Dr. John H. Browe
Veteran

Michael Aikey
Wayne Clarke
Interviewers

Interviewed on March 21, 2001
DMNA Headquarters
Latham, New York

JB: John Harold Browe
MA: **Michael Aikey**

NOTE: THIS 2001 interview starts in the middle of a conversation about a 13 year old boy who is a genius researching the Vietnam War and whose Grandmother is a friend of his. John said he knows where his material will be going and thanked Michael for the good advice he gave him. Then John asks for a favor as he pulls out pages of material he has had for a long time and just found. It said it was interesting, but has a hole in it. It is from The Retired Officers Magazine which he didn't have access to so requested it be tracked down for him and said he would appreciate it because it is worthless without the middle. Mike answered "okay".

Then John hands over pages which he said might be of interest to you. These are copies of my Orders to Active Duty, my promotion in the Philippines, and I love the one that says V.O.C.N.C. That was President Truman's orders at the end of the War where everybody got upped a Grade.

MA: Neat, now may we make a copy of these?
JB: You may have that. Smiling he wonders how I managed to save two sets, in good shape? And this picture got sent back home (John hands over a black and white photo of three men in uniform. Held to camera @2:30). This is at Fort William McKinley in Luzon, just South of Manila, in November of 1941. That was where the Philippine Division was Headquartered.

Next photo he calls "before and after (@3:12) we see John in uniform and also his Prisoner of War head shot.

MA: You look pretty good after.
JB: I didn't feel that way. (@3:55) Next photo shows John on the cover of LIFE Magazine with the headline "The Best Thanksgiving". This is in the museum. I didn't have the sense to take a picture of it before they put it in the glass frame. It includes some text, Gold Bull/Red patch and his POW ID.

Another b/w photo (@4:17) shows John standing in uniform in November of 1941.

Next (@4:31) And this was June of last year. John shows a newspaper color photo of him speaking at a podium. The text reads "Memorial service dedicates POW rose garden"

That takes care of all the impedimenta (odds and ends). And it is impeding your interview!

MA: Not at all! It's all part of it.
JB: I'm wearing this purple cap on purpose. John then holds up a burgundy/gold cap which says "American Ex-Prisoners of War". It's got a billboard on the other side with words "Chaplain" "Life Member", but it doesn't mean very much. People would be amazed if they knew I was a State Chaplain. (laughs) The real one died a couple of years ago and I knew him very well. So, I got promoted….anyway.

This cap I do have on purpose. There was an organization "The Battling Bastards of Bataan". The guy who started it up was Dick Gordon.

Just a little aside, I got into Camp O'Donnell on the third of July, and he and about four hundred others marched out about two days later. There were just the people who were too sick to leave among the Americans. There were about two hundred left to die, and we managed to save most of them. I did not meet him until I was with John Edwards (@6:00 spelling?) in Vermont when he went up there to install the Department of Vermont. He knew I was from Vermont and he liked to sleep while I was driving! (laughs) That's how we got there.

Up there, I met Dick Gordon. He had been looking for me for years. He was a good friend of Al Weinstein who wrote the book. Al died quite some time ago. Weinstein and my paths crossed at a distance in Japan. He mentions me in his book as "turning a brilliant orange" in the early days of O'Donnell, and it's funny that the orange survived! I had ten days there with a temperature of one hundred and five with infectious hepatitis. So if I stumble now and then I have an excuse, not a reason, but an excuse

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Since then, Dick moved to New York and had actually worked in Suffolk County training in their Police Department and military drill. You know, you watch Policemen march. He organized this group. And Mrs. Brady, who was Colonel Brady's wife (He was the last Commander of the 31st Infantry) gave him the names of everything so people could refer to him. Now he has a website and has responded to hundreds of requests for information. This is from that song "We're the battling bastards of Bataan".. I never can remember the rest of it.

I happened to be the surgeon of the group, and it was a privilege for me to do that. He has done quite a bit, including a memorial wall commemorating the Americans who died. It was dedicated last April. He wanted me to go over too.

I said I would like to, but I was a little leery of going back over there in terms of not memories, but diseases and so forth. Well, he managed to get there and did his talk at the dedication then spent ten days in the hospital with double pneumonia. He probably got that on the plane, the way they don't properly ventilate the planes.

I said, it would have cost me one thousand dollars to go, so here is the rest of the money for your monument, so that took care of that! (laughs) I have a large picture of that, but did not bring it. I have now finished my off-camera remarks for whatever you want to use them for.

MA: Very good! Okay, I'm going to do the marking announcement, then we are going to take off.

MA: (@9:13 audio only) This is an interview with Doctor John Browe at Latham Headquarters on March 21, 2001. The interviewer is Michael Aikey and the videographer is Wayne Clarke. Dr. Browe, you grew up where sir?
JB: Burlington, Vermont

MA: What was it like growing up in Burlington?
JB: Wonderful! I had actually never slept anywhere else but Burlington except for two weeks in the summer when my family would go on vacation. I went from Cathedral Grammar School and High School to Holy Cross College for three years. Then I transferred to The University of Vermont-Pre Med and the following year I entered Medical School there. I graduated in 1940 with a Commission of First Lieutenant-Medical Corp from Medical R.O.T.C (Reserve Officers' Training Corps.)

MA: What was the R.O.T.C. Program like at that point?
JB: Well, the thing I remember most about it was, it was so set up you could use your wits. You could figure out from the examinations what a passing grade was. I mean to know enough answers that you could get a passing grade, you did not necessarily have to be awake during the class. It also provided some spending money which was kind of necessary in those days. The Commander was Colonel (@10:33 name unclear) He was a Major who headed up the course, and it was really very good. He knew if I had not been in a class, but still scored a ninety on the exam, he said "You're the kind of guy we want in the Army!" (laughs) I don't know if that helped me get in or not. It was a nice experience, plus it gave me enough spending money to make it worthwhile. Not nothing like it is today, but it was adequate.

