

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR  
(ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM)**

**Center for Pacific War Studies**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**John K. Stutterheim  
Lakebay, Washington  
February 28, 2006  
Born in Indonesia  
Captured by Japanese at Age 13  
Spent War in Labor Camp**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is February 28, 2006. I am interviewing Dr. John K. Stutterheim by telephone. His address is: 603 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Court Kp S, Lakebay, Washington 98349. His phone number is area code 253-884-2506. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific Wars, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Dr. Stutterheim, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and let me ask you first, what is your birth date?

Dr. Stutterheim

Flag Day. June 14, 1928.

Mr. Misenhimer

I sent you a copy of the agreement with the Nimitz Museum; you have read that is that correct?

Dr. Stutterheim

I have it yes. I did not sign it. If you want me to sign it I can mail it to you.

Mr. Misenhimer

You have read it and it is okay with you? No problems with it?

Dr. Stutterheim

No I don't have any problems with it.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's fine. That's all I need, just a record that you have read it and it's agreeable to you.

Okay, you were born in June of 1928; where were you born?

Dr. Stutterheim

Surabaya. That was a naval harbor of the former Dutch East Indies, Indonesia now.

Mr. Misenhimer

I believe you are of Dutch ancestry is that correct?

Dr. Stutterheim

My father was Dutch and my mother was French.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did they get down to Indonesia?

Dr. Stutterheim

In 1928 my dad decided to go to the Indies and he got a job with the government as an accountant.

Mr. Misenhimer

So he moved down there then with them?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. Both of my parents came from Amsterdam.

Mr. Misenhimer

Since you were born down there do you have Dutch citizenship?

Dr. Stutterheim

I did in the past yes, but I am an American citizen.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's what I meant, by birth you were a Dutch citizen.

Dr. Stutterheim

Correct.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you also have dual citizenship with Indonesia also or not?

Dr. Stutterheim

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Dr. Stutterheim

I had one younger brother.

Mr. Misenhimer

How much younger than you?

Dr. Stutterheim

Two and a quarter years.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you go to school in Indonesia?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. As a matter of fact they had excellent schools including the high schools. You see the Dutch preferred to keep their kids in the colonies. They hired top notch teachers for high salaries to teach their kids in the Indies.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about what it was like to grow up there in the Indies, in Indonesia.

Dr. Stutterheim

As I mentioned before I wrote a story for my book and it reveals that growing up there was very comfortable. Of course we had certain problems like malaria and that sort of

thing. But actually it was a very comfortable youth.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there a large Dutch colony there?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. There were about 125,000 and about another 125,000 what we called Eurasians. So a total of a quarter million.

Mr. Misenhimer

So it was quite a large expatriate population then?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. But you have to realize how big Indonesia is. You take the western point Sabang where the tsunami hit recently and you take the middle of New Guinea, it is the same distance as Seattle to Boston.

Mr. Misenhimer

I have a small map here that shows Borneo, Sumatra, and Java.

Dr. Stutterheim

Sabang is a tiny little island that used to be a coaling station just off of Banda Aceh which got destroyed by the tsunami. I'll bet you that Sabang got hit too. Alongside the equator and it covers about one-eighth of the equator. It's really stretched out. It's a warm climate with six months rain and six months dry. Very wealthy in natural resources. It's a beautiful country; no other word for it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else from your time of growing up there?

Dr. Stutterheim

Well my dad encouraged us to do a lot of sports, especially swimming and diving. He was good at it himself. And he made us do Swedish gymnastics and I still think that saved my life during the concentration camp. When the Japanese took me prisoner I was a strong kid. I was forced by the Japanese to lift 220 pound sacks on my neck two flights up. You know that takes strength.

Mr. Misenhimer

Particularly your legs to go up those steps.

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else from the time you were growing up there?

Dr. Stutterheim

As a kid, I would say just before the Japanese invaded between 1940 and 1941, or 1939 and 1941, I received a bicycle with a headlight. I was so happy with that toy. I was a kid that loved to explore and I would roam around the countryside. Actually we were living in the mountains at that time and I would go 5 to 10 kilometers in one direction and visit certain places, especially the area of Singosari. It has an old Hindu palace and I found all the old statues. I just enjoyed that. I was that type of kid.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you finish high school there? Did you finish high school before the war?

Dr. Stutterheim

The grade school was seven years and I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade when the Japanese invaded. I

was a very good student; I was number two in my class. Of course that was terminated.

During the entire war we had no ability to study.

Mr. Misenhimer

What languages did you speak there?

Dr. Stutterheim

The entire Indies uses Malaysian, Sumatra, Singapore and the state of Malaysia. Now on the island of Java they have Javanese. We spoke Dutch and my mother and also in high school taught me French.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you learn to speak that native language there?

Dr. Stutterheim

Well as a matter of fact when I was very small I started to get very good in Javanese and that upset my mom. She thought that was not the thing to do in that type of environment, so she forbid me to do it, but I did speak very well Malaysian.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have help in the home?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. When we were in Malang in the mountains, located on a plateau about 1,800 feet up and we chose that area to live for the nights are cool. We had four servants.

Mr. Misenhimer

These were of course natives, local people?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes and my mother got along with them very well. She treated them humanely. Our cook

started to fester in the neck and she brought her to the doctor and they found that she had open tuberculosis. My mother offered to pay for all treatments but she did not allow her to cook anymore (laugh). You can imagine you know a cook who has festering tuberculosis is a disaster. Anyway, the woman left and died from what I remember. When she said farewell, both my mom and her were crying.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a nursemaid or something like that?

Dr. Stutterheim

No. My mother forbid that. She said we have two boys and we will handle everything ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

Your mother was born in France is that correct?

Dr. Stutterheim

No, she was born in Amsterdam but she was a Huguenot and they came from France.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned malaria; did you all have any problem with malaria?

Dr. Stutterheim

My dad had lots of it. You see he was an inspector of the Internal Revenue and he traveled from province to province. He was for two weeks in each province, so he came home only on the weekends. So he picked up malaria in various areas. There are three types of malaria; the tertiana, the quartana and the tropicana. The tropicana hit him and boy was he sick. People used to call it black water fever for you urinate blood and he had it; boy did he have it. We were very worried. I was about 6 years old and we thought he



was going to die.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is black water fever a form of malaria?

Dr. Stutterheim

The worst.

Mr. Misenhimer

I wasn't aware there were three different types.

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. The tertiana means every three days you get a fever bout; quatrana is every fourth day.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do they still have those three types around the world?

Dr. Stutterheim

Oh yes. We treated with what the British called quinine and it's still very effective.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about dengue fever did you have anything like that?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes we had it. Fortunately our family did not get hit. They used to call it bone breaking fever; it was so painful. We would see dengue fever in a high percentile.

Mr. Misenhimer

What is the treatment for dengue fever?

Dr. Stutterheim

At the moment I don't know. In those days it was anybody's guess sometimes.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've heard of a disease called scrub typhus did you ever hear of that?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. We had it in camp. There is another type of typhus too you know. There are different types of typhus. It is a rickettsia, it is not a bacteria it is a rickettsia. The type that we had in camp was spread by the urine of rats.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall happening before the Japanese invasion?

