasn't much to steal, but I'm sure there was. There was some.

Marcello: Okay, describe what happened then when you went from Clark Field over to Bilibid Prison. You went there to be operated on for your knee.

McCall: Right.

Marcello: This is the knee that you had injured in the fall on Corregidor. Isn't that correct?

McCall: This is true.

Marcello: What sort of facilities did they have at Bilibid? That had been made into a hospital of some sort, had it not?

McCall: Yes, yes. They were bringing them in from all these details. And you were operated on and treated. One fellow--there's a lot of them--one that I know for a fact that he was on Cebu. And they'd lay their hand between two two-by-fours and let somebody bust their wrists so that they could come into the hospital. Cook, a guy by the name of Cook from my outfit, Donald Cook, he did that. He'd taken battery acid and kept treating his wrists until he'd gotten an ulcer, a tropical ulcer, so he could get shipped in. And of course they were coming in from all these camps and then be shipped back to Cabanatuan, or maybe they'd come from Cabanatuan and stay over night and go into another detail, or maybe a detail was coming back from Cabanatuan. But it was primarily a hospital. We had

Navy doctors, Army doctors. They did have surgical stuff to work with. And we had a little library. We could get hold of some tobacco fairly often, stringy tobacco made in a big pouch like a mail pouch, chewing tobacco. This was sort of stringy, dry, hairy type of tobacco. And we had hold of a little food there, more so than anywhere else.

Marcello: In other words, you were operated on at this camp by American doctors. Isn't that correct?

McCall: American naval commander.

Marcello: Were the operating facilities about as good as could be expected under those conditions?

McCall: I thought they was real good. They at least gave me a shot. We had one boy that was at Clark Field before I got there that the Japanese . . . had an appendix attack, and they threw him in the back end of a truck and took him into this town and strapped him to a table and took his appendix out without any anaesthetic at all.

Marcello: Now, this was an American boy . . .

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: . . . and the Japanese had done this?

McCall: Yes. And he was still at that camp when I left, so he done all right. That's why I say I was fortunate; we had anaesthetics and all of this. And they gave me a local and operated on my knee. And then they had a corpsman in charge of the ward that took care of us.

Marcello: About how long were you in Bilibid altogether?

McCall: Oh, again I'm just guessing, six months. I went on the outside on a couple of details into the city. That was something just to see women again, you know. And when we were downtown we went over to one of the universities and worked one day. And I remember seeing a barber pick up his scissors to form a 'V' and the Japanese saw him, too. They went in and beat him up. But you have to hand it to the Filipinos; anytime they would get a chance to give that 'V' they would give it. But this was the sign at the beginning of the war when we went down the road.

Marcello: This was Churchill's sign, too.

McCall: That's right.

Marcello: I think he's the one that originated the 'V' symbol.

McCall: That's where it come from. That's true.

Marcello: I assume there wasn't a whole lot that really happened in Bilibid. I mean other than the operation.

McCall: No.

Marcello: What sort of details did they send you on into Manila?

McCall: I only went on two; they were clean-up details in buildings. I guess maybe they were moving into it or . . . just clean-up.

Marcello: Was the food any better at the hospital than it was at any of the other camps and so on?

McCall: About average. I wouldn't say it was any better or any worse. About average. You get accustomed to food, I guess. I hadn't thought too much about it lately, but there was never enough.

Marcello: You were still thinking about food, and that was still the thought that was most constantly on your mind, I suppose.

McCall: That's true. We had plenty of tobacco in the Philippines, this is one thing. And, of course we had none of it after we got to Japan, to speak of. Very scarce. But I guess that was about the size of it. We used to scrounge around and get out of an old library there and . . . it was where they kept case histories of prisoners. It had real thin paper. We'd go through these files and make our cigarette papers out of that.

Marcello: Oh, in other words, you didn't read the book. You used it mainly for . . .

McCall: Well, it wasn't all in English.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: It was just a bunch of paper that had been filed and scattered all around.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And toilet paper was a scarce item, too. That was a luxury.

Marcello: It was, I'm sure.

McCall: You take so many things that we used to think about, you know, that we really missed--those everyday items from the states. Boy, here I am in the hospital and nobody's come to see me--I would have had a box of chocolates if I was home.

Marcello: Were you staying in a ward, a hospital ward, or type of barracks or cell?

McCall: These old barracks cells is what they were. And when we first

went into them, they just converted them.

Marcello: About how many were in a cell? How many bunks or how many beds were in a cell?

McCall: I would say there was a hundred men in there because it was a long barracks-type of thing. It could be hundred men there easily.

Marcello: Okay, then, the next part of your odyssey, I guess we can call it that, was the trip to Japan. Is that correct?

McCall: No, we went back to Cabanatuan One again.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And there again I ran across a few very close friends. And then I worked on the farm, the vegetable farm. In other words, they were planting a lot of vegetables, and we were taking care of them. At that camp we had potato vines which were very bitter, and they given . . . and they were given different food from the farm.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if the Japanese kept the vegetables, or if they did ration them out to you.

McCall: They took their share, and, of course, we got a few. Then I was very fortunate. I got to herd carabao. I had a friend that was a truck driver for the Japanese, and all I had to do was sit there and watch those carabao. And we got a little extra food on the trucks that way--soybeans and what they called mango beans and tobacco, eggs once in a while. I had a couple of eggs there.

Marcello: That must have been a real treat.

McCall: It was, it was. And, of course, we had entertainment at that camp, and it was getting a lot better. And we saw one Japanese movie, and they showed them fighting the Chinese. And I remember that this English translation . . . this soldier run up to the officer and said, "We've run out of ammunition." And this officer said, "Throw rocks at them." (Chuckle) And before I was there too long, we were shipped to Japan.

Marcello: Do you recall about how long you were there?

McCall: About two months, three maybe.

Marcello: What was the attrition rate? Were very many prisoners dying?

McCall: Well, there were quite a few the first trip through. They slacked off the second trip. Of course, I used to have the figures. I heard them. O'Donnell was the worst camp--after Bataan.

Marcello: That's Camp O'Donnell.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: That's where the Bataan boys were going to. Isn't that correct?

McCall: We had beriberi and malaria and dysentery on Bataan. And that march took it out of them. Where the boys on Corregidor were fed a little better and in much better condition. Wasn't near as much malaria or dysentery or anything else. I think that was really the worst was during the first few months. And I think it tapered off after that.

Marcello: In other words, during those first few months the really

weaklings had more or less been weeded out, I suppose you could say. And the stronger ones kind of muddled on through.

McCall: This is true. There was some of them going all the time.

Marcello: Sure.