MA: Now after college, what did you do?
JB: I had a two-year rotating Internship at the Municipal Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. I did have an opportunity to stay in Burlington and Intern at the Medical School Hospital, but a former graduate from there who was a Resident in Connecticut decided, probably because it would give him back and forth transportation for the weekends- he did not know I didn't have a car- got me and interview. So I went down there and was fortunate enough to get in there, it was a remarkable place. There was no Resident Staff, just the two-year Residents and Interns and established from the Hartford Hospital. So we had to make decisions on our own, not somebody standing here and making a good guess and hope you were lucky and it didn't make any difference. Here, we had to come through. Also, we had telephone conversations with doctors in charge of patients, it was a Municipal Hospital. They would try to defend their not coming in, and our idea was to just not get caught in the middle and get them in (laughs) we did it pretty well. We had more control thinking that way, than in a larger place with men standing right behind you all the time. So it was good.

MA: So you finished your Residency there?
JB: No, it was two years of a General Rotating Internship and by sheer coincidence I happened to meet the head of the Draft in Connecticut on a weekend and I was kind of fat and mistaken for a German-Jew refugee as an Intern. He thought I looked too healthy to be just there, and he knew about my Commission because he asked me about it. Then I got my orders to report to the Harbor Defenses of Portland, Maine. I have to say Maine because everyone assumes it was in Oregon and I did not go there. Except I did go on the wrong Challenger Train and would have wound up there instead of San Francisco! (laughs) but I got off in time.

So that posed a problem because I had not taken any parts of the National Boards, but I did take the written one in Vermont. One of the requirements was simply that you complete an Internship before

you got your license. So I rode up to the Licensing Board and told them what had happened and I got my license by return mail and that took care of that. If I had gone through all of this and come back and had to take National Boards, I don't think I would have liked that very much because by that time the practical part was in and I at that point I had a right-brain and would have had to get it retooled.

MA: What was Portland like at that point?
JB: It was ship-building and the Harbor Defenses had one post on the Mainland, and the other three were on the Islands. I got my early Island experience right there. (laughs) Portland was a busy town, the Navy ships that had been somewhere, nobody in the country knew where they were except we did because we talked to the sailors and they told us where they had been.

There was one vessel named "The Prairie" which was fairly well known. The only reason you did know the name of it was because it was written on it's side. I don't know nautical terms very well. It was just PRA and I did not know if they had forgotten the "Y" or the rest of the letters. So we knew what was going on pretty well and the Atlantic Charter Meeting had been held just a few miles from Portland. (statement on August 14, 1941 that set American and British goals for the world after the war) It's all common knowledge. The same way that I got secret orders to the Philippines, and boy did they keep me shut up and so forth. On the morning we sailed from San Francisco, I read in the paper the names of all the guys going to the Philippines. Secret orders! (laughs) And that was just about good as the secrecy was anyway.

MA: So you went from Portland, and then you were shipped off to California?
JB: Yes. We sailed on the former SS President Cleveland which was renamed for General Tasker H. Bliss on the 4th of October of 1941 and returned October 3rd, 1945.

MA: Did you know where you were going?
JB: Oh yes. We were certain that was where the next part of the war was going to occur. Except, the closer we got there, they said "no, no, it is not going to happen here!" (laughs) Despite the fact that the week before, December 8th, which was the date that we got hit, also on a Sunday. We had known from pilots at Nichols Field (Philippine Air Force headquarters) that there were dogfights with planes that were not ours over Luzon several evenings before. The Japanese fleet was just over the horizon and had been there a week.

There were still converted liners, converted in name anyway which were bringing troops in and going to Shanghai or whatnot. They would talk about seeing all the Japanese Naval vessels, they did not touch them at that time. So we knew something was imminent, but we still went to sleep not being worrying about it because even though we knew it had to happen, it was still hard to believe being right there.

MA: What Unit were you in at that point?
JB: At that point, my first and only assignment was with The Philippine Division, specifically the 12th Medical Regiment, which became the 12th Medical Battalion two days before the fighting started making the Triangular Division (two forward/one back in reserve). Historically, the Philippine Division had three Regiments – the 31st was the American Troops, the 45th and 57th were the Philippine Scouts with American Officers. The Scouts were regular Army as of 1921. And our dear government here treated them as the Philippine Army for years and years. We promised you nothing, the heck they did! They promised them a lot and reneged.

MA: So you arrived in the Philippines, where were you first posted?
JB: Fort William McKinley.

MA: What was that like?
JB: Well, it was built around a golf course, that essentially says it. There were Filipino ladies squatting there every morning picking weeds out of the Fairways. Of course, that did not last terribly long! We arrived on the 23rd of October. I remember the next morning waking up and was in a room by myself with (@18:46 unclear) saying "I don't want to get out from under it." This was the way I felt, but then said "heck, we gotta to" and that's what we did.

We got assigned to Colonel Donald Duckworth, whose picture I happen to have here but skipped (@19:00 tape is still blacked out) was the Commanding Officer in charge of the 12th Medical Regiment and of the Station Hospital in Fort William McKinley. He has an interesting story. He was an assistant to a local practicing physician, I've forgotten who that was, and I got to know him pretty well later on. He told me how he was quite happy doing that until the time he had diagnosed a high- society woman with syphilis. His preceptor (instructor) said "These ladies don't get syphilis!" So he decided he would rather be in the Army than in that sort of practice. He was a pretty good man. And later on I can tell you that was what I consider an extreme act of heroism and it really paid off.

I often wondered why the Japanese really paid attention to him. It never occurred to me, he was rather an obese man but many, many years later a man who I had never known except in prison camp said to me he thought the Japanese were so careful of him because he looked like a Buddha. That had never occurred to me, but it could have been. (laughs)

MA: So the feel of the Post at that point, was it still old Pre-war Army or was it changing?
JB: Well, let's see, we went to work at eight o'clock in the morning and finished at eleven. You read in the papers how we were working twenty-four hours a day. There were five Officers in each collective Company and I was the sixth. Company B. Historically, Company B was part of the 31st Combat Team. Company A and C, I don't remember which, were with the 45th and 57th.

VISUAL OF TAPE RETURNS AT 21:05

It turned out that being in Company B was a good thing because the American Troops took care of the Headquarters and they did not want anything to happen to the Headquarters so we had a pretty good deal!