Dr. Stutterheim

For every year that my dad worked in the tropics he got an allowance to have a furlough for one month. He worked for 10 years in a row, from 1928 to 1938 and as a reward he got 10 months of furlough. He used that to travel by ship to the Netherlands and back. Those ships were passenger liners, very luxurious but it took a month to go from there to Europe. So we spent eight months in Europe and I never forgot that was the time that Chamberlain came back from the meeting with Hitler. It was the peace signing that he had made an agreement with Hitler and the Anschluss of Austria and the Sudetenland and all that. It upset my dad tremendously and then the last straw was when my aunt came and said, "Hey you know there is a Colonel Stutterheim in Hitler's entourage and he is really important." My dad said, "That's it, we're going back." We cut it short and we took the first ship out. He said, "It smells like war." Not realizing that the Japanese would come in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that your first trip to the Netherlands?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. We were in The Hague.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall from before the invasion?

Dr. Stutterheim

I love to tell the story that we came just out of Southampton, England and we rounded the southern point of the Isle of Wight and here came the Queen Mary all lit up. It was a fascinating sight. The other thing was in Lisbon we saw a Dutch cruiser that had been hit by a German freighter. We had to stop at Gibraltar; the civil war in Spain was going on and all ships were not supposed to travel at night for the Spanish government was afraid for smuggling of weapons to the Republicans. I admired the monkeys on the Rock.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else?

Dr. Stutterheim

Those are the major things. There are a lot of small details but I don't want to tire you with that of course.

Mr. Misenhimer

No, go ahead; I want to hear all of those.

Dr. Stutterheim

Oh, okay. We were in Colombo and there was an old Greek rust hulk and they were loading coal and I admired how primitive that was. They had women lined up and each had a basket filled with coal and they lifted it up on top of their head and then they passed

a man sitting behind a desk. They opened up their mouth and he would throw a little token in their mouth. They would walk up the gangplank, dump the coal in the hold and come down on the other gangplank and put the token in their belt. It was like an ant hill. I can assure you that the dust was immense. Our ship had all portholes closed.

Mr. Misenhimer

I'm interested in all of those kinds of things.

Dr. Stutterheim

When we were going through the Strait of Messina between Sicily and Italy where Mount Stromboli is located and we were passing there late in the evening and my mother woke me up and my brother of course and she brought us to the deck to look at the lights alongside the shoreline but also at the Stromboli which was spitting fire and it was like fireworks. It was a beautiful sight. Those are the major things from that trip.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you got back to Indonesia about when?

Dr. Stutterheim

By the end of 1938, so I was 10 years old; that's why I remember all that. Then we moved from Surabaya to Malang. It was in the mountains on a plateau between five big volcanoes and they were active, I can assure you of that. We felt many earthquakes. Java is very volcanic. The Smeru is the tallest at about 9,000 feet and erupted in 1940, covering us with ash.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else?

Dr. Stutterheim

The major event was when the Germans invaded the Netherlands in May 1940. That was a shockwave in the Indies because then we knew we were totally isolated. The Dutch occupied about eight German ships who had found harbor in various places. Many people started to realize how defenseless we were actually. There was a lot of hype about how well we were going to defend everything, but the Fleet was old and we had hardly any Air Force. We had a few flying boats to reconnoiter certain areas. They had a few submarines but in general speaking the Army was 6,000 or 8,000 men, it was not really much to defend such a big area. We knew that Japan was very interested. My knowledge of war ships surprised Dad. Again so many adults I knew expressed their opinion that Japan really did not have the ability to conquer Southeast Asia. The Japanese war products were made of inadequate materials they said. Dad discussed with mother and me the visit of a large Japanese delegation under Yoshizawa Kenkichi during June of 1941 to the capital, Batavia. The newspapers mentioned the developments of these economic discussions. Their Minister of Economy, Kobayashi, remained aboard the ship the *Nissho Maru* anchored in the harbor, Tandjung Priok. This delegation was very polite and stated that Nippon was in great need of products found in the East Indies and the Dutch were well known for their eagerness to trade. Japan had been at war with China since 1936. They had just taken over Indo-China from the French Vichy government. Japan wanted oil, bauxite, copra, tin, rubber, quinine and timber. The Japanese proposal was quite aggressive. This request by the Japanese meant no less than an economic surrender, impossible for Dutch government in exile in London, in close alliance with the British, to accept. Furthermore, they intended to bring in Japanese laborers to do the work. They

proposed to include soldiers of Nippon to “protect” their workers. The Dutch government was willing to trade but not under those conditions, and the Dutch leaders were especially appalled by the idea of accepting soldiers of the Rising Sun. The Japanese consul Ishizawa in Batavia who participated in the discussions became especially embittered about the Dutch rejection. He tried to soften the blow by stating that this trade surrender was in the best interest of the Indies. After the Japanese invaded Java in 1942 this consul let it be known how the Dutch could have saved themselves a great deal of the harsh treatment during the occupation. Later on some of the Dutch doubted that their treatment by the Japanese would have been different. The ship *Nissho Maru* lifted her anchor at daybreak in order to save face by avoiding the answer of a rejection by the Dutch government. Throughout the Dutch East Indies there were over 7,000 Japanese citizens, who had officially received an equal European status in contrast with the Chinese. In essence this was recognition of the Japanese imperial status in the world by the western powers. Most of the Japanese on Java were storekeepers. In Surabaya, for example, we had all shopped at the hardware store Tjjoda, owned by a Japanese firm. Within a week of the departure of the *Nissho Maru* just about all of the Japanese living in the Indies closed their stores and left. This departure should have been an ominous sign for the oncoming war. Several returned after the invasion as ranking officers with the advantage that they could speak Dutch and Indonesian. The Dutch government started a campaign against espionage and posted signs stating: “Watch for the Moesoeh Mata”, the enemy’s eye. They also campaigned against “Chabar Angin”, news by the wind, or wild rumors. Posters appeared showing a gathering of chickens while a rooster stood in the background holding his wing behind his ear to listen. Written on the poster was: “Leave

cackling to chickens.” Things like the disappearance of our Japanese neighbors and the government warnings should have been a sinister hint about what was going to happen. Instead life went on as before. The attack on Pearl Harbor came six months after the departure of the Japanese citizens. Here I go again. There was a Japanese delegation and I have to look up the name of that ship; they came by boat into the harbor of Batavia, what is now Jakarta. They wanted to make a deal with the Indies government; a trade deal. The Dutch said okay, we’ll be willing to trade and they demanded that they wanted to buy oil, bauxite, what is aluminum bauxite hydroxide, palm oil, rice, tin, rubber; all these things that they needed for the war with China. So the Dutch government was hesitant but they said, “Okay we will trade, we will trade.” Then the clincher came when they said, “Okay. We want to bring in Japanese laborers to help you dig coal and all that. On top of that, we will bring in Japanese soldiers to protect them.” Then the Dutch government said, “No.” So this committee, in order not to lose face, to save face, they lifted the anchor before the real Dutch answer came for they understood that it was going to be no, the ship had left Jakarta, what was Batavia. I thought that was an interesting story.

Mr. Misenhimer

When Germany took over Holland then what happened to the Dutch East Indies down through there?

Dr. Stutterheim

They had a governor and he formed a government and they tried frantically with all the gold they owned to buy war material and they found out in a hurry that there was nothing available, nowhere. The United States was just gearing up their factories and England was coming first. Finally very close to when the war started with Japan they received

some Catalina's, the PBY's and they received some Brewster Fighters, who were not up to the Japanese fighters.

Mr. Misenhimer

No the Brewster was not much of a plane.

Dr. Stutterheim

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

So the Dutch East Indies maintained their independence from the German occupation?

Dr. Stutterheim

The Germans were not in Indonesia; they couldn't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did the Japanese come in before December 7, 1941?