McCall: I've seen guys with their scrotums as big as a softball. And some had their feet swelled from gangrene, and, of course, some of them were dying from malaria. But there were always some going. Actually, the ranks were getting thinner and thinner, but it wasn't as bad as at first. But it slowed down considerably. Of course, I guess it would.

Marcello: Now by this time, of course, by the time you had returned to Cabanatuan One, the war was, well, let me . . . I don't know exactly how to put this, but the tide perhaps had changed by that time. You understand what I mean? Perhaps the tide had turned and the Americans might have been winning by that time, let's say. In other words, they had won quite a few battles.

McCall: This is true.

Marcello: Did you notice any difference in the Japanese attitude or in the Japanese treatment as the tide turned?

McCall: No, because I wasn't actually in contact with them, too much except on this detail, but, no, they were about the same. I didn't really have as much personal contact with them as I had at Clark Field and that I had later in Japan itself.

Marcello: Two other questions come to mind here. Something you mentioned earlier about the self-inflicted wounds that prisoners would

take upon themselves. Was this something that was done to get out of work or to try and get better treatment?

McCall: This was a rough detail that they were on, and they wanted to get out. For example, at Nichols Field they'd say . . . well, the "Angel" would come by and wear gloves and "What's wrong? Why are you out for sick-call?" And if it was a fever and he'd feel your head with his gloves on, and then he'd slap you and knock you down. If it was dysentery, you know, he'd double up his fist and hit you in the stomach. And it was just a rough detail.

Marcello: And you said that the "Angel" would come by. Who was the "Angel?"

McCall: He was a naval lieutenant that was in charge of this camp at . . . what'd I call it. Well, I named it a while ago. Well, I can't recall the name of the camp.

Marcello: You just said Nichols Field.

McCall: Nichols, that's it, that's it. Did I say that?

Marcello: Yeah.

McCall: Yeah, that's right. Nichols Field.

Marcello: How come you recall the "Angel?"

McCall: I guess because he wore a white naval uniform that would be my guess.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: That was the only contact with the Japanese that I know of that many prisoners come in contact with. And they claim the

Navy was a lot rougher than the soldiers.

Marcello: I wonder why this was so.

McCall: Well, I think they were more strict; they were more educated; they were more disciplined. They were the elite of the Japanese more so than the Army.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And they had more pride, more determination. In fact, I think they were the ones that were the die-hards during the invasion of Manila and Luzon. There was a big battle with them that held them up, if I remember right, or the way I was told anyway.

Marcello: Something else comes to mind here. You said that you were herding the carabao when you had returned to Cabanatuan One. Were you under any supervision, or were you just more or less on your own with those carabao.

McCall: Alone. The Japanese had their barracks and garages outside the camp. And then they had another guard ring around that. And all I'd do was sit on the fence and watch them eat grass, ride them back and forth.

Marcello: Make sure none of them strayed in the jungle and so on.

McCall: There was no jungle there.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: It was all open country. It was all hilly. Oh, there was some woods, but no jungles. But as far as I could see, it was just all open country, outside of your elephant grass or your tall grass. It's a tall grass up above your head, and when you

go through it, it will cut you pretty good. We had to cut a lot of it. And we always wore shorts in the Philippines. In fact, on Bataan, we had cut off our khakis and were wearing shorts. And I remember coming back to the states in shorts. You know, men started wearing shorts in about 1952, and everybody was laughing at them. And I was the first one to get into a pair. I thought, "Well, heck, I would have been ahead of the time for a long time." (Chuckle)

Marcello: I guess you were. Is there anything else that happened back at Cabanatuan One that you'd like to talk about before we talk about the trip to Japan?

McCall: No, except a group of us used to get together and have tea at night. And that was really a bad habit-forming deal. And they got hold of that tea, and that's something I really missed when we left there. And these three or four fellows from my outfit and a fellow from my home town that I happened to meet. And when I left he said, "Well, bring me a pig bristle brush back from Japan." I said, "Okay." And he never made it. That was the last time I ever seen him.

Marcello: I assume these get-togethers for tea were very good for boosting morale, were they not?

McCall: Oh, sure. I mean this was something everybody didn't have was tea.

Marcello: How did you get hold of tea?

McCall: Through the truck drivers. See, American truck drivers when

they go to town, they'd buy it. But everybody didn't get hold of it. There was several thousand men there. So that's why I say I fell into a clique at that time. I was very fortunate.

Marcello: Where would they get the money to buy these things? Did the Japanese pay the prisoners so much for working?

McCall: Yes, they did pay us a little there at a time. But as far as I remember, that must be where it come from. It was very little because I don't think I ever had over three or four pesos at one time. Of course, everything was sky high. But there was some Filipino currency running around camp. But I don't recall getting too much or getting paid. I don't know how it come about, really. I'll have to ask somebody.

Marcello: What were your first thoughts when you heard that they were going to send you back to Japan? Did you know where you were going?

McCall: We didn't know where we were going at the time. They didn't say much about it. You know, we were put on detail, and you'd just come and go. And again they loaded us up, and we went back to Bilibid.

Marcello: Loaded you on trucks?

McCall: Trucks and then by trains and then to Bilibid. And then we were there a few days, and then they loaded us aboard this trip and sent us to Formosa and then to . . . wasn't Tokyo. Where'd we land? What's some seaports up and down the coast there below Tokyo?

Marcello: Was it . . .

McCall: Kobe.

Marcello: . . . Yokohama? Kobe, yeah, Kobe.

McCall: Kobe. That's where we landed.

Marcello: Well, before we get that far then . . . so you boarded a ship at Manila. Is that correct?

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: And from Manila you went to Formosa. What was the ship itself like?

McCall: Well, we were all run into one big hold. And they had some outhouses up to the topside, and they had this drainage ditch or trench down the side of the ship. And they washed that out with hoses. And they'd let us out occasionally to get a little fresh air. In other words, we were down below deck most of the time.

Marcello: For the most part they confined you to this hold. Was the hold pretty full?

McCall: Well, you could lay down.

Marcello: Oh, you could? There was room to lay down in the hold?

McCall: Oh, yes, yes. I think we had it a little better than some of the other boys that come out at a later date, from what I heard. At least we had water and we got fed. So you could lay down and sleep. It was sort of, you know, crowded.

Marcello: Did you have more or less freedom of movement from the hold to the upper deck? Or were there just certain times when you

could go up above deck?

McCall: Just certain times when they'd let us on deck. And how often, I don't recall because they just had times that they told us to come up and come down. That was it. Seemed like a long voyage to me. And then, of course, the nights started getting colder.

Marcello: Did anything happen on the voyage from Manila to Formosa that stands out?

McCall: No, we started out and then made a big sweep back. We sort of figured there must have been a submarine scare.