VISUAL GOES BLACK AGAIN AT 21:14 RETURNING AT 21:36

MA: What were your duties?
JB: Well, when there was action, we had to evacuate from the Aid Station to the Clearing Station so it was essentially Transport by ambulance or bus or whatever way we could get. This was only occurring when there was action, and there was not a heck of a lot of action.

The first we saw on Bataan was after or about the 6th of January when they finally managed to get everybody into Bataan and the Japanese finally closed the gate there. Eventually they started coming down and, of course, (@22:05 name?) the Japanese Commanding General was not very concerned. He said, "Heck, we have them all down there and we will just finish them off and whenever we want!" Except it took them longer to finish us off than any other group in the Far East. Presumably, this had

something to do with their inability to take Australia, which would have been pretty fatal for the American cause if there had been able to do that.

I might as well get the real plug in and that is the real defense at the time was the two Philippine Scout Regiments – the 45th and the 57th. They did enough damage so that later on, before the Japanese had gotten beaten, they looked up all these guys who were living in Manila and killed them….according to what I have read, I can't talk to that particular statement. It sounds reasonable. (John smiles to camera)

MA: Where were you when you heard that Pearl Harbor had been attacked? What was your feeling when you got that news?
JB: I was at Fort William McKinley. I felt, well, it had finally started, that's all. We moved out of the apartment building and into the field where we remained for the next four or five years. (laughs)

MA: When did the Japanese begin to attack the Philippines?
JB: There were air raids that day and night. I forget when the Lingayen Gulf landings were made, but it was probably about the 17th or 18th of December. They came down fairly fast so that they were prepared to hit Bataan about the 5th or 6th of January. They made no particular attempt prior to that because they figured "Well, we have them boxed in there and there is no place they can go."

They missed the boat completely because they followed their plan, and their plan was what they would do if they were Japanese, and we weren't. So they let us all get into Bataan. They could have busted it up the first week, but they didn't.

MA: What was the general feeling of the Americans in January? You are being attacked, did you have a feeling that you were going to get out of this situation?
JB: No, you see, there were many Regular Army that were there a long time prior to this and they had a visitation in early 1941. And what was going to happen was described by the Military from the States so the guys asked "What's going to happen to us?" and they answered "You are either going to be dead or in a prison camp."

MA: So you were basically there to buy time?
JB: Correct.

MA: How did you, as a young twenty-something year old feel about that?
JB: Well, from the very beginning, and I am talking about the 1930s, I was quite fatalistic about it because I could remember seeing a picture of Hitler in the old Literary Digest Magazine and telling my Mother "I'm afraid of that man." As time went on and you read Reader's Digest, etc. and saw what was happening in Europe and knew about "The Rape of Najing" (massacre of Chinese civilians by Japanese) as it was going on and knew this was not going to be good. The Japanese started in 1931 and it took them that long to get ready to hit us. They were still miscalculating unfortunately.

I was fatalistic, but an incident occurred in February of (@26:07 1939 and then @26:20 1940 both mentioned as the date of this event) on a Sunday evening. I was with the gal I married and her sister and we were visiting the fellow she married. The question was, what would happen to Glen and me in the event of a war? This is what went through my mind.... there was Glen who was 4-F because he was in an auto accident resulting in a broken neck and just wasn't fit. Although many who were not fit were inducted, at least if they were the first draftees.

I, of course, knew I would have a Commission because I was already through Medical ROTC. This is what passed through my mind….I was on a fantail of a ship and in the background was a coastline which I knew was Asia. I had been over there for four years, and I had been through a war. I did not remember that until December of 1943, but I remembered it every day after that. It was comforting, I never knew for sure whether to believe it or not. Somewhere in the back of my head someone put the idea that I would survive.

MA: So the Japanese had now had cut Bataan off? What was the series of events leading up to the final capitulation?
JB: Well, we have to back up just a little bit. I did not know this at the time, in fact I did not know this until recently but there is legislation in the Philippines that did not permit the transfer of foodstuffs from one province to another. So they could not stockpile Bataan with rice for example and things of that sort. So by that time, it it didn't make any difference, it was too late to do anything about it. The notion that Bataan was prepared and stockpiled, and I'm not degrading MacArthur at all, but the fiction that was put out during the daily briefings, the stockpile just wasn't there. It was all on Corregidor and it was hard to get it from there. They did not like to give it up.
We had seventy thousand people on Bataan, which included many civilians, the Philippine Army and about twelve thousand Americans there. Let's call it ten thousand, that's easier to remember and about nine thousand Philippine Scouts, and there was a Philippine Army. Not to denigrate them either, they did not have a chance because they just began a few months before.

A typical story is maybe two months into the fighting in Bataan, when things were quiet, there would be one or two Filipinos that were recognizable as in the Philippine Army come out of the jungle and say

VIDEO BLACKS OUT AT 29:17 BACK AT 29:26

"Sir, my companions and I are very hungry, we have not eaten for three days. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow." These were very forward thinking people. Unfortunately, we could not do anything about it because if we said "Okay" then thirty five or forty of them would come out of the jungle. If we didn't say it, they didn't do it. There was just no way that we could.

Since then, an anesthetist once was telling me about the odds of a general anesthetic when your cataracts are being done. I said I knew all about that, it would take thirteen and a half million men in ten thousand...I will never win the lottery because I have already been in that ten thousand.

So, we were on half rations in December and got that cut down to a quarter ration by end of January or February. The crucial battle in a hacienda (@30:17 unclear) terminated about the 25th of January with the Japanese having been stopped. They were having as much trouble with disease, food, and everything else as we were. So there was a lull from the end of January until the end of March when they brought troops up from Malaysia. I have no notion of how many they brought because you had fantastic numbers that could not possibly be so and reasonable ones.

By that time, we did not have any effective troops at all. We had maybe one hundred men to hold a Regiment or line, you can't do it. No one was particularly happy but I can recall since we were always in reserve and except from the actual fighting. We would play bridge in the (@31:10 unclear) Valley on the floor of the perimeter in the camp we had, maybe a half of a mile from Regimental Headquarters. We would play bridge every afternoon and say sometimes "Gee, just think, people are worrying about

us and here we are playing bridge!"