Dr. Stutterheim

No. Remember now there were three areas where the war started. There was Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and from Indochina they came straight down into Malaya. They were heading for Singapore. One branch came down into Banka and they had; oh this is very interesting. The Japanese had learned from the Germans how to use paratroopers. As far as I know there were two areas where they used paratroopers. One was in southern Sumatra and they landed there I think it was in February of 1942 and it was in the area of Palembang. There was oil; that's what they were headed for. The other area was in eastern Indonesia on the island of Celebes. The Dutch had created a huge airfield in Kendari and the Japanese landed there with paratroopers and the Dutch could not defend that. It was actually centrally located covering the whole eastern Indonesian area. Then



there was another spearhead that came down the Strait of Makassar. Again they were heading for two areas, Tarakan which is a small island where they found oil and Balikpapan, and they landed down there. The Dutch set fire to the beaches of the island of Tarakan. In response to that the Japanese were so mad that they killed all the people. Balikpapan became a famous fight for the American old four-stackers; they had 4 four-stackers. They hit the Japanese invasion fleet during the night and they all survived at that time. They really raised havoc with the invasion fleet. Then the eastern prong came down into the island of Bali. So they literally shut down all communications with the outside world. Java was totally surrounded. There was only one harbor left open on the southern coast, what we called Tjilatjap. Many Americans escaped through Tjilatjap, but the Japanese submarines were waiting there for many of those ships. So the Japanese landed the first week of March, 1942. Then on the 8<sup>th</sup> the Island of Java surrendered, that was after Singapore had surrendered already.

Mr. Misenhimer

The cruiser the USS *Houston* was lost down there somewhere.

Dr. Stutterheim

As a matter of fact I have here a little article and I was planning to mail it to you, I made a copy of it; there was a combined force of Australian, British, American and Dutch ships to try to stop the invasion fleet. The *Houston* and I think the *Exeter* escaped. They went west to try and escape through the Strait of Sunda, what is in between Sumatra and Java. Unfortunately Japanese planes detected them for the Japanese also had an invasion fleet in that area and they ran smack into it. The Dutch Navy basically was destroyed; they had two light cruisers and several destroyers. This article what I will send to you

says they put a bronze plaque in honor of the 900 Dutch people who perished in that battle in the city of Surabaya; February 27 and 28<sup>th</sup>, it was during the night when this battle took place. It was a disaster to us. We had looked up my dad in Surabaya and my mom said, "This is becoming too dangerous." They bombed Surabaya every day at special times, late in the morning around 11:00. The main targets were the railroads and the harbor. We assumed they came from what I mentioned before Kendari on Celebes, counting the hours that it took to fly that distance. We departed for Malang just before the surrender. We were waiting for a train which was a real problem. All of a sudden while we were standing out there on the platform; I was 14 years old and I looked and there came a steam engine pulling freight cars. All the freight cars were painted white with red crosses on the sides and on the roof. This train was loaded with all the survivors and wounded from the Battle of the Java Sea. They were heading for Tjilatjap, which I mentioned before. Apparently some of them did escape. At that time there were survivors of the American Air Force that was stationed at Singosari. There was an airport. We had B-17's stationed there. All the planes were lost and there were survivors. They came to Surabaya and onto that platform and they boarded that train. I will never forget the sight of it; it was horrible. Later on when I was practicing medicine in Tacoma I met various people and they became patients of mine. One used to be a Navigator of a B-17 who had been in Singosari and he escaped from there. He made it to Australia. The other one was the Captain on a Dutch ship that was in Tjilatjap taking on evacuees. They escaped by hugging the coastline so they would not stand out and they made it. But many, many ships were sunk by the Japanese submarines. If you are that young and you look at all of this; it leaves a deep impression. We made it to Malang and the next day I went outside.

We had a house in front of a big park, Merbabu Park. All of a sudden a zero plane came low over the roof so you could not hear it coming. There were two native boys standing across the road and this zero opened fire and killed them both. I was standing on the other side of the road. I was absolutely horrified at that time. My mother ran out, she heard the noise, and she grabbed me. We had built a shelter in back of the house made out of sand bags and heavy, heavy planks of teakwood, with sand bags on top of it; a real shelter. She made us sit there even when the all clear sounded, she was so shook up. That was our first experience. Then on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>, I've forgotten the date, the Japanese rolled into Malang with all their trucks. They used our park, Merbabu Park to park all their trucks; they camped there. We heard all the wild terrible stories of what they had done; many of them by the way were Koreans. To Dutch people in little towns like in Madiun where the minister and his wife were in a house and the Japanese invaded that house and they took the wife and raped her, 40 men raped her and tied the husband against the post. Those stories spread like wildfire and you can imagine the fear of the women around us.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now this was March of 1942, is that correct?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes about the 9<sup>th</sup> or the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. Stutterheim

Then for a while not much happened. My dad came back from Surabaya where he was fired by the Japanese so he became unemployed. He noticed that there were many

Japanese soldiers at the railroad station picking out white males that he jumped from the train when they rolled in and he escaped. He pulled a calf muscle, he tore it, and he couldn't walk for many weeks. But we were glad to see him of course. After a while he was picked up by the Japanese and they were told they were being sent to Kesilir. Kesilir is an outpost on the most eastern point of Java facing Bali. They were put to work there. They had to deforest land and bring it into cultivation. We were allowed once to visit him. I tell you my mother was real gutsy. Where she got the money I don't know for we had become instantly poor. I think she sold some jewelry. We took the train and we had to stay in a little town overnight. The natives were deathly afraid to help us for they were more afraid of the Japanese. A Chinaman said that he would allow us to sleep on his porch and we could use his outhouse. He gave us a little mat to put down on the floor and he sold us some little coils that you light up, citronella oil against the mosquitoes. So that's how we spent the night. We ate in the morning and we chartered a Dogcar what is a horse drawn little cart and we made a trip to that Camp Kesilir. We were allowed to visit Dad for about two hours and then we had to make the return trip. When we approached that Dogcar, we had an agreement with that man that we paid him in advance for the round trip; he demanded more money for the round trip. So we made it back home. After that we were interned in an area of Malang that included our home. We ended up with roughly 10,000 Europeans. Most of them came from all the plantations. The males of course were removed so there were 10,000 women and children. We were surrounded by a 10 foot barbed wire fence.

Mr. Misenhimer

How large of an area would this have been?

Dr. Stutterheim

How large the area was? It's a little hard to say but I would say roughly 2 X 3 miles.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay, it was a pretty good sized area then.

Dr. Stutterheim

In our little home we had about 40 people. We had to turn in all the dogs and rabbits and cats and birds and whatever. My brother and I since we didn't have money and we still had to buy food started to work. I made a deal with a Chinaman who had a milk dairy. I brought the milk on his bicycle around the camp and delivered it at 5:00 in the morning. My brother was doing the same thing with bread. But after a while that stopped too. There was an illegal library in the building of the Masons and there was a doctor over there. I cleaned the room for the doctor and I repaired books for the library and did all kind of crazy jobs just to make ends meet.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you were paid for these jobs?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes, I was.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you were paid in what, Dutch money, Guilders or what?

Dr. Stutterheim

It was originally Dutch money yes, but the Japanese said to use their Occupation money which was worthless; it was all paper.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were given Japanese Occupation money then?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. Then in 1943 the Japanese Commandant, and I remember his name, Ikeda, he announced that all the Japanese citizens in the States were taken prisoner and the Japanese were very mad about that and they were going to put us on transports. I think there were eight or ten different transports. Every week a trainload of civilians would be moved. They were moved to central Java. We were one to the last transport. There were about 1,000 per transport. That was a scary event. Very early in the morning we were put on the train. We had to leave our belongings. We had only a suitcase for each person. I was one of the older boys, I was 15 by that time and the train was a fourth class passenger train but all the windows were sealed off so there was no light. The bathroom was in the corner; a little hole cut in the floor. I forget how many people there were in a car, oh God, maybe 60 or 70. Can you imagine women with little kids, babies, the whole thing? *(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay so you made a deal what now?