Marcello: I was just going to ask you if there were any submarine scares or any raids by airplanes and so on.

McCall: No, that was the only incident.

Marcello: Were you worried about that?

McCall: Well, I think I was concerned, let's say that. Worry was a thing of the past. I don't think you can worry on something like that. What can you do about it? If it's going to happen, it's going to happen. And I'm not a fatalist, either.

Marcello: I was just going to ask you if you had become perhaps fatalistic as a result of being a prisoner.

McCall: Never. I'll take any kind of prevention, you know, protective prevention I can. And I'm not a believer in that at all. But you've got to live with it, and you can do so much about something and that's it. So why worry about it?

Marcello: I see. What was the attrition rate like on this trip to

Formosa? Did very many people die?

McCall: We didn't lose any. Of course, always on these details they took the healthiest.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And we were all in good shape so there was no problem there.

Marcello: Other than malaria. You still had malaria, of course, did you not?

McCall: I had had malaria and on top of that I'd had it the last time I'd been in Bilibid with that knee operation. I'd had dingy fever, also.

Marcello: I've heard people talk about this dingy fever. Exactly what was it?

McCall: Well, some of the boys from the South said it was break-bone fever.

Marcello: Break-bone fever.

McCall: That's why . . . that's what they used to call it in the South. Every joint in your body . . . everything aches about you. You just feel . . . just aches, aches and you get a fever. There's no part of your body that doesn't ache, whereas with malaria it's your back. But you just ache all over. And it lasts a short time, and I had no reoccurrence of it. How or what causes it other than a mosquito, I have no idea.

Marcello: Was it on this trip to Formosa that you noticed that the weather started to turn colder?

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: And get colder?

McCall: Yes. Of course, they had issued us some blankets and overcoats. We had a fairly good idea where we were going. I think they had issued it to us then.

Marcello: What was Formosa like?

McCall: Never did even get off the ship.

Marcello: Oh, you didn't.

McCall: It was like a beautiful island, and we got to see it from topside, and that was about it. Then we proceeded on in to Kobe.

Marcello: How long did you stay at Formosa? Just to get on new provisions or . . .

McCall: Well, weren't on deck too much. We were just up and down.

Marcello: I see. You really didn't know what was going on?

McCall: No, and I would say that we were there twelve hours, maybe. And then we proceeded to Kobe.

Marcello: I guess it got colder as you approached Japan.

McCall: Little colder, yes. I'm trying to remember the month. Seemed like it was in the fall.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you had any sense of time here. If you knew either the month or the year that this was taking place.

McCall: Well, let's see. We were liberated in August, and I was there seventeen months. So it must have been in the spring.

Marcello: Of 1943.

McCall: Yes.

Marcello: I guess it would be the spring of '43.

McCall: Yes. I remember being there seventeen months in Japan proper.

Marcello: I see. How was the trip from Formosa to Kobe?

McCall: Well, it was nothing outstanding about it.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: It didn't seem like it took too long after that.

Marcello: Everybody survived the trip?

McCall: The sea looked a lot different. We must have went through the Yellow Sea or something. That just sort of dimly hits my memory there. The ocean looked entirely different. I hadn't thought about that since it happened.

Marcello: What happened when you got to Kobe?

McCall: We were loaded onto a train, and they had all the blinds pulled. And they were very strict with us. I guess . . .

Marcello: Were you in regular passenger cars or were . . .

McCall: Passenger cars.

Marcello: . . . you in boxcars or passenger cars?

McCall: Passenger. No, that was deluxe, yeah, deluxe. And it seemed like we spent, oh, about six hours on that train. Went through Tokyo. And I remember taking a peek at Tokyo and seeing people on the platform and in a few buildings. And the humorous part was going to the bathroom. They had two marble slabs--everything's saddle trenches with those people. And they got a bar to hang on up here (gesture). And I got to laughing and thinking about a woman with high heels on it

going around corners. (Chuckle) Can you imagine that? Of course, those people didn't wear high heels. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You're right. (Chuckle)

McCall: And they served one meal, and it must have been smoked salmon. Oh, it tasted like ham. It was big, thick slabs. It was the only time I ever tasted any, before or since. And that was the best meal we had. It was the first time we'd had any rice in a long time. We'd been eating milo maize in the Philippines.

Marcello: Oh, really? You hadn't had much rice at all in the Philippines?

McCall: We'd been on milo maize quite a bit.

Marcello: Oh, I didn't realize that.

McCall: And after we got to Japan we got on milo maize again.

Marcello: Well, then where'd you get rice mainly?

McCall: Well, most of it was in the Philippines. And then we got a little in Japan. But I remember getting some rice again, and it tasted real good.

Marcello: But for the most part in the Philippines you were eating maize rather than rice?

McCall: We were eating both.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: But we got into more maize in Japan later on in the war.

Marcello: Did you eat more maize than rice, then, huh?

McCall: Oh, yeah, I think so.

Marcello: That's very interesting. I hadn't realized that.

McCall: Well, I liked it pretty good. Of course, you acquire a taste

for it, I think.

Marcello: Anything would taste pretty good (chuckle) under those circumstances though.

McCall: Yes, yes, it did.

Marcello: Okay, so you're on the train going from Kobe to where?

McCall: Tokyo and then we went on down to Hitachi.

Marcello: Hitachi?

McCall: There's a big city there today.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And I read something about it in a news magazine here a while back. And then we proceeded . . .

Marcello: You didn't stop at all? In other words, you just passed through these towns. Is that right?

McCall: No, we stopped there in Hitachi. And this is where we got off of the train . . .

Marcello: I see.

McCall: . . . and proceeded by foot to the village of Motiyama, a mining village, an old copper mine. I think it means "mountain village."

Marcello: Okay.

McCall: That's what I was told it meant, "mountain village" in Japanese.

Marcello: Were you pretty strictly guarded by the Japanese soldiers at this time yet?

McCall: Oh, yes, yes. Same number of guards, same procedures. And then we marched up a road to the mountains. And it took us an

hour or so. And we were assigned to wooden barracks. There were 300 of us. We were on a mountaintop. And they had paper over the cracks--the barracks were very thin--and sliding wooden doors, and then they had a hallway. There was five rooms to a barracks. And I believe there's one, two, three, four, five, six, twenty men to a room. You slept on straw mats. This is where we got into our sand fleas. Never had a flea or lice in all my time.

Marcello: Want to talk a little bit about the sand fleas? Sounds like an interesting story here.

McCall: Sand fleas?

Marcello: Right.

McCall: Well, they just bite you is all and scratch. And it's just aggravating.

Marcello: It's a matter of uncleanliness more than anything else?

McCall: Well, no, no. A sand flea is in that part of the country.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And these were straw mats that we were on and . . .