Of course, we did not have any future, but for the moment we had an opportunity to send letters home about Washington's Birthday time (February 22). My particular letter was found by my wife in the mailbox just as I had handed it in. It had no postmark, no cancellation, no stamps on it and there it was which was kind of peculiar. I never had an explanation for that except that's the way things happen in wars. Things get all mixed up.

MA: So the feeling was pretty fatalistic at that point amongst the men?
JB: Oh yeah. We had, of course, a lot of stories about "help is on the way" and whatnot. We do know that there was a convoy of ninety-five ships that left San Francisco early in December. But that kept on going to Australia of course. It was foolish to think of doing anything else with it. We sort of lived on a six-month basis. Always extending time by six months whenever it got to the sixth month. That was sort of fooling yourself.

Another technique which I just happened to know, I was on a detail and there was one Japanese who was fairly viscous and I had a dream in which I killed him. He never bothered me after that in my mind. So there were crazy little ploys you would make to help out. I never had any trouble sleeping. There were times when there was enough action around, particularly in Japan, where you finally went to sleep through utter exhaustion, you were so tense. But most of the time it was just plain periods of intense boredom punctuated by moments of intense fear, which is a quote from somebody.

MA: Now, Bataan finally fell on?
JB: April 9th

MA: What was that like on that particular day?
JB: Well, we have to go back to the day before because that was when we knew it was going to happen. We were ordered, on the 8th, around noon time, to dismiss the Scouts. Tell them to get out of their uniforms, get to Corregidor if they could which might help for awhile, and just plain disappear if they could and they did.

That afternoon was rather tense because you could hear the fighting getting closer and closer. We did hear in the evening that this was going to be over by eleven o'clock the next morning. I'm not sure now exactly when it did end. Part of the trouble is the difference in the time with the International Date Line and so forth whether you are talking about yesterday, or today. Maybe that was why those Filipinos said they had not eaten yesterday, today or tomorrow.

There was a story I read a long time ago as a kid called Three Sundays in a Week. It was in a set of books for kids. These three fellows met in a club in London. One guy said it was Saturday, one guy said it was Sunday and the other said it was Monday. They had each gone around the world, one guy stayed there, and that was the way it was! So that accounted for quite a bit of it.

I know for a fact that the surrender, the time of the Emperor's recorded speech on the 15th of August was the time there of eleven o'clock. Everybody says it was noon! Part of it may be because the Japanese changed their method of keeping time, and this just occurs to me now. So at ten o'clock, it was the same in any area that they had conquered, it was ten o'clock rather than in those time zones. That may have been the reason for it, I don't know.

Actually, we were so darn glad it was almost over even though we did not know what would happen to us, that in itself was a relief. We did know that the hospital, this was Hospital #1 which was the Engineer Headquarters in Bataan, in permanent buildings which were never intended to be a hospital I don't think. This was a Surgical Hospital that was actually in Fort William McKinley in which Colonel Duckworth was the Commanding Officer, as he was of the whole Battalion.

VIDEO BLACK OUT AT 36:24 til 36:35

I would like to get into his story for just a second. At about eleven o'clock we could hear tanks coming down the road and sporadic machine-gun fire. They were rattling along and not stopping anywhere or whatnot. Colonel Duckworth came down, got his Aid and a bamboo pole, put a sheet on it and walked to the road. These were tanks that were firing at targets of opportunity. He just stood there and they ignored him. They went by and so he came back up. The same thing happened again about a half and hour later.
Colonel Aston (@37:09 spelling?) was operating in the Operating Room and he did not see the first visit so in his book about Bataan, Duckworth only went down once. But I know he went down twice. The second time I said "Gosh, that is something!" The second time, the fourth tank stopped.

@37:29 MA interrupted John and says he needs to change tapes but visual continues un-iterrupted

So there was some space between the groups of tanks and it was quiet for a while. Then the second group came down, and firing as it was before, and the Colonel went down again and stood there. We wondered what was going to happen to him, but this time the fourth tank stopped. The lid opened up and there was conversation. Somehow you learn to talk without language and they sent back for the Commanding Officer and he came down and accepted the Hospital as turning itself over to the Japanese.

This was really more ticklish than I realized at the time because I did not know we had four hundred Japanese P.O.W.s in the hospital too! And they, of course, were interested in them and there was swift justice right through there. If the Officer thought he was a (@38:35 unclear) out he went. We don't know if he got shot right there or two months later. Things like that. And they slapped him around and so forth.

The slapping around bit, just to give you a notion, this is the Japanese way. If I had been in the Army one day, and you come in the day after, for the rest of your career I can beat you up any time I feel like it. So when they got prisoners, they had more fun than they did beating up their own people. This was hard for us to understand for a long time until we realized this was just the way they had become. Whether they were always like that or not, I don't know. There was a great change that occurred when Hirohito became the Japanese Emperor. Personally, as far as I am concerned, he shares the entire blame.

MA: Now, Colonel Duckworth surrendered the Hospital? Where were you at that point?
JB: That is correct. I was right there. (he smiles) I mean, I did not see the actual handing over. We were stationed in warehouses just off the hospital grounds which were for the Engineers equipment. Some of them had five hundred pound bombs which they managed to blow up towards the late evening on the 8th. We were all told to get into holes, we sort of went from side to side in the holes. I don't know that anyone was hurt in that, but it was quite a close sensation.

The next morning was really quiet, and I managed to have a bit to eat. But everyone was wondering what was going to happen. Were we going to be bayoneted in our beds, or what was going to happen. It turned out to be a very orderly transfer and it was a good thing because we were right in the path of advancing troops who were by this time were essentially unarmed. But they decided they were going to make a (@40:28 unclear) and we could not argue very well.

I did manage to keep a ring for a long time, in fact I did keep the ring all the way through until my daughter, when she was a little girl, managed to steal it from me. My watch, of course, went right off the bat. I borrowed some Seconal (sleeping pill) the night before, I said "If I could have just one night's sleep I will be alright." And it made a heck of a difference because, although we thought we were sleeping well, it was a tense sleep of course.

Oh yes, there was a little incident. A bunch of Japs got onto an ambulance, I just happened to be moving the ambulance foolishly and they told me to go down to (@41:19 town unclear) with them. I knew if I lost my contacts right there and then I was in for a tough time. They got kind of angry when they saw I could not drive because I drove into a tree. (laughs) They all fell out and were mad as hell and just took off. That was one of my late-blooming ideas I guess. Things were rather quiet. We learned just from gossip the things that had happened. The bulk of us stayed there until July 3rd.