Dr. Stutterheim

The Japanese took in Indonesian soldiers called Heiho. We thought it was a funny name. But they were very young people. Each balcony of the train car had a Heiho, so when the train finally went into motion it became extremely hot. Temperatures were easily 100 degrees. I opened the door and left it ajar to get some air to go to the women. I sat down next to him and he was very upset with me at first and told me that I had to go in. I said,

“No, I think we should just talk and entertain ourselves.” I made kind of a joke out of it. He was a young fellow and he said, “Well, that’s fine.” The three Japanese who were in the front car would not patrol the train except when it came to a stop at a station. If they made a stop I would go inside. Well we hit Surabaya and we were put on the marshalling yards for the night. Everything became very quiet. The biggest problem was there was no water and all those kids became very thirsty. So many of them were crying and all that. Around midnight the sirens went off to tell us the Australians were going to bomb the Surabaya harbor. Here the marshalling yards were not far from the harbor. So all these flashing lights were going through the sky, scraping the sky so to speak. Then we heard the planes and the bombs exploded and we knew we were sitting ducks over there. But thank God they didn’t bomb the marshalling yard itself. Around 2:00 all of a sudden an engine came and hooked on to our train and we pulled out. At least it was cooler at that time. Then we moved to Semarang. Over there the scene; over 1,000 women and kids all on that platform; the Japanese running around screaming and there was an Indonesian conductor who came towards the little kids. He said, “Kasian, that means I pity you, you poor people.” And he had a cup of coconut milk and he gave it to the little kids. One Japanese guard stormed forward and he wanted to block it and all those little kids looked up at him. He said, “You’re not allowed to do that” and then he turned around and left. So he let them dole out the coconut milk. One of the mothers walked forward and said, “God bless you.” (tears) Sorry, this is really gripping. Anyway we ended up in Lampersari and that was a female camp; 7,000 Europeans in Lampersari, Semarang. I tell you that was a real concentration camp. The Japanese Commandant was brutal. As a matter of fact I always felt that these officers felt it was very degrading that they had to

guard women and kids. The common soldiers didn't care. There was a tremendous difference between most educated European women and plain soldiers who came, as we used to call it, straight out of the Japanese clay, from farms. They had no understanding or any attempt to understand each other. There was so much hostility.

Mr. Misenhimer

Could any of these Japanese speak Dutch or anything?

Dr. Stutterheim

No. We had one woman in camp who had been the wife of the Ambassador in Tokyo and she spoke fluent Japanese. She became the official translator. That camp was wild. All the boys were quartered in two rooms up in the building on a hill where also the cooking took place. The girls, the teenage girls did all the cooking of what came in. We boys had to unload the freight cars that came in and stack it. There was the first time that I had to carry those tapioca bags of 220 pounds on my neck. In that heat that was really work.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many bags did you have to carry at one time, several?

Dr. Stutterheim

The most that I did at one time was 100.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's a lot.

Dr. Stutterheim

That was exceptional. We were there for about a year. My brother stayed with me and my mother was at the other end of the camp. Here I was in 1944, 16 and my brother still had to turn 14 in September, 1944. One morning the Japanese Commandant came and said,



“You all line up. Take your belongings; we are going to march off to a boy’s camp.” My mother was a supervisor of the kitchen to make sure that no theft would occur. She stood there in the corner waving goodbye when we marched off. There was one little kid who was 10 years old and he had just lost his mom. He had an older sister who was working in the kitchen so they were orphans. She hugged him and one of the Heiho’s got very upset with them for she didn’t want to let go. He had a bayonet attached to a bamboo spear. He pushed this boy and carved his thigh open. This boy, this poor little 10 year old was limping in line and nobody could really help him. Prior to that, a few weeks before that, the Japanese always made us attend reveille, to line up three deep in groups of 40, number in Japanese. One morning the Commandant was there and his telephone rang and he went into his compartment, which was fenced off by a five foot fence. What I didn’t know was that he had a tiny little dog and he had a bowl of rice steaming sitting on the table. He went inside to answer the phone and I jumped over the fence and grabbed the bowl of rice. We were so hungry. Then the dog discovered me and started to bark. So when I was half way over the fence again this Commandant grabbed me by my ankle. I was only dressed in shorts; that was pretty basic. He was a tiny little guy and I was six feet and I towered over him. He walked around me with a mean grin and he had this little dog whip. It was a real thin Rotan stick with a leather loop on the end. He hit me in both crooks of my knees until all the skin was gone. I never cried; I was not about to show him that it hurt. Every morning at reveille he would pick me out of the line up and say, “Make 10 deep knee bends.” The result was of course that it would crack and bleed and the flies would come and sit on it. Thank God it healed very well. Again in September of 1944 we were all moved to Camp Bangkong. Bangkong was a school with a church in the middle.

A Catholic school with a church in the middle run by nuns. The nuns remained there. There were about 55 nuns; it was a cloister. We ended up with about 1,000 boys ages 10 through 17. If you turned 18 you were shipped off. And we had 400 very old males. Out of those 400 old males I would say that just about nobody survived. We had two orphans that were 9 years old. Everybody had to work. The Japanese required that 400 of us every day had to leave camp and march down the road and go into the fields, go into the swamps. We had to build a road; we had to build bridges. Then we had to plant cabbage and other things in the fields. They used to be rice fields which was very appropriate where it was wet. We had to dig a pond what was done mostly by hand to put fish in, but the fish never arrived. Then he found out that the cabbage that he demanded that we would grow; cabbage will not do well in a temperature of 100 to 104 degrees. So whatever we did didn't make it. We had to grow food for the Japanese Army. Very close by was an old high school where the Japanese officers were being trained. They had a lot of manure; Japanese manure. The 12 year old kids had to go over there; two boys with bamboo over their shoulders with a bucket dangling from it. They filled the buckets and brought it back and we had to dig big holes and dump the manure in there to let it age. Then after a while we had to spread it over the fields. That was one of the jobs. As time went on it became very difficult to work. If we were lucky we got 600 calories a day. There was no entertainment. We were not allowed to congregate more than four boys together. There was no minister. There was one Priest but he was not allowed to give his services. No books. No studies. No instruments. No music. We had 14 bathrooms for 1,400 people. I'm not going to describe to you what it was like. Pretty soon all kinds of diseases started. Malaria was the biggie and then due to starvation we got beriberi, which

is B-1 deficiency. I had malaria and pellagra. Pellagra is the Italian word for what means dirty skin or rough skin; it's due to niacin deficiency. You get terrible spots on your skin and then in the open fields with the sunshine they would itch and burn terrible. My treatment was to make mud pies and cover it with mud for that cooled it a little. My poor brother contracted malaria, then he had amebiasis what is the bloody diarrhea from an amoeba in the rectum. He became anemic as a result of that combination. Then he contracted pellagra, beriberi and finally in 1945 he got scurvy. Some people don't believe me, here a 16 year old kid knowing something about diseases. My mother was pretty smart and taught me several things. I had worked for a nurse for a while in Camp Malang and so I considered myself slightly knowledgeable. I recognized scurvy. My brother was leaning against a tub and his shin bone started to bleed. He brushed his teeth and they started to bleed. My answer to that was to go out into the fields and I raided the Japanese field where they had grown lettuce. I had two little brass safety pins. I had a wide blue belt that I put around my waist and I put the brass safety pins on the inside of that belt and connected them by a string. I strung the lettuce leaves on that line inside my belt and then walking home I sweat nicely on them. And that was what I fed my brother. Some other kids thought I was crazy but that cured his scurvy. The other thing that really was bad, I had a spell of malaria so I was not allowed to go outside. We had by the way 18 physicians and only 4 were allowed to practice. And the ones that were practicing were in the hospital and only one was making rounds. The one that was making rounds had throat cancer and could barely talk, all by order of the Japanese. He told me that I couldn't go out and work. So by noon; we never got water from about 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning until 5:00 in the afternoon. They shut down the water works. We had a death room and