Marcello: Were you sleeping on the bare ground? Was this the bare ground, or was it a platform?

McCall: No, we were up as high as this table or a little lower. And then they had the starw mats. Then they had a wooden board at the edge of each of this that went around in a "U" shape and then in the center they had a little charcoal pit made out of bricks. And then we had electricity there, and we had a few

lights for a change which we didn't have in our camps in the Philippines, a lot of them.

Marcello: Was there a wall or a fence or anything around this particular camp?

McCall: There was a wooden fence. Most of our guards were . . . well, a good majority of them were ex-combat troops who had been wounded, and some were like "Four Eyes." You're getting into your names then. He had never been in the service or saw combat. And "Tomato Head," he was a corporal.

Marcello: What was it?

McCall: "Tomato Head."

Marcello: "Tomato Head." (Chuckle)

McCall: And then we had "Queenie-san," our interpreter. His father, I understood, was in the embassy, or he was some way connected with our government in Japan. And his mother was Japanese. So he was an interpreter.

Marcello: But you called him "Queenie-san?"

McCall: Yeah, yeah, yeah, very feminine.

Marcello: You gave him a feminine name.

McCall: And he always smelled like powder and after shave. Of course, we had none of this stuff, and you'd smell him a mile.
(Chuckle) So that's where he got his name.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And this is where we got all of our straight information from. We knew what was going on in the war from then on.

Marcello: What did you do at this camp?

McCall: We worked in copper mines.

Marcello: Well, if you did that kind of work, then, like you say, you were in fairly good shape, comparatively speaking, that is compared to a lot of other prisoners.

McCall: This is true.

Marcello: Or obviously you wouldn't have been doing that kind of work.

McCall: That's right. We first, a group of us, went down and a small group went into the mine. And, of course, I had no desire to work in a mine and had never been in a mine. We were issued hard hats and then these split-toed tennis shoes like their combat troops wore and the socks without heels in them. And then they issued us coats and pants. And we had leggings that we put around, wrap-around leggings. And I was picked by a little man by the name of "Maturi-san" about sixty years old.

Marcello: Now what was his name?

McCall: "Maturi-san," very nice. And he had on big thick glasses, and he kept looking at me. And I figured it out. He couldn't get over blue eyes. He'd never seen a man with blue eyes. So I was picked as a driller. There was two other Americans, and we went in to try out. That was their deal, and they put us on these drills, these air drills. And I think out of the 300, there was thirty-five. Us three started, and then we started breaking in the rest for drilling. And we worked by drilling tunnels and working in the ore room. It was a mine that was

closed down, and they were trying to go back and pick up as much copper as they could from it. And these air drills . . . well, you had a water tank that you had to fill. You had these drills that would turn around 360 degrees in any direction. You had a big arm that would swing around, and then on this arm a gun would swing around in any direction. And you could turn the gun 360 degrees. And you had water going through these drill bits that you had to regulate so that the bit wouldn't hang up. These guns were operated by air, pneumatic drills.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if they were pneumatic drills.

McCall: Yeah. The drills were poorly tempered a lot. They were hard to work with from this standpoint. And from the drippings in the mine we had to get around and scrounge for our water to put in a water tank because we regulated it with a valve to these drills. And like I say, we drilled tunnels most of the time. I did. And then we'd put on the dynamite and blast. In fact, they used to take us to the dynamite shack and issue it to us, and then we'd go down there. And it got to the place where one man in the mine would be over three or four guys, and they'd send us to our individual working spots. Then we'd all drill or blast, and then they got to trusting us so much that they left and would go back up with him, topside, and then go out with him, and out of the mine. I guess those guns weighed . . . one of them weighed 160 pounds. And you

had to set your own stand up. And you had to pick this gun up and set it up on this arm and tighten it down. And I lifted one gun . . . talk about being in pretty good shape, this weighed over 230 pounds. It was on a cart. I never did pick it up from the ground. If it hadn't been on the cart, I would have never picked it up. I don't believe I could have done it every day. Depended on where you worked. I worked on . . . with a smaller gun most of the time, but that big one was a son-of-a-gun. Of course, like I say, I was in good shape. You were up and down a mountain, up and down a ladder. It was all day.

Marcello: Was there quite a bit of contact with Japanese civilians at this mine?

McCall: No. They kept the civilians away from us.

Marcello: I thought maybe some of the supervisory personnel might be . . .

McCall: They were all civilians, the supervisors, yes, yes.

Marcello: This is what I was referring to, these kind of people.

McCall: Yes, in fact there was one pretty good fellow there that I was with some of the time. But now this fellow Lawrence . . . and I bet he's not on the Chit Chat list. He's up here at Jefferson City. And I stop by to see him. He stayed in the service and went back and took this old boy three watches and spent the night with him. He took his whole family. And he seen "Maturi-san," too.

Marcello: Now what old boy are you referring to here now?

McCall: Well, I can't recall the guy's name. This man by the name of Lawrence worked with him most of the time. And, of course, "Maturi-san" was the old gentleman, and he was the head of all the drillers. This is quite a . . . what would you say--a top-notch job. In the mines this is number one job, to be a driller.

Marcello: How do you think you got selected for it?

McCall: It was just my blue eyes, I guess. (Chuckle)

Marcello: All right. (Laugh) It could be, I guess. That's a possibility, I suppose.

McCall: But, as I remember, I just fell in with this group, and we were assigned to different parts of the mine. And if I remember, this whole group became drillers. We were the first three. The rest of them were muckers. They mucked this stuff up at night after we blasted. And we used to get our sewing thread from the fuses. And we'd take it off. We didn't care if it blew or not. Later on, they got these . . . I don't know who they were--Japanese engineers--came down, and they had a string from a cork in the ceiling about ten foot apart. And they lined you up on that, and this is how you lined your whole drilling. Depending in how hard the surface was, this would be the number of holes you'd drill and at what angle you'd drill it.

Marcello: You were drilling for blasting, in other words. Is that correct?

McCall: Oh, yes, and then we'd cut our own fuses and sticks. In other words, we had certain fuses we lit first, and then we'd take a pattern so they'd all go off about approximately the same time. But anyway, they got to putting us on a quota, and when we found out, why, we got to drilling our holes back and moving our strings back. It was impossible to make this quota with these bad drills. And, boy, they come around and pat you on the back--number one, you made your footage. Well, probably we didn't. (Chuckle) That's the way we survived.

Marcello: I see. I see. In other words, these corks designated how much you had . . .

McCall: Yeah, how much we had done.

Marcello: How much . . .

McCall: How far we were in the tunnel.

Marcello: . . . how far you were in the tunnel, right.