MA: How were you being treated at that time?
JB: We were essentially ignored. Some of the men did wander up north in Bataan where we remembered finding a young pineapple patch. This was probably about the middle of June. We ate so much pineapple that we had sore mouths for two or three days. Its not good to eat too much of that particularly if you don't get all the sharp things off the skin.

We had some really smart guys thinking about the future, so we went on very short rations immediately. So for breakfast we had two nickel ice cream scoop size of rice, one spoonful of C-ration (canned food) gravy and that was about it. At noon, we had two C-ration crackers and a cup of tea. And at night, a big increase, three scoops of rice with two spoonfuls of C-rations gravy and that was all we had. This was in an effort to stockpile because we did not know when we would get anymore. We had a fair amount of supplies hidden away apparently. We did hope that eventually we would get up to Camp O'Donnell though at that time we did not really know how bad it was. We did learn after a while from the truck drivers who came down. They were the elite because very few Japanese could drive a truck, which was good. There were very few of them in Japan.

We took care of the patients we had there. After Corregidor fell, they evacuated those that had to continue to be hospitalized to our hospital so we could prepare them for transport. Most of these were amputations and we would change their casts. They did not move the patients for another two weeks so we did not know how many more there were, or how bad a shape they were in. Some of their casts were on too long, things like that. Whether they all made it to Manila or not, we never found out.

This was about the third or fourth week in May that this occurred. We, of course, were trying to straighten out the place, policed it up and so forth. I almost burned the place down once! Fortunately, the last flame did not lick the eve. I was scared to death, and I knew if I told anybody about it I might just have well burned the place down. I was pretty lucky, I did a lot of praying when I was trying to outwit the fire and I managed to. It was just one of those foolish things that people do now and then.

We just continued on. Noteworthy was the fact that I managed to go approximately thirty-five days

without a bowel movement. Then I had a rabbit turd, and then it was another seven or eight days before I got a normal stool, then I got diarrhea. I was put on, I can't remember the name of the drug now but it was one that dries you out. I was supposed to just take a couple of drops every four hours but I was half-asleep and drank about half the bottle. I did not urinate for a couple of days after that (laughs) I didn't do anything for that matter.

That turned out to be handy to know because many months later in O'Donnell where there was a Dental Clinic I had much dental work that could be done and they were willing to do it, but I was drowning the dentist. So he put me on this drug every day so I would not salivate that much. I guess I just had to think about something and my mouth began to gush. So that was a handy thing to know at that time but I am getting ahead of the story.

I managed during this period of time to get "Dengue Fever" the alternate name for that is "Breakbone Fever" which is a good description of it. You get very sick, very achy for the first twenty-four hours and you think you are getting better. And then on the fifth day it sneaks up behind you and hits you on the head again. There is nothing you can do for it but take aspirin and bed rest, you have a high temperature. It takes another three or four days to recover from that. Supposedly, if you have had it once, that's it, but some people got it two and three times.

The Ward for the sick Officers was in the Prison Compound that the Japanese had so it had wire strung up all around it. But it was actually not a bad spot. It was better than the buildings and air conditioned all the way around!

There were many rumors flying around, we did wander down the Peninsula aways not knowing that it was not smart to do it. But I found an empty footlocker which we had a heck of a time bringing back empty up the hill. But it did turn out to be worth something when we got up to (@47:20 unclear) I could trade that for something. I found some sheets, that were in decent shape. All the cans of food had holes knocked in them, we did not profit from them at all.

It was kind of scary, I mean there you were alone on a battlefield. You wonder who was hiding where? We knew about the Detail going South. We knew that (@47:52 unclear) Raider was going to O'Donnell. He eventually took a group down to Duvual (@48:00 spelling?) and he did not survive. Neither did many of them.

Only one group had left the hospital area when we left. There were about two truckloads, so maybe twenty Medical Officers went by truck to the rail head in San Fernando. Whereas the other guys had to walk the whole sixty miles which took three or four days. We probably lost about six hundred Americans on that Death March and about six to ten thousand Filipinos.

Among the stories I have heard, there were parents down on Bataan buying their sons out from the Death March. There has been much criticism of the Japanese for that Death March. I think it was just one of those things, we were really angry about it. They probably assumed that we were in good shape, not realizing that we weren't as in as good shape as they were. They were not in too good shape at all because they had short rations, short of ammunition, short of everything too. It was very badly handled.

Actually, Yamashita (Japanese General) came up from Malaya to knock us off. I am a great admirer of Yamashita as a good man, and a good soldier. This I can't vouch for, but we will skip to Singapore for a minute. If Singapore had held out for another twenty-four hours, the story goes that the Japanese would

have stopped attacking because they were at the end of their rope and Yamashita let them through. The reason is sort of like the Japanese Naval Commander who seemed to me like a real darn good soldier. He was not especially brutal and tried to stop the slaughter of Manila. Manila was the most devastated country in the world outside of Warsaw, Poland. It was totally unnecessary that about twenty-five thousand Marines were in the harbor and they turned them loose. One hundred thousand Filipinos were killed.

MA: So you went to O'Donnell on a truck?
JB: We went by truck to San Fernando, well I don't remember exactly but we did get to a rail head, got on the little boxcars and went to another town whose name escapes me. Then it was a six mile walk to Camp O'Donnell which you could smell a couple of miles away.
I knew that was what a Charnel House (place where corpses are piled) smelled like. At that time, the 3rd of July, about sixteen hundred Americans had died there from thirst, malaria, dysentery, and starvation. They were fed rice and salt, that was it. They had one water tap for ten thousand Americans. Obviously, many died from thirst. At the same time, there were about twenty thousand Filipinos who had died. There were probably about fifty thousand Filipinos interned at O'Donnell, so it was just one hell hole.