all these people who died, and many of them were old, were put in that death room until they were collected. The ox pulled cart would come in and we put four dead people in it and they pulled out at noon. So the outside world thought there was only one who had died. Sometimes it took several days and you can imagine in that heat what it looked like and what it smelled like. Now we had one brutal Sergeant and he was a Korean. We called him the bloodhound. He walked around with a wooden field hockey stick and he would hit you if something was not to his liking. So here I had malaria and I went to the bathroom when he stopped me and he said, "You go to the death room and you follow my orders and you clean up the body of this guy and envelope him in a tiker." That is a thinly woven bamboo mat. I had to clean him off. He had died from beriberi so his skin had erupted and was leaking. It was an awful job. He picked me on several occasions. I felt so depressed from that, that quite often I would walk up to the water tap which was about three feet high and I would sit underneath it waiting for the water to come on; I would sit like a rock. I didn't feel like going into the room, smelly and like that. That I tell you was my worst experience. We got to the spring time in 1945 and the Red Cross sent packets. All I am going to say about that is they were great. They were full of stuff that we had totally forgotten existed. One of the items was Spam. We got one packet. It wasn't one to one; one packet to five boys. How we divided it was very meticulous. We were still very disciplined. So that happened three times. Of course we were elated. The second time it was one packet for nine boys and the last time it was for 25 or something like that. Later on we heard from the Heiho's that the Japanese officers were smoking American cigarettes. In our packages we had Chesterfields. I traded my cigarettes for food. We found and heard that the Japanese and after the war we found a warehouse

where they had stacked a lot of the Red Cross packages. They expected to be invaded by the Americans for by that time they were in the Philippines. So they wanted to have a food supply and they used our packages. During May or June the order came that the bigger boys had to stay in camp where they built an old saw mill. I was one of the boys standing on top of the log pulling up, we called it a misery whip, you can picture an old fashioned sawmill. There was about a height of 12 feet. I had blackout spells from hunger and weakness and I was deathly afraid to fall. One episode that stuck with me was in May, 1945. We came out of the fields marching down the road and there was a huge banyan tree and in the tree, the Chinese had hoisted a blackboard and written on it, it said, "Germany surrendered." That was the first time, the only time that we received word from the outside that something was going our way. I tell you we were elated. About the Red Cross packages, coming back to that. They gave us, not that much food, but just the idea that we were not forgotten was very encouraging. Then all of a sudden in August the Japanese became very nervous, angry, short fused; they beat us up for the slightest provocation. Then on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, around noon, two B-25's came over and they came over very, very low. I ran out to the parade grounds and saw the planes. I saw the head of the flyer and I saw the head of the machine gunner in the tail and he was wiggling his machine guns as a greeting. They dropped pamphlets that missed us totally. I think that we boys went berserk. We climbed on each other's shoulders; we yelled and screamed. The Japanese stood in the corner and didn't say a word. So we knew that the war was over. Sick kids crawled out of the sick rooms to the verandas to watch the whole thing. These planes came over three times and then they disappeared. We demanded from the Japanese to open the gate and they refused. The Commandant, his name was

Hasekawa, brought a platform out and stood on it and told us that the Americans had dropped a terrible bomb on Japan and that they lost the war but that they were ready to get ready for the next one that they were going to win. I tell you we were absolutely appalled by that kind of an attitude. Then the Japanese disappeared and we never saw them again. The next morning the gate was open and the Japanese had left. Our barbed wire around our camp was 60 feet high and filled with woven bamboo. That meant that it was always gloomy and dark. People on the outside gave us a form of an orange. Some Chinese people came and gave us pig feet from a pig. Well I tell you we cooked it and for our emaciated condition, that was a disaster. Just about all of us got the runs. My brother by that time was semi-comatose and all I was getting down into him was some liquids. I don't think he remembered too much from our liberation. After a few days I felt confident that one of the other boys was going to help him so I left camp and walked down the road to my mother's camp not knowing if she was still alive. Entering that camp was horrifying. The situation had deteriorated so badly. I entered the little home that my mother and her two girlfriends were in. Those girlfriends had three little kids and they were by that time 4, 5 and 6 years old. If you see kids that age nowadays they're spunky, they move around and they're full of life. Those three were sitting on the floor against the wall completely listless. One was not even able to walk. I met my mom and I asked her how she was and she said, "Okay, okay." She was crying. Then she said, "Where is Anton?" That was the name of my younger brother. I said, "He's in camp. He's sick but I'll take care of him. Eventually I'm planning to bring him over." After about a half hour had passed she looked at me and she said, "Where is Anton?" So then it dawned on me that mentally she had deteriorated terribly. Then the other women told me

what had happened. The three of them had a habit of going through the barbed wire and smuggled food into the camp and one time they were caught. The Japanese Commandant, he had them stripped into shorts and bras and then he beat them up and then he had them kneel in an open field in full sunshine and put a three inch bamboo in the back of their knees that they had to sit on. One bamboo covering three women and they were not allowed to go to the bathroom. My mother had diarrhea and so did the youngest woman. By night time the other women had to help them out and bring them back. Then they were allowed to drink some liquids. That took place for seven days and it took its toll. My mother also had malaria. Mentally she recovered completely. But that little girl that could not walk it took almost two years before she was capable of walking. I brought my brother a few days later. I took him on my back and carried him to the other camp for I was not able to do good for both of them. Now imagine, I just had turned 17, trying to take care of two people who were very sick. When I was liberated I was 95 pounds and 6 feet. After a while a cruiser came into the harbor and a medical officer came ashore; he was a surgeon. Within no time he ran out of supplies. He was bothered by the heat and became short-fused. He didn't know what to do anymore. He had a line up of sick people that, well you can imagine the frustration. There was a kid standing in front of me who had a bulge in his flank, I call it a flank like a horse. The surgeon recognized that this was a perirenal abscess. There was a concrete floor. He threw a pillow on the floor and he said, "You lay down prone kid." And he gave him a piece of rubber and he said, "You bite on it." Then he took a knife and stabbed him. I was standing behind him and I watched this and the puss just came out, several feet high, it was just pouring out. The kid screamed and passed out. So this surgeon said, "That's good anesthesia." Then he turned