McCall: And if we didn't think we had it, why, we'd just take them out and move them back.

Marcello: Move the corks back. Generally speaking, did you have pretty good relations with the civilian bosses and so on?

McCall: Oh, yes. I only worked for primarily two or three. And they were all pretty decent sort of people. In fact, I had no problems with them.

Marcello: What was the weather like?

McCall: Cold, snowy, wet. We used to get up before daylight to go in the mine, and we'd be back by four o'clock. I think it was

about four. Some of these mine levels were very, very hot. You could go down a half a level, and your clothes would be soaked. And we'd work in a G-string, tennis shoes, and a hard hat. Other areas would be cold. And we'd come out ringing wet, and there was this cold air and snow, and no colds. We didn't hear of a cold. And got these carbides. We worked with carbide lights. And they have a brass wire around each carbide, and when the mud hit it you'd ream it out, and you had matches that was in a wooden box in a metal canister. And then you had to light it back up, which was hard sometimes if they were wet. And we got to getting these old carbide cans and taking them and putting a grate in them, and we made our own stoves. And then we got pipe out of the mine and vented it out of the room, and then we got to cutting the timber down to carry our wood in, which is pretty hard when you don't have any good sharp tools.

Marcello: Right.

McCall: In fact, they stopped us one time because we was taking too much of the good wood out that was helping for support. But you could always go to an old wrecked part of the mine and find some dry wood. It was liable to be wet, but a lot of this was abandoned, and a lot of it was where it was caved in. This is where we scrounged our wood. And we took turns . . . if you brought in the wood, and then the man who can't, who was on another detail, he cut the wood. And, of course, the

Japanese guard, they take their share as we come in. So we done pretty good because they never did give us any charcoal to burn--very little. And this is the way we kept warm. Several times we had to get together to sleep under the same blankets to keep warm. In the summertime we'd have seven blankets; in the wintertime, they'd take three away from us.

Marcello: What was the reason for that?

McCall: Don't ask me. I guess for them.

Marcello: I assume these blankets weren't very heavy, were they?

McCall: They was army and navy blankets.

Marcello: Oh, they were army and navy issue blankets.

McCall: And in the summer, like I say, they'd give you seven; in the wintertime, they'd take three or four away from you. And the old army overcoats they issued us on the first day of spring in March, I believe it was. It was snowing. And the corporal come out. I forget what we called him--"Iron Head," I think. It was "Ironhead." Then we had one we called "Bird Dog" and while it was snowing out there on the parade ground, he said, "Well, it's the first day of spring, turn in your overcoats." Just aggravating. He tried to aggravate us all the time.

Marcello: This was army personnel again?

McCall: Right. Well, a lot of these things, I feel, the Japanese didn't have and they needed. Of course, the overcoats I couldn't understand that, except he just wanted to be ornery is all. But, the mine, that was the hardest work I've ever

done in my life.

Marcello: What sort of rations were you getting now? If this was hard work, obviously they had to feed you fairly well. Didn't they?

McCall: Yes, we got two rations a day. Let me see. We got fed. We got to carry one to the mine, and we got fed when we'd come back in. It was milo maize, basically.

Marcello: You say you took one meal to the mine with you?

McCall: Yes. We carried an old Army mess kit.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Like a lunch pail.

McCall: We carried an old Army mess kit. You know what they look like?

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: That's what we all had. Well, we had a few vegetables, and sometimes we'd get sweet potatoes, but not many. And a few dried potatoes or we ate seaweed, grasshoppers. We got some sharks and barracudas and soup.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: They were in meat form. But we were fed. I think we managed.

Marcello: Were you maintaining your weight fairly well, let's say, at 120 or something like that yet?

McCall: Yeah, I think I dropped down, and it was right there all the way through--118-119 when I got out. I maintained it pretty good. Towards the end I was getting wet beriberi. I doubt if any of us would've lasted another winter because it was beginning to show.

Marcello: What is wet beriberi?

McCall: You wake up in the morning, and your face is swollen, your eyes are closed, and then as the day goes on it goes down into your arms and your feet. Your legs feel . . . get like balloons, and also your ankles. But it seems like at night these go down when you're laying down, and it goes to your face. And you just keep swelling. And I don't know whether you would bust open or not with all that moisture in your system. So we just called it wet beriberi. And there was a lot of it previous in camps. I was just lucky and didn't contract it until the last few months, the last two months, in fact. I always felt we'd never make another winter. And I don't think we would've because they cut down the rations as we was beginning to bomb. They strafed our camp one day when we was in the mine.

Marcello: I was going to ask you about this. Did you experience very many air raids?

McCall: No, two . . .

Marcello: . . . in your particular camp?

McCall: . . . the machine gunning, I was out. I've seen one flight over one day.

Marcello: These were bombers?

McCall: These were off a navy ship?

Marcello: Lots of them?

McCall: Yeah, there was quite a few. They wouldn't let us close to the window. But then the high altitude bombing one time dropped

a bomb near us, but I think he was just flying over and dropped it.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: But the night that this one fleet came down, and, remember, it shelled the coast of Japan. And I don't know what task force that was, but it was shelling Hitashi right below us in the valley. And that did get us excited then because we didn't know what was going to happen. We didn't know whether it was an invasion or what. But, it went on for several hours, it seemed like to me.

Marcello: These are the only experiences you had so far as any air raids or off shore bombardment of this type?

McCall: Yes, that's so.

Marcello: And you really couldn't observe too much of it. You heard most of this rather than seeing it.

McCall: No.

Marcello: And I assume you didn't know what sort of damage it did . . .

McCall: No.

Marcello: . . . that is, in Hitachi or one of those other places.

McCall: No, there were some camps that were hit, you know, throughout Tokyo and other places.

Marcello: A couple of questions come to mind at this point. A while ago you said that this was the hardest work that you ever did. What made it so hard?

McCall: Well, maybe you go down five or six levels by stairs--wet

stairs, broken stairs, wood, you know. And you're carrying a bunch of bits, eight or ten bits plus a box of dynamite, oil can, your lamp, and then they're swinging that gun around all day. And up and down, you set it up, dismantle it.

Marcello: Physically, in other words, it was very tough work.

McCall: Yes. It was. It was quite heavy.

Marcello: Another thing comes to mind here. Now you had all of these nicknames for these various guards and so on. How did they usually get these names? Because of their physical appearance in most cases? You were talking about "Tomato Head" a while ago. (Chuckle)

McCall: Who knows? It just comes out. "Four Eyes," that was glasses.

Marcello: I assume he had glasses, right. We talked about "Iron Head."

McCall: He got this name because of his stubbornness and . . .

Marcello: "Iron Head" was stubborn, huh?