There was an inquiry that I read about towards the end of June and some measures were taken, inadequate as they were and so forth. But the main reason we were sent up there was to try and salvage some of these people. It was a good idea to have Colonel Duckworth, I want to call him (@52:06 unclear name) I have nothing against Colonel (@52:10 name unclear again). Colonel Duckworth was really the guy that set the tone. Everybody had to behave and dress and shave as though they were in garrison (military post). Of course, some of these doctors have been there since Day 1 and they were run pretty ragged. We looked like people from a cruise ship in comparison to them. We were skinny, but that was about it.

There were six areas that were Philippine Army Hospitals, and one which was American. They divided up the Philippine area hospitals and staffed them with Americans. And the one just East of us was the one to which I was assigned. I awoke once in the middle of the night, and they speak of chills, this was a (@53:07 term unclear) not a chill. I couldn't talk, I couldn't move, I couldn't even gurgle. I just kept trying and trying until I woke up the fellow next to me. Finally he woke u, realized what was happening and piled me with blankets. I went back to sleep for a while until daylight came. I did not feel too badly, but they took my temperature and it was one hundred and five.

I was then asked by a doctor who was assigned to take care of other doctors to look me over and make a decision what they should do with me, and he left it up to me. He gave me the reasons why and I said "Look, you know I have a temperature of one hundred and five. My decision decides whether I live or die. If you want me to make it, get me out of here right now!" and he did.

They had pretty much cleaned up the buildings which were where the American prisoners and hospitals in contrast to the barracks that were for the Philippine Army. These were substantial Philippinetype buildings with wood floors, etc. which had to be buried in lime, chlorine, and so forth. Many dead bodies were found underneath the floors which, of course, were all elevated. It was quite a hell hole. That afternoon, that was where I was brought, I was out of it for at least ten days, probably more like two weeks.

How I found this out was that I found my record which was written on the backside of an evaporated milk can label! When I was interrogated many years afterwards asking why there were no records it

was because nobody told them this was the way it went. There weren't any records. I can recall just saying to myself, "well I've had it!" and I literally turned and looked at the wall and went to sleep for ten days with that one hundred and five degree temperature before I came back to where ever I was. The first question I was asked of course was "How long is this going to last?" I just said, "I haven't any idea!" (laughs)

The death rate was cut down pretty much after that. However, the Japanese decided to send everybody home because all of the Filipinos seemed to be siding with them while they were victorious. When the men were released from O'Donnell to go back home, and every burial had somebody there, and the word got around as to what happened there, the Japanese had a tough time the rest of the War. They only had the cities, they did not have the countryside, ever.
My figures for the totals were probably inaccurate but they are not exaggerated. There were twenty-eight thousand Filipinos and seventeen thousand and sixty Americans who died there. Then, of course, those nine thousand that got to O'Donnell that were moved to Cabanatuan, they died over in Cabanatuan. They had a very high death rate for quite a while.

There are some interesting stories of how people, despite the fact that they don't know the situation they are in, can do remarkable things. Like the doctors threatening to bring in another doctor in to the Medical Society for disciplinary reasons because he stole one of his patients! The guy happened to live, which he would not have had otherwise, but that did not make any difference. He still stole the patient. Things like that.

The truck drivers were the kings of the place because they got out and were able to get stuff. The Japanese did not know much about transportation or trucks, so they were literally the kings. The camp got smaller as they started to release Filipinos. I can recall they had a band there playing Japanese songs and the Filipinos had to learn them. All I learned was (@57:20 John speaks in a foreign language) which means "it is our sea". For a while there I could hum along with all of them and so could they.

We were sent from O'Donnell to Cabanatuan in October, there were twenty four doctors. The actually type-written sheet of paper which had the names on it was reproduced for a book about Camp O'Donnell called O'Donnell, Andersonville of the Pacific (by John E. Olson). I, fortunately had fair input into that because I answered a letter in the (@58:03 name unclear) Bulletin about information. The man who was writing this became the fellow who what you might say was the Personnel Officer of O'Donnell and had to walk up to the Jap Headquarters every night and give the tally of the numbers of prisoners. He never knew if he was coming back or not, but he did. In fact, he is still down in Texas.

We gave up describing what happened, nobody believed us. The word got out probably about 1933 or 1934 when the government, of course everybody who did get home early had to be silenced. You could not talk about it, you could not tell anybody what happened. Yet they did permit this book to be published, Ten Escaped from Tojo (by McCoy and Mellnik) and it tells the story of the Death March and the escape from Davao down to Australia. And then, they finally let it go. Until that time, this was all a big secret.

MA: What were your daily experiences with the Japanese?
JB: I was very lucky and I have this on the authority of the guy who really defined the Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. I was interviewed by him some few years ago. He told me I had a very protected life until I got to my final Camp in Japan where I arrived in early April of 1944. And at this point I was in

direct contact with the Japanese daily. This was a new experience for me because there were always layers of people in between except for the occasional, casual encounter which could be bad too.

This particular Camp was a real hell hole until about January or February of 1944. It was a big Camp in Nagata which was about one hundred miles North. It was Japan's largest purely domestic port and before the prisoners got there, the only Americans who had ever been there was in 1923 or 1924 when Bill Tilden played some exhibition tennis. So it was pretty much isolated from what was going on in the world.

I stopped through there when I was on my way when I was sent up from the Philippines. There were people there that I had known and spent time learning things from them which was good to know. Things had changed because there was so much snow on the roof it collapsed and a few prisoners were killed from that. This was accidental compared to the deliberate killing. An order had come out, do not kill any more prisoners. There was an investigation by the International Red Cross. This improved things taking it from a worse-case three to a worse-case one. Something like that.

It was just a different atmosphere more than anything else. All the Australians had to work, even if they were sick they had to work unless they could figure out some way to con the Medical Sargent to let somebody stay in and so forth. I spent my first year there getting him to trust me and it worked. Although they were never sure of it. He was a very intelligent guy. He did not like being in China so he became the dumbest Sargent they ever had. He even got demoted and became a Medical Sargent at the Prison Camp back in the home islands which was his objective. The insignia was a little oblong red patch with a line through it and one, two, and three stars. Well, his had two stars but there was a space where the third one had been, that was his sign of notoriety.