to me and he said, "What's your problem?" I had an abscess under each armpit from scabies. By that time I was not convinced that I wanted to go through it. He cross sectioned both armpits and I felt a great amount of relief. He said to me, "You are not going to work and you are not to sweat." I looked at him and I laughed. It was over 100 degrees and I was one of the few kids that was still able to work, so I thought that was hilarious. He got really mad at me. I thanked him and turned around and left. One day I was walking outside the camp, again in my shorts and barefooted, ribs sticking out, we had a nickname for that; we called our ribcages, birdcages, the ribs sticking out. A woman came, she was an Indonesian woman and she said, "Hey boy, don't you have a shirt." I said, "No ma'am I don't." She said, "Wait a minute." She went in the house and came back with an old Army shirt and she handed that to me and she said, "You put that on." Well, I did. It was not very comfortable for the lacerations in my armpits actually prevented me from wearing the dumb thing. I felt more comfortable going naked so to speak. Then the British landed. Oh there was another episode before that. The Japanese had promised that they would protect all the women and kids in the camps against the revolution that had started. The Indonesian Revolution started in August and spread like wildfire and was bad during September. One night there was a full moon and it was very spooky. That little home of my mother and her girlfriends; there were about 30 people in that home at the end of the camp against the hills. Across the street was a school. The barbed wire ran between those homes and the school. During the night we heard a tremendous noise. Thousands of people were coming out of the hills, natives and they had hollow bamboos half filled with water and they were sloshing it and they were singing, "Rampock, rampas." Rampock means plunder, rampas means kill. So the



youngest woman in our group started to pray. I found a machete. I thought by myself, "Well I'm not going to surrender." Then all of a sudden a Japanese soldier showed up with an Arisaka rifle and eleven bullets. That's all he had. He grabbed a chair and since it was a full moon and this home by the way was built on a four foot elevation so we could look over the fence, and I grabbed a chair and I settled down next to him in the shade of the chair. We never spoke with each other. I'm sure that he was fully aware that I had a machete. The massive amount of people coming down that road was so scary and all of a sudden I told myself, "I'm not going to be scared. I'm just going to put up a fight and if this means the end, that's it." The Japanese officer, and I still have to admit about his courage, showed up on the road with a pistol and he raised his left hand and the crowd stopped. One guy tried to come forward and he shot the man point blank dead. So the whole crowd stopped. The second shot he fired over the heads of these people. The crowd turned and moved away and came around the camp and attacked the front part of the camp. Over there were eleven Japanese soldiers defending us against this crowd. The Indonesians had two machine guns. The Japanese attacked and conquered the machine guns. The Japanese that served in the Kempeitai (Secret Police) were all murdered by the Indonesians. So the Japanese were very upset with everything and they started to clean out the towns. They burned the villages. They shot everybody that came out. Within a day half of Semarang was totally empty. I still see the billowing smoke and I wondered at that time what happened to our liberation. Then the British landed. There was a British Lieutenant and I was one of the few kids who still could work you see, he said, "There is a ship in the harbor called the *General Van Heutz*." It was a small freighter; a troop transport, 4,000 ton. Liberty ships are 6,000 tons. He said, "The native crew abandoned

ship. After five years at sea they wanted to go home. The ship still had white officers but no crew." So he rounded up volunteers to work aboard that ship. I asked him what the destination was and he said, "We're going to Batavia and we can take 2,000 women and kids. The only requirement is that they are ambulatory." So this ship had been on anchor in the roads and there were several LST's that came ashore. We loaded 2,000 women and kids aboard the LST's and brought them to that ship. We 14 boys walked up the gangplank first and I had that given shirt just loosely hanging around my neck for my armpits were still bugging me. The first person that stood at the top of the gangplank was the Boatswain; he was a short stocky fellow. He looked at us and he said, "Who the hell are you?" And we said, "We are the crew." He looked up to heaven and said, "God help us." We worked like the dickens. We got all these women quartered within the holds. We doled out food. We went to the machine room and worked all over the place. We got that ship going. I had told this Lieutenant that the only reason why I was willing to work is that I was going to blackmail him; that my mother and younger brother were going with us, and they did. I still remember a young woman that was very emaciated and had a little girl that was about five years old who had sustained polio. This poor mother. *(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

So you reached out to help this little girl then?

Dr. Stutterheim

During the night I fell asleep on the deck. I had a long conversation with the Boatswain who came to talk to me and we were standing on the railing watching the coast pass by. We entered, now called Jakarta, Batavia at that time, and on the docks was a passenger

train. So I went down and I talked to the engine driver and I asked, "Where are you going?" He said, "We are waiting for passengers who want to go into the mountains to Bandung." I had heard by then that my dad was working there at the airport. So all I knew was that he was alive. I found my brother and my mother and I said, "We are going to board this train and we are going to Bandung. It's that simple. This time as free people." And we did. When we were half way starting to get into the hills we were guarded. We were going through enemy territory. It was the area where the revolutionaries were. Each passenger car was guarded on the balcony by a Punjabi, British Indian troops. They were armed with Lee Enfield rifles. (laugh) You know what was as funny as hell? I was sitting on the balcony again watching those two soldiers and one fell asleep and he dropped his rifle and it fell overboard. So in panic the other soldier screamed and the first one woke up and he pulled the emergency cord. The train stopped and the British Lieutenant came down and wanted to know what happened. He became outraged that the soldier had lost his weapon. Guess what? He made this train back up in enemy territory until we reached the weapon and picked it up and then we continued the trip. I thought it was so absurd. I thought it bordered on idiocy. But anyway we arrived in Bandung and my dad did not know that we were coming and he had just walked down to the railroad station to see if he would know anybody and here we showed up. My parents hugged each other for at least an hour.

Mr. Misenhimer

Could you all recognize each other? Had you changed enough?

Dr. Stutterheim

After all those years, yes. My dad was real skinny and so was my mom. My parents had

been separated for 3 ½ years. Bandung became completely surrounded by the revolution. There was a time that we were even cut off from the airport. The revolutionaries had mortars and they shelled us quite often. Christmas Eve my dad got word that the British wanted him to come as an accountant to the city of Surabaya again to set up the accountant department. Before New Year's we flew off to Batavia; we flew off in a Dakota. There was an incident where a B-25 landed and those were grass fields, nothing else but grass. One tire blew out and the B-25 made a 90 degree angle running down and he was mowing the lawn so to speak with his wing. So my mom watched that and she said, "I'm not going to fly." When we were in Batavia it took a week to get transportation. We flew in a B-25 to Surabaya. Surabaya was hellish. The British had landed down there in October I believe or November and the revolutionaries had occupied the whole city. They wanted to liberate several hundred Europeans and they succeeded in doing that partially. But the British lost at least a thousand troops; most of them were Ghurkhas and Sikh. General Mellanby was killed over there. That was our welcome in Surabaya. We were quartered in a hotel on the river. On the other side of the river was revolutionary territory. The bridge was guarded by Sikh soldiers and we were on this side. During the night in the backyard they had mortars and they were shooting at the other side. There was no running water; everything was very primitive. Very slowly it came back to a certain normal level. By the summer of 1946 my dad told us that the school was bad; everything was destroyed by the Japanese. By this time I was turning 18 and my brother was almost 15 and he felt that we should be going to the Netherlands to study. There was no transportation available. My mother had been offered to be evacuated to Australia to recover but she refused to leave my dad. Then a hospital ship

came into the harbor, a 21,000 ton and its name was *Orange*. That ship needed workers for they were taking on 700 sick people. My dad made the arrangements with me that we were going to work aboard that ship. When we showed up, again it was anchored in The Roads and when we came aboard the Steward welcomed us who was in charge and he said, "You have to work in the hold today and for the rest of the trip would you volunteer to work as an orderly in the crazy ward? I have to tell you that we have 30 shell-shocked soldiers in there and 5 lepers." The others didn't want to work with lepers. I said, "Well after what I've went through, I will volunteer." But I told them under one condition, "You find a job for my brother" for he told my brother that he was too young. So he found a job in the pantry. The best job ever. Every evening we had chocolate milk to drink and toast with real butter. We hadn't tasted it for a long time. And I would say this is the end of my story except if you have more questions.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, I've got several questions here. In August of 1945 when did you see the first American or British or Allied soldiers come in there to help you all?