McCall: Yeah. And "Bird Dog" was always, you know, he was always digging around. But now "Tomato Head," I don't know how he ever got that. (Chuckle)

Marcello: There's something else that comes to mind here now. Did you have some scores to settle after the war?

McCall: No.

Marcello: You know, for maybe some of the things that these guards had done or something.

McCall: None. I had no bitterness at all. I see no reason. You got knocked around a few times, but part of it . . .

Marcello: Did you get knocked around very much at the copper mine?

McCall: No, not too much. I got slapped a couple of times, and that was about it. But I had no problems, and we were treated pretty good. We got to stealing a bunch of potatoes that they had sitting on the roof one night. (Chuckle)

Marcello: What? They had them on the roof?

McCall: They had potatoes all over the roofs of these barracks, you know, drying out.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And we were slipping out stealing potatoes--raw potatoes--you know. Then they missed them. And they got us all to fall out. And they wanted to know who did it. Well, everybody was guilty, so each division . . . let's see, we had Malaysians after this. It wasn't too long before they took most of the Americans out. They left seventy-five. The balance was Dutchmen and Malaysians that they brought into camp. Of course, they had their own sergeants and officers. We fell out on the parade ground. And so, this fellow that was in charge of us, he said, "Well, somebody is going to have to take the blame." So about four of them stepped up, and he just said, "Now you roll everytime I hit you." And he had to stand there and slap them for about thirty minutes.

Marcello: Now, who did this?

McCall: The Japanese made the American slap the Americans and made the Malayan slap the Malaysians and the Dutchman slap the Dutchmen.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: And then they returned us to the barracks. And that was about the size of it. But that is where we got the lice is when the Dutchmen come in. They were filthy. We respected the Malayan kids. They were young. They were young. They were from the British Army. And they were very, very young and a very likeable group of people. We got along real good with them, better than we did with the Dutchmen.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if there was very much contact between the various nationalities.

McCall: This is the only camp I was ever in. And like I say, they come in within about thirty or forty days after we was there. They packed up the balance of our group and sent them somewhere else and brought these in. Why, I don't know. Of course, Americans lived in their barracks and the Japanese, Malaysians lived in theirs.

Marcello: You mentioned a while ago, also, that this was where you really started to get news from the outside world. How did you get it?

McCall: From "Queenie-san," the Japanese interpreter, civilian interpreter. And she would relay it to our officers . . .

Marcello: When you say "she" you are being facetious . . .

McCall: Yes, yes.

Marcello: . . . it actually was a male, was it not?

McCall: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. You know, this was just normal.

Everybody said, "Queenie-san." There used to be a Marine by the name of "Queenie-san" in Cabanatuan Three. And you'd hear some real stories on that, but now they were just hearsay. This Japanese boy picked up "Queenie-san" because of the powder and the perfume and etc.

Cigarettes were very short there. Everybody had a cigarette butt holder. In fact, they had it in the Philippines. These butt holders were made out of chicken bone, metal pipes, bamboo, anything imaginable. You cut the cigarette in three parts, and two or three hot puffs and that was it. So we were short of cigarettes. We did get a couple of Red Cross boxes which didn't amount to much. And we got to smoking cherry leaves, too.

Marcello: Did you have any reason to believe or not to believe the news that "Queenie-san" was bringing you? Were you sure this was pretty well the truth that he was bringing?

McCall: I felt so. Especially the bomb. That's when the atomic bomb fell. Our guards were really jabbering. We could understand enough Japanese to know that they was talking about a bomb. And it seemed to be more authentic than anything we ever had. And everything seemed to prove out, you know, that we were winning the war. After a few ships showed up over there and then this bombing, why, we knew it was a lot of truth in it. I think we had more factual information then than we ever did.

Marcello: Did they ever allow you to go into town, that is, down to Hitachi?

McCall: No. No, we never did. All we did was work, and we were supposed to get off a day or two weeks.

Marcello: Oh, you were working seven days a week?

McCall: Right.

Marcello: . . . other than that day off?

McCall: Yes. Yes, and sometimes we didn't get that off. Like I say, we used to go to the dynamite shack, the drillers, get our dynamite and go in the mines, set all the dynamite charges, and come back out. Until the fourth of July we had a day off, and I guess it fell on a Sunday. And we left their parade ground, and that shack blew sky high. Boulders come up through that camp, and they swore we had something to do with it. But we hadn't been down there for twenty-four hours. So after that they'd bring the dynamite to the entrance and give it to us. We never did get close to the dynamite shack after that. So, of course, we didn't have nothing to do with it, but they thought we did.

Marcello: Were you working down in the mines with the Dutch and the Malaysians? Were they in the mines, also?

McCall: Oh, yes. But they worked as muckers and other jobs, so the only people I went in with was one or two other Americans that was under one hauncho or boss.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: And we'd move to our assigned levels and then move back top-side. But the drillers would go down early in the morning.

Then the muckers would go in the afternoon and pick up the ore and dump it. They had a little old pick there, you know, and they picked it and put it in these rail carts and . . .

Marcello: They tried to keep you segregated as much as possible according to nationalities?

McCall: No, they kept us all in the same camp. There was no . . .

Marcello: You were in the same camp but you were in separate barracks?

McCall: Oh, yes.

Marcello: And apparently you were on separate work details. They didn't mix up the Americans with these other groups very much, did they?

McCall: No, the driller team was already established.

Marcello: I see.

McCall: Now, we had Americans that were muckers, too.

Marcello: Oh, you did?

McCall: But they were already into a unit, and I guess they worked side by side in certain other cases, but there was no Malayan or Japanese down with us as driller.

Marcello: In a situation like you were in throughout your tenure in these various prison camps, do you strike up a friendship with two or three people? Do you get pretty close to two or three other people? Do cliques develop of sorts?

McCall: I imagine in some of the bigger camps, and closeness is how close to close? Of course, you develop a friendship with an individual, but how close is it?

Marcello: Well, I was thinking so far as confiding in him and this sort of thing.

McCall: Well, I don't think so. I think everything was group discussion, you know. There was no privacy to speak of.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: Close friends? I can't say I ever really had any close friends.

Marcello: Why not?

McCall: Well, all of my close friends were killed or disappeared, especially after I left the Philippines. There was nobody to my knowledge that was from my squadron anyway that I knew very well in that whole group. Seems like I was separated on Corregidor. Of course, we were gradually separated all from the start of the war. Some went to Mindanao and other places . . .

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: And you moved from one camp to the other. You never went with the same group. So possibly this is it. I say Walker and a few of the fellows in the barracks, we were friendly, but not in the way that you were in the service together in peacetime. As far as private conversations, they're all about food or something else, you know. And you usually don't find a conversation to be had.