It was an enjoyable relationship, though it is hard to say that under the circumstances, but it actually was. My proof of having really conned him was in July of 1945 when they had built a new building for sick call, trying to make things look good I guess. They had a whole string of garlic. I kept looking at that and finally I succumbed and stole a bulb. I was very careful only to eat very, very little at night, that was it. Except one day I got careless and was accused "You've been eating garlic! Where did you get it?" I pointed and said "Right over there". He was so surprised, he never did anything to me. (laughs) You learn a little bit about their psychology. How I was smart enough to do that was, there was a doctor from Tokyo who was doing the live-person experiments and so forth and he was in the hospital area in Shinagawa, Tokyo. While he was gone his trusted prisoner who took care of things dropped his microscope. It was severely damaged. It was one given to him as a prize in medical school. So this poor prisoner lived in agony until the fellow came back. It was such a shock to him, he just said "oh, dismissed" and never did a thing. So you can overwhelm them. It was just kind of hard to figure out what it would take. (laughs)

MA: So you were in the Philippines after O'Donnell?
JB: Oh yes, I was there until the end of March of 1944. I traveled around quite a bit. I got transferred from one Camp to another for a variety of reasons. When I was a medical student, it was determined I had bronchiectasis in my middle left lung. I had a fever one time considered of "unknown origin" because they could not figure out what it was. But the doctor who was in charge of Hospital Number Two, which was essentially all Malaria patients, was the guy they referred all cases to and I told him about this and he said "don't you know you had Malaria?" I told him I never even thought of it because this was three months after I had left Bataan. I had been here quite a while and taken prophylactic (medicine to prevent disease) as long as we had it, so it never occurred to me. And I did have

bronchiectasis. But he said "That is what you had, no question about it!" So as a doctor, I should have know that. (laughs)

Most people got one or two Red Cross packages in their whole term of imprisonment. I moved around enough and fortuitously I got fourteen! Which was unbelievable, it just happened that way. There was no way I could have arranged it. In fact, if they realized it, they would not have given me fourteen because they took a few themselves. (laughs)

Quite a bit in fact, they found warehouses full of them in Tokyo so they tell me. They used them primarily on the Naval ships. In Camp (@1:06:19 name unclear) where they sent Officers on another island, they got a Red Cross package every week but not much else. It did not do them a heck of a lot of good.

Because of the fact that I had this fever of "unknown origin"at least that was what we called it, they sent me to Tokyo to be studied at the Shinagawa Hospital. This gave me the highlight of prison camp. I was in Tokyo right on one of the man-made islands in the bay. I got there in the middle of February on the last carrier before the taking of Iwo Jima. That was a lot closer to Tokyo than Okinawa. They needed Iwo Jima as a place to stop, if they had to stop.

That was kind of scary because way up North we could hear them flying over, but that was it. But that was the last raid until the 9th and 10th of March. I always call it the 10th because that was the day when I was there. The figure was about three hundred and twenty B-29s (Superfortress heavy bomber planes) with napalm burned out sixteen and a half square miles of Tokyo and killed one hundred thousand people in six hours from early evening until midnight I think. It was really horrendous, it burned for three and a half days. That morning, you could not see the sun.

We figured, "boy, we are going to have a tough time today" when the workers came back from their homes. But they were not in the fire area and paid no attention to us. In fact, they laughed about it. But their laughter is their embarrassment. That is how they show it, like the time they had three bamboo poles and three soldier each had a Filipino head on it. They went out and captured some girls and brought the heads in, they were laughing and laughing because they were not happy with what they did either. But this was the only way they could express it.

MA: So you were in Tokyo for how long?
JB: From about the middle of February, for about five or six weeks. I was supposed to go back in two weeks but they had enough bomb damage that I didn't. So I was familiar with Tokyo before the fire and the bombing and then again saw it in September on the way home. It just was not there. There was an occasional building.

MA: And after Tokyo?
JB: Well Tokyo was where we stopped. They split the shipload. There were two hundred of us, one hundred and forty Corpsman, the rest were doctors and nurses. I had confirmation on this because the guy who was in charge of the rations on this old ship, which was built in Philadelphia in 1916 which I can't remember the English name of it but the Japanese name was not in the record books that it even existed. It is an easy one to remember if you remember that famous soprano singer from New Zealand – Kanawa. It was Kanawa (@1:09:53 name unclear) And that is the only way I can ever remember that name. (laughs)

This fellow happened to find out where I was and wrote to me. He told me I was all wrong, there was only half that number aboard the ship. He had to know because he was in charge of the rations. I said "Gee, maybe I was wrong." Then I got a second letter saying I was right! I checked in Okinawa on the way home with the Air Force and whatnot because they told me that no Japanese ship or convoy ever got through after such and such a date. I said "well, I can tell you when it did." They did not believe it and I couldn't give them the name of the ship and so forth. But it did.

It was about a three week trip in the hold. It was a whole week in Takao Harbor in Taiwan which is where some of the L- ships (Landing Ships) were bombed. We had a quiet five days. They loaded, we estimated, ten thousand sacks of sugar. We were in the aft holds and in the forward holds were the women and children. They did not treat their own people any better than they did us. We were in the periphery of the oilers going North.

The only incident that occurred was on the afternoon before we docked in (@1:11:30 city unclear) off Nagasaki and we were all on deck and we were told to "Get below, fast!" which we did. But there was an Air Force Officer who was in the side of the ship and he just stayed there and watched what happened. One of our subs sunk one of their cruisers in a half and hour.

He waited until everybody was back on deck, snuck out of the privy and told us about it. Later on, nothing related to this, his picture was in one of the monthly periodicals. It was placed there by his wife asking "Does anybody know this man?" And fortunately, there were about five or six of us who did, so we filled her in on that reunion. Without the picture, I doubt it would have happened. This was a luxurious trip compared to all the others. I was kind of hungry until it was over.

MA: You mentioned nurses, were you generally with nurses or were they kept separate?
JB: No, the nurses essentially remained on Luzon. There were nurses of course at Hospital Number Two which was just jungle with as many as ten thousand patients at a time treated for malaria, dysentery and Dengue fever. The nurses there, and the few nurses that were at Hospital Number One and others who had been around and were on Bataan, essentially all went to Corregidor Islands and just about made it.