Dr. Stutterheim

British.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did they come in?

Dr. Stutterheim

That was in September, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

Up until then you were on your own?

Dr. Stutterheim

Correct.

Mr. Misenhimer

When the British came in did they help you all much or what did they do?

Dr. Stutterheim

The first thing they did was disarm the Japanese. They were very permissive with the Indonesians. As a result the Indonesians returned to town after they had been cleaned out by the Japanese and the revolution started all over again; a lot of trouble. It was not safe to leave the camp. So for many weeks on end we were still surrounded by violent actions.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you able to get plenty of food at that point?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. My brother was starting to recover. He was very good to make deals with native women. He would squat down and talk to them. My mother had some linen. There was a big shortage of linen and especially cotton and that sort of stuff among the natives. We would trade linen for food. But again it was all very primitive.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have the option of going back to Holland as soon as the war was over or not?

Dr. Stutterheim

Most people, initially that was done by the British; a lot of people were evacuated to Singapore where they found a safe haven. Several thousand were shipped off, the real sick ones, to Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of the people in your camp, what percentage do you think survived?

Dr. Stutterheim

I know that the Japanese imprisoned 125,000 people in all these camps over Sumatra, Java and Celebes and some in Borneo. Out of those 125,000, 102,000 survived. The British were very poorly informed. When they came to the Indies they were told there were 10,000 survivors. They didn't anticipate that they were heading for a tough job.

Mr. Misenhimer

They were not prepared to handle that many then?

Dr. Stutterheim

Logistics were horrendous. Most of the stuff had to come from Rangoon.

Mr. Misenhimer

When the war was over the Japanese at that point did not really bother you anymore is that right?

Dr. Stutterheim

No, they left us alone. The British disarmed them and put them in camps. Very slowly, after many trials for major offenders, several were killed or hung, they were evacuated. It took almost two years to get all of the Japanese back to Japan.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Japanese did defend you all from the revolutionaries then?

Dr. Stutterheim

The Japanese defended us in September of 1945, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

For a short while?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes, it was a matter of three or four weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have access to any weapons or anything?

Dr. Stutterheim

No. I'm sorry, in Bandung when we were surrounded yes. What happened was that we had a lot of military living up there. They broke into a British warehouse, plundered it and took the weapons.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you all find this store of Red Cross packages?

Dr. Stutterheim

That was after we were liberated.

Mr. Misenhimer

Fairly soon after?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes, I think about two weeks or three weeks, something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you all ate those of course, right?

Dr. Stutterheim

We suspected them you see for they were smoking American cigarettes.



Mr. Misenhimer

So you all were able to find those and eat those right?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned the Heiho's, what nationality were they?

Dr. Stutterheim

Indonesian.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did the Indonesians cooperate with the Japanese during the war?

Dr. Stutterheim

Some of them did, yes. Actually there was an Indonesian division called Sukanillas set up by the Japanese under Japanese officers with about 18,000 men. Towards the end of the war they revolted and the Japanese were unmerciful. They killed them all. That was really something. There was an uprising of the Koreans too.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did your family finally go back to Holland?

Dr. Stutterheim

My brother and I did to study. My mother and father stayed in Indonesia until 1957.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then they moved back to the Netherlands?

Dr. Stutterheim

They were kicked out.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then they came back to the Netherlands then right?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you come to the U.S.?

Dr. Stutterheim

1959, November. That's a story by itself.

Mr. Misenhimer

If you don't mind telling it, I'd like to hear it.

Dr. Stutterheim

First of all I wanted to study in the Netherlands. I checked into the Lyceum, the high school with an emphasis on sciences. The headmaster said to me, "I don't know what to do with you. You have only six months of the eighth grade. Why don't you try the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?" So I took summer school and night school and anything I could lay my hands on. I did my final exam at the age of 21 and graduated. Before that happened the draft came and I was not opposed to the draft but I thought it was terrible. It was based on the American system and you were tested the whole day long and by the end of the day you saw a psychiatrist. He looked over his glasses and he looked at me and he said, "You have the highest score of the day, you are going to be an officer." I said, "The hell I will." So he got mad. I said, "Hey, I'm not opposed to the draft but I spent three years in a concentration camp. I came here to study and here you want to draft me." "Oh", he said, "That's very simple. I will give you a deferment. When you leave high school you will be

drafted." I said, "Fine, thank you." But nothing happened, so I did my pre-med in one year and I had my basic science in 1953 I think, during the Korean War and they drafted me. I spent four months in the Army, boot camp, the whole thing. I was two days a Sergeant and I received my deferment again for every week I mailed off a letter for a request to be deferred again. I felt that it was terrible to be pulled out of medical school. Then by the end I had some American friends from California and one from Connecticut. They were studying at the same school as I did and they had gone through the war. Many of them had been in Algiers in North Africa, and one had been wounded. So they had funds to spend to go to school. I contacted them. I hated Europe, I just didn't like it at all, the climate, the whole works. They said, "Why don't you come to the States?" So I checked with the Dutch government and the Dutch government told me there was a waiting list of five years. I felt that I had to take everything into my own hands. I traveled to Rotterdam where the American Consulate was and I saw the American Consul and I asked him for an interview and he said, "Fine. Tell me about yourself." From the moment that I told him that I had been born in Surabaya, Indonesia he said, "Uh oh, the waiting list is 20 years." I almost got discouraged. Then he said, "Tell me a little bit more about yourself." So when I mentioned that I had been in the Japanese camps, his face lit up and he said, "Number one, we need physicians and number two, we have a group of 3,600 former prisoners of the Japanese who are allowed to come instantly into the States. The requirement is that they close the dates by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1959." I almost kissed him. This was a special act called the Pastor-Walter Act. So by that time I got married, we had one child. I got three slots and we went to Tacoma, Washington where I found a place to intern. I had a job so to speak. I took all my exams again here in the States. I

went to Los Angeles for the Specialty Boards. I became a Specialist in Family Practice and I practiced for 36 years.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had your medical degree before you came to the States?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. I have a license in the Netherlands too, but I never practiced in the Netherlands.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is your brother still living?

Dr. Stutterheim

He became also a physician. He became an anesthesiologist and he died last year in January, in 2005. I went back to visit him just before he died.

Mr. Misenhimer

He stayed in Holland, right?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. He was planning to go to Canada but he married a Dutch girl who didn't want to leave.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did your mother and father pass away?

Dr. Stutterheim

My mother never regained full health and she died at the age of 65. My dad was a tough one; he lived until he was 95.

Mr. Misenhimer

When would he have passed away, what year?

Dr. Stutterheim

Oh dear you had to ask me that. He was born in 1896. My mom was born in 1909.

Mr. Misenhimer

So your father was quite old when you were born then?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes my dad was in his 30's. My mom was only 18 years old when she married my dad. Their families were big. My dad came out of a family of eight and my mom came out of a family of twelve.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you able to attend any of the war criminal trials of the Japanese?