Marcello: How did you receive the word that the war was over and that you were soon to be liberated?

McCall: We had been on the detail on topside and hadn't been to the mine. And we went up the hill one night, and some fellow in the back said, "Kick old Maturi-san in the ass, and tell him to give you a cigarette and if he does, we'll know the war is over. If he hits you, why, we'll know it isn't." And we laughed about that, and we went into camp. And that evening they come in and announced it, our officers did. They announced the war was over. And one guy broke down and cried, and that's about all I saw.

Marcello: What were your own emotions?

McCall: Felt pretty good.

Marcello: What happened then? Was there very much celebrating of any sort?

McCall: There was no place to go and nothing to do. We were supposed to stay where we was at. We had our regular meal. And, of course, they, the Japanese, immediately they took us over to somewhere, and we hauled in a bunch of rice. And I know I was in good shape because I carried that rice a long ways up and down that mountain. And they started increasing our food, and then they started dropping small parachutes from the navy ships, these small pursuit jobs. Then the bombers kept coming over and dropping supplies by parachute in these big fifty-five gallon drums. And we'd go out and pick it up and bring it back in.

Marcello: What sort of things did they usually drop in these . . .

McCall: Oh, food . . .

Marcello: . . . drums?

McCall: . . . and coffee and all kinds of canned foods, mostly. Some of them burst open. Some of it we'd get back, and some of it we wouldn't. We had plenty to eat.

Marcello: The Japanese more or less let you alone at this time . . .

McCall: Well . . .

Marcello: . . . when all this took place?

McCall: . . . yes, yes.

Marcello: Had their restrictions relaxed somewhat? They were still in control of the camp, I assume.

McCall: Well, there was still a few of them there. A few of them took off. There was a few people that wanted a little revenge, I'm sure . . .

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: . . . so some of them took off. But as a whole, they were there. And when we got orders from a radio, why we left.

Marcello: How did you get orders by radio? I don't quite understand that.

McCall: Well, they had a radio. They bought us a radio, and it come over a news wave. This is the way they told us to pick it up. Of course, there for several days, we didn't know whether we were going to get out of there or not. They were dropping leaflets from airplanes urging the people to turn down the surrender and continue to fight.

Marcello: This was the Japanese military that was doing this . . .

McCall: Right.

Marcello: . . . is that correct?

McCall: Yes. They flew over our camp, and we got a few of the leaflets. I may have one of those at home.

Marcello: Did you ever think that the Japanese might just systematically kill all the prisoners? Did this thought ever enter your mind?

McCall: No, no, it never did. In fact, of course, we didn't know what happened in some of the other camps, you know . . .

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: . . . when it did. I'm thinking of Cebu, I believe, in the Philippines where they poured gasoline on them and machine gunned them.

Marcello: I heard about that. I think there is somebody around here very close that I would . . . I think the survivor, in fact, lives in Mineral Wells or someplace like that. One of the survivors . . .

McCall: One of the survivors lives at Lone Star, Texas. And they had a write-up in the Longview paper a while back several years ago. And he was telling that he went over a cliff, and he swam so many miles to another island. There was another Navy chief who escaped that didn't know how to swim but swam that distance. And he lives over here at Lone Star, Texas. And I'll be you got his name.

Marcello: I probably do.

McCall: Get him in and he'll have a good story.

Marcello: I'm sure he would.

McCall: But, no, when I was in the copper mine I had a broken toe,

. . .

Marcello: Something fell on it?

McCall: Some of the overhead, and it busted this third toe, and its never been set. They wouldn't set it. They painted it with something that looked like iodine and put, oh, cellophane over it. They wouldn't X-ray it because it cost too much money. And another thing, while I think of it, they asked anybody that had a bad tooth to step out, which I didn't do, and they took them to the dentist. Well, what they did, they took them down and drilled all their gold out. And all the fillings that they put back in the fellow's mouth, why, they fell out within a few days. They just were no good.

Marcello: When did they do this? Was this near the end of the war?

McCall: Yeah. Yeah, this was . . .

Marcello: They were just trying to get the gold in other words?

McCall: That's what they said. They had their gold drill out. Of course, the new fillings they got didn't do any good. I remember an instance there in Cabanatuan that I had a bad tooth, and they had a corpsman that pumped a hand driven drill, and they drilled that out. And they took some old silver money, and they made a filling and put a filling in my tooth there.

Marcello: Out of silver money. They melted it down?

McCall: Yeah and they got the silver, and the dentist knew how to do it. But that corpsman was standing there, pumping that drill. And there was an old homemade chair. And that dentist would stop every once in a while, and he'd pull me back up in the chair. If you've never had your tooth drilled by a hand pumped drill, why, you've never lived. (Chuckle) That is something I hadn't thought of in a long time.

Before I went back to the mines, I was off and I decided that I didn't want to go back, so I got me a brick. I figured I was getting about well, and I went over there, and I aimed that brick at my foot. I was going to break it over it. And I moved that foot. And, you know, I couldn't get up enough guts to do that. I even closed my eyes one time and moved my foot. (Chuckle) I aimed at it and I did it four times. Finally I just put it up. I went back to the mine, and I got on those big drills again, and I was trying to stop this car. It was about to get away from me down this steep incline. Some of the drills fell over and busted it again. It fell on that foot, so I got off. I got another week off. But I didn't have enough guts to break my foot over. But that was something. I got out there where nobody could see me, you know. Everybody was out to work. And I'd get that brick, and I'd aim it, and I'd let her go, and that foot would move.

Marcello: I guess there was no stopping it. (Chuckle) So anyhow, the

Americans started dropping down the food, you know, from the big fifty-gallon drums or whatever they were . . .

McCall: By parachute.

Marcello: . . . by parachute, right. Most of the guards had taken off, you said, or some of them had at least. What happened in camp? You knew the war was over. They were still guarding the camp to some extent. What exactly did you do? What took place then?

McCall: Well, we'd just go out and gather the food and bring it back, sit around and really have a nice visit. Course, we knew we were on our way home. And we were eating good. I was in no hurry to go anywhere. It didn't make any difference. I never was hurrying to go home. I just took my time and enjoyed it. One thing there on record back there that happened before the liberation, I'd walked fire guard one night. We used to have what we . . .

Marcello: Fire guard?

McCall: Yeah. But we used to walk these fire guards, and I had an attack in the side, and I thought it was dysentery. In fact, the doctor did too, and he sent me down to the mine. And I decided going down, well, I'll just play like I can't make it. And I doubled up, so they sent me back up and put me on light duty cleaning out drill bits. And somebody gave me some hot water, and, boy, that really set it off. I had an appendicitis attack. So they took me over to the hospital, and I laid in

the hall on the floor there quite a while. And I went inside and this Japanese doctor pricked my ear and took a blood test, and all he said in English was, "Do you still have your appendix?" And I said, "Yes." And that was all. So they sent me back to the room. It was cold in that room, I remember that. And then one of the Sikhs . . . now a Sikh was an Indian. He was an interpreter. He was from India. He was a Sikh Indian.

Marcello: Uh-huh.

McCall: And then there was another Malayan boy who was a corpsman. And they were trying to shave me with a straight-edge razor, no soap. And finally a Japanese corpsman came in, and he really did the job. He pulled them out more than anything else. And they . . . come to the time, and they said, "Get up." And I got up and I was stark naked, barefooted, and I put my overcoat . . . they had me an overcoat, an army overcoat. And I remember walking down this hall and it wound around, went through these two doors, and I seen all these bright lights. And I thought, boy, how warm it is in here. And I seen the doctor standing over there and the nurse standing by him and another nurse over in the background and "Iron Head" from camp and the Sikh interpreter standing at the head. And they motioned for me to get on the table. And I wondered, well, surely they're going to give me a sheet with these women in here. And I stood there a while, and they started griping at me a little bit, so I just took off my overcoat and

handed it to the Sikh and climbed on the table. And they gave me a local . . . no, they give me a spinal. And this doctor made one puss, and it didn't take, and I sat straight up. So he gave me a local, and he took out my appendix with a local anesthetic.

Marcello: Was this done under relatively modern conditions and so on or was it . . .

McCall: Oh, yeah, it was regular hospital and operating room.

Marcello: They had this right there at the camp, right there at the mine.

McCall: Oh yes. This was a mining village that we were in.

Marcello: But you were kind of off from the village a little bit, were you not?

McCall: We were upon the hill.

Marcello: Yeah.

McCall: A little higher than the normal group of them.

Marcello: Right. Hitachi was down below. The village itself was down below.

McCall: Yeah, and they had a lot of Koreans in there working in the mines, too. I remember that, and I'd never heard of Korea before until that time. And then they took me back there to camp before they took the stitches out. And I remember it being real muddy and snowing. They carried me up the side of that mountain on a stretcher, and I thought, "Boy, if they fall, I've had it." Then I went back to work.

Marcello: About how long were you laid up with appendicitis?

McCall: Oh, I would say not too long. I was in the hospital . . .

Marcello: I suppose you were lucky it happened at that particular camp than at Cabanatuan or someplace like that.

McCall: Well, I was real fortunate because my appendix had ruptured. When I was on the operating table I heard that the Japanese doctor say "puss," and I knew they had no Japanese word for that. And I was told later that they had ruptured. So I was very fortunate because they had no antibiotics or anything else. So I was real, real fortunate there, I think.

Marcello: So what did you think when you made your first contact with American soldiers near the end, you know, after the surrender? What kind of emotions did you have at that time?

McCall: Well, I felt real good, felt real good. I never could get over the fact of how big the women were and how white they were.

Marcello: This is when you got back to this country?

McCall: No, this was over there in Tokyo. We come into Tokyo by train. And there was a Red Cross woman or somebody there. They were the people that met us there. Of course, it felt real good. And I don't know.

Marcello: What food did you want the most?

McCall: When I got back to Seattle or got in Washington I went down and bought me a chocolate malt and a cheeseburger. Those are the first things that I had the desire to have. And, of course, all food, I thought of a lot of times. You know, actually, I was working in the mine one day, and I could smell bacon. And I shut down that gun and went back down the tunnel looking.

And another time I was down there, and I could hear crows cawing. And I don't know why, but that was the oddest thing. And it would be just like it was actually taking place. But that bacon, man, I could smell that.

Marcello: Never did find it, though.

McCall: Never did find it, no. (Chuckle)

Marcello: Looked pretty hard, though. (Chuckle)

McCall: Yeah, I sure did. But it was a relaxed atmosphere, and it was very easy going. We had it real nice.

Marcello: As you look back on your stay in these various prisoner-of-war camps, what thing perhaps stands out more than anything else? What sticks in your mind most vividly as you look back on it?

McCall: I'd have to think about that a while.

Marcello: Another question comes to mind, in the meantime. As you look back over your stay in those camps, was there evidence of a good deal of cruelty or atrocities or barbarism or whatever you want to call it on the part of the Japanese?

McCall: I wouldn't say so. I think different camps varied . . .

Marcello: Surely.

McCall: . . . greatly. And I think it depends how you looked at it for another thing. To me, it wasn't too bad. You get accustomed to it, but it was not as bad as some of the fellows had it, I'm sure. And there was a very thin line between any of us being civilized. And at the time and the conditions existing then, you can mold yourself into any form of human

being without feelings or regard or anything else about life. And you're a different individual. So I would say there was nothing unusual that happened. It could have been a lot worse. And you sort of learn to accept it. But I don't feel that there was anything unusual there. I'm sure it happened in some cases, like on Bataan and the death march and few of these other things.

Marcello: Did it take you very long to adjust after you got out of prisoner-of-war camp?

McCall: Yes, yes.

Marcello: In what ways? What did you find especially hard to adjust to?

McCall: I didn't understand the people; it was entirely a different life and different thinking. Of course, I'd been in the service a good many years. And this had been a slow adjustment. It took me quite a few years to adjust to it. And I think it's just step by step and phase by phase.

Marcello: What was hard to adjust to? Can you think of anything specific? Were you rather a suspicious person when you came out of those camps?

McCall: No, not suspicious, just I guess more of an individualist. Stayed to myself to some extent. I mixed but I noticed there was always people that gripe and moaning about something that didn't amount to a hill of beans. That always got under my skin a little bit. At first going home and seeing so many new people and feeling much attention, I didn't care for that.

It's hard to say when and how I adjusted. It's a different life and it's a different feeling. It's been so long, it's hard to say. But it has taken a good many years, and I would say in the last five years I've more or less got more relaxed than I've ever been. And it doesn't come to mind as much as it used to. Like I've often said I wouldn't take a million dollars to go through that place again, but I wouldn't take a million dollars for the experience. I think I capitalized and learned a lot about life as a whole. I learned to get along with people to some extent. You had to. And I don't know. Just come and go. The most outstanding thing that happened when I got back to the states was going downtown and seeing all the lights. And I just couldn't get over that, and walking down the streets and window shopping. And I really enjoyed the simple things. Of course, you learn to accept that and not appreciate it. I still can't stand to see people waste food, either. That still gets to me, the waste. And I love to shop in the grocery store. I go wild in the grocery store. (Chuckle) So my wife won't let me in there. (Chuckle)

Marcello: You still do go wild in the grocery store?

McCall: Oh, you better believe it.