Dr. Stutterheim

No. That's a story by itself. They brought Dutch prosecutors to Indonesia or to the Indies and they had trouble finding any witnesses; they went through all the proper channels so to speak and there were a lot of people of the Kempeitai the same as like the Gestapo. The worst Kempeitai was in Malang. The stories that came out of there are horrible. One Japanese Sergeant of the Kempeitai admitted about criminal events. He was allowed to see a Japanese translator and then the next day he changed his story. They had trouble finding witnesses because all the witnesses were moving away; had gone to Singapore, Australia, the Netherlands, America. Two of my friends went straight to America. The Japanese General Imamura; the Dutch government decided that he denied any criminal activity and he must have been aware of the Kempeitai so the Dutch government said, "Well we don't have enough witnesses to testify, so we'll let him off the hook." But the Australians stepped in because many Australians had been a victim of Imamura and they

gave him eleven years. That was I think, if I remember it right in 1947. Imamura never served the eleven years. The story that is very little known in America is "The Treaty of San Francisco". John Foster Dulles in 1951 when the Korean War was going on made a deal with Japan and all criminals were pardoned. He excused Japan from paying restitution to all their victims. Were you aware of that treaty?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes I am. I am aware that they absolved the Japanese corporations, the Japanese people and all from any liabilities to Americans.

Dr. Stutterheim

Correct. That still upsets me.

Mr. Misenhimer

There are a lot of them that are trying to do something now and they've got that law that blocks them out.

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned earlier that the Indonesians killed the Kempeitai; when did they do that?

During the war or after the war?

Dr. Stutterheim

That was in September, 1945, right after the war was over. As a matter of fact there is more to it than that. The Kempetai was so beastly that the Indonesians locked them up in a jail. The Indonesians knew how gutsy the Japanese were so when they decided to kill them they shot them through the jail cells; they machine gunned them through the bars.

They killed them in the cells.

Mr. Misenhimer

Actually the Kempeitai in some ways were worse than the Gestapo.

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. I will not tire you with all the stories that came available from Malang but it was horrible. I have a story I can tell you. A Eurasian boy, a native, he was picked off the street. The Japanese claimed that he had done something bad, but he didn't, he was innocent. But they beat him up and beat him up and they wanted him to confess and he didn't. Then they went on the street and grabbed a Eurasian girl from her bicycle and brought her in and they started to beat her up. They said if you don't confess we will kill her. He said, "I don't know what to confess to" so they killed her. That's one of the stories. The other stories; I know I can stand in for the truth of that were that Japanese Kempeitai who had political prisoners and people who stood up to them they put them in pig cages. The Australians were one of the victims. They had to pull up their knees in order to fit in those cages and they stacked them on railroad cars and on trucks. They brought them to the harbor of Surabaya and they brought them aboard a ship; they set sail and they dumped them overboard.

Mr. Misenhimer

In your letter to the World War II magazine you mentioned about the Dutch boys being thrown in the mine; tell me about that.

Dr. Stutterheim

That was in Samarinda in southern Borneo. What happened there was the Japanese were pretty harsh to 200 men, women and kids in the area of Samarinda, south of Balikpapan,

the oil harbor. When Balikpapan was invaded by the Australians the Japanese took it out on these people. They beheaded the men, they bayoneted the women and dumped those bodies in the mine shaft and then they took the kids that were still alive and dumped them in the mine shaft. The natives who witnessed that did not come forward until all the Japanese a year later had been evacuated for they were too scared. If you ever want to read a very interesting and horrifying book, I think I listed it to you. It was written by a New Zealander, I could look it up to you and mail it to you. I was planning to mail you another article anyway. It was published by an English publisher. It is called *The Allied Japanese Conspiracy* written by James MacKay. Modern books are going by ISBN numbers and I'll give that to you 1858212626. I think it's a Scottish company. First published in 1995 by the Pentland Press.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you another question. Did you all hear about the atomic bomb being dropped?

Dr. Stutterheim

We learned about it after we were liberated except the Japanese Commandant said there was a terrible bomb but we didn't know that it was an atom bomb.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of course when the Japanese surrendered you all did not hear about that until later?

Dr. Stutterheim

Correct. At a meeting of Librarians I spoke up. They said it was horrible that we dropped a bomb on Japan. I said, "Ladies I'm not going to argue with you but have you listened to my story? I survived on that basis. All I can tell you is that all these people who were prisoners would have died if the war had gone on for another six or seven months as



predicted." I figured it out one day. The Philippines were liberated. The prisoners in Malaya, Singapore, Burma, Indochina and Indonesia totaled close to 400,000 and those people would never have survived.

Mr. Misenhimer

John, anything else you can think of from your experiences over there.

Dr. Stutterheim

No, not off hand. I think I've told you everything that popped up in my mind.

Mr. Misenhimer

I'm willing to listen.

Dr. Stutterheim

There was one episode that I remembered later on. I had forgotten totally about it. I was sleeping and I had a nightmare. It was 2:00 in the morning and I woke up realizing that I had gone through a bad episode and that was the boy's camp. We had returned from the fields around 5:00. We were hungry, dirty, tired, thirsty and the bloodhound came and we were all lined up like in a parade and he screamed and yelled and ran back and forth in front of us for he had discovered that every week two 12 year old boys would go through the barbed wire to the outside world to the Chinese. They were fed and they brought back eggs for the hospital. So they stayed overnight most of the time. Well we reported them always that they were sick. One time the bloodhound decided to check and he found that they were missing. So he knew that he had been had and he went absolutely berserk. He walked up and down there with his field hockey stick. Next to me was Leo who was a year younger; he was 15. Leo was a nervous individual; by the way Leo just died last year. Leo made all these funny faces. He was always a target for he had been a target

when we just moved from Lampersari to Bangkong. When we arrived he made funny faces and he was beaten. The bloodhound walked up to him and like I said, he was standing next to me on my left side. The bloodhound grabbed his pencil out of his pocket and tapped it on his forehead and said, "Bodoka." Bodok in Indonesian means stupid and they always added the Japanese word to it Bodoka. This made Leo grimace like he was tempting him so the bloodhound stepped backwards and swung his hockey stick and hit him over the left temple. The kid convulsed, fell down, vomited, peed in his pants and he was unconscious and he was bleeding from his left ear. Then the bloodhound started to kick him telling him to get up. So I made it clear to the bloodhound that the kid was unconscious. Finally the bloodhound walked away and you could hear his Japanese blabbering to the others how good he was in torturing people. Then I reached with the help of another kid and picked this boy up and wanted to bring him to the hospital. By that time it was night and it had started to rain. Then the other Korean, Kumuro came and he threatened with a club over my head that I had to leave this boy alone. This boy laid there all night. I will tell you the story when these two smuggling kids came back. They were belted. You could hear the belts cut into their skin. Then the Kempeitai came and did it all over again. They wanted to know who the Chinese on the outside were. None of us, nor those two brave kids ever revealed the source. They were locked up in a pig sty. They boarded the door. There was a little window and they covered it with planks. The idea was that they would die there. We found a way of feeding them. There was a knot in the plank covering the window and during the night usually around 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning the cook would put a hose through that knot; we would push the knot in and then we would put a hose through it and fed them porridge. We kept them alive that way.

Then by day time they would put the knot back into that hole. So the Jap knew that we had found a way to feed them but he never found out how. After about three weeks they were released.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the fellow that got hit with the hockey stick did he survive?

Dr. Stutterheim

Yes. Like I said he died last year.

Mr. Misenhimer

Dr. Stutterheim I appreciate very much your time today and it's been a tremendous and wonderful story you have told me. The story that you sent me on your wife's experiences was very interesting. All of those things you sent me will be included with the final copies.

Dr. Stutterheim

I appreciate that. I think my wife deserves that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thanks again and best of luck to you.

Dr. Stutterheim

Thank you for the interview and I'm looking forward to a copy.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thank you.

*(end of interview)*

**Transcribed by:**

**Lesle W. Dial**

**Beeville, Texas**

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**Oral History by:**

**Richard Misenhimer**

**P.O. Box 3453**

**Alice, Texas 783334**

**Home: (361) 664-4071**

**Cell: (361) 701-5848**