There is a book that just came out about it, I guess her name was Norman. (We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of the American Women Trapped on Bataan by Elizabeth Norman) Her husband is a writer too, I talked to him about various things. This is the best book on the nurses, there are several, but is more authoritative and quite packed with data.

We did have a nurse there that had supposedly been raped, I never even saw her. They did put the nurses into coveralls way back in the early days of the business, which was probably a pretty good idea. What they did on Corregidor, I don't know. They eventually got brought into Santo Tomas (aka Manila Internment Camp). This book really gives you the horror that happened at Santa Tomas. The other books don't quite do it. You had to be in fairly decent shape because the Japanese did not feed them for several weeks. The only food that was there was what the Filipinos brought in to the gates, what they could buy, and what the wealthy people who had servants had made arrangements to take care of them before they went in and had plenty of money.

Then, of course, after the first six or seven months, it really was a hell hole. When you talk about Internees, I think they had it just as tough except they were not in combat. But they sure were for several days after the Japanese got into Manila. They had a hell of a time for those five or six days.

The story of (@1:15:00 name unclear) the agricultural school down South and how they were treated. If the Rangers did not get in with the split-second timing and so forth was much more dramatic than the rescue at Cabanatuan, they would have all been killed. There was no question about that. The plans were there.

MA: Excuse me, I'm just going to throw in another tape (@1:15:27)

JB: (When tape returns, John is telling a more recent story)The funniest thing of all was that nobody liked to talk to the group particularly except for the fellow who had been State Commander. He could ad lib like nothing. Well anyway, on this particular day he wasn't there as he was supposed to be. For some reason, he couldn't make it and I was asked. I had no idea what I was going to say until I stood up. At this time I was eighty-three and I said I was pretty lucky, but I'm not as lucky as you because it took me until I was about seventy-nine or eighty to get by my adolescence. It's about time you guys got out of yours! I went off on that for about ten minutes. I was told later on that this was one of the better speeches they heard. I said "well, it just came out that way." The man who was listed on the program (@1:16:25 Stanley Pavlek? Confirm name) to speak was who I was introduced as being. He got a phone call that afternoon and was told what a wonderful speech he made! (laughs) So you never know. I could see no point in making a point out of that because most of the people there knew my name. It just happened, so let it go.

MA: Okay, so you were outside of Tokyo?
JB: Oh yes. I told you how we got to Tokyo and why. So I was, on paper, to go back in about ten days because I had no fever then and I was ostensibly healthy. In fact they had moved me into one of the doctor's quarters that several doctors shared rooms. This was a privilege, getting to know Sir Hugh Cleave, he was a Naval Commander in charge of the hospital in Hong Kong. Also there was a man by the name of @1:17:25 and 17:55 confirm name of Tony) who was featured as a sort of a rascal in Emily Hahn's book China to Me, which of course I got. (laughs) He was the man I told about seeing my vision of the coast line. I told it to him on the fantail of the ship as it pulled away from the Philippines. He never spoke to me the rest of the voyage. He was quite a guy Tony.

Nagata was the place where the Canadians and British were taken when Hong Kong fell. That was a pretty sad thing, pretty sad. There wasn't any fighting at all to speak of. Just an occasional errant bullet now and then. The British acted the way British Officers did, they were playing bridge (card came) when the Japanese came on the island at ten o'clock in the morning. It was sort of like the "Charge of the Light Brigade" (battle in Crimean War, disaster for British) and a few other things.

MA: What was that experience like?
JB: Nagata was very rough, there was much torture. Guys were spread eagle in the middle of winter-naked. Tied to trees and burned with cigarette butts, and so forth. There was much illness and many deaths. The buildings collapsing did not help. The British Corpsman wrote a book about all of this. He eventually became a doctor in the States. I loaned this book to a compatriot, I even Xeroxed, I used to make library cards with my name on it because I started losing so many books! (laughed) He told me that was real cute, the next year he said "oh, I had it out to bring you." But now I think he has Alzheimer's and I've given up on getting it back. But it was the whole story of Nagata and Hong Kong. I hated to lose that.

I met a Marine trumpeter from a Marine Band in Peking and we became quite friendly. It took me until

I was at my 45th reunion at Holy Cross to think of his name. I met with a man who I had just known for one year there and we spent a lot of time together. I was telling him about this Marine. I said "Gee I'm glad I could tell you about so-and-so" and I finally remembered his name! So we corresponded, he unfortunately has since died. He was quite a guy.

MA: You mentioned there was a lot of torture by the Japanese, could you understand why they did what they did? What was the mindset you believed the Japanese were doing this for? Was it revenge, retribution?
JB: It was what they were trained to do. What they had been doing in China from day one. (@1:20:40 unclear) was just a bump on the log that made the headlines. This had been going on year in and year out. A book which I think you would find fascinating, but is not accepted by historians because the man who wrote it was not a historian, even (@1:20:58 unclear) did not find it authoratative. The evidence was there, but it wasn't collected in the right way. I have seen legitimate criticisms of it, which I can buy because some things did not get documented and so forth. But it was essentially true.

His father was an architect who built the St. Louis Hospital in Tokyo so he lived with the Japanese in Tokyo as a little boy. The name of the book is The Imperial Conspiracy (by David Bergamini). He was so fascinated by them, they were so nice to children, they were wonderful people no question about it. After Tokyo, he went into China and for some reason, which I don't recall, they were in the outskirts of Yang King (@1:21:53 spelling?) and witnessed that from a distance. They eventually got to Shanghai and (@1:22:02 spelling?) in the Philippines where they were captured. He was so fascinated by this remarkable change in these wonderful people into these monsters, which they were, that he really wanted to try and find out how it all happened.

Now the best explanation I found is in the last book that has been out, which I can't quite remember the name of it but there is a picture of Hirohito on the cover wearing ceremonial robes. This takes it from day one and is about Hirohito in the most detail I have ever found and well documented. It talks about the troubles he had growing up in this Imperial Family and how they had to maneuver to get him on the track they wanted him on and so forth. Eventually, he could just tell them to all go to hell because he was the Emperor and this is what happened.

The foreword to this book about the Japanese Imperial Conspiracy was written by the Australian Judge who was the head of the Tribunal says very simply "Hirohito stopped it, therefore he was the only one who could have started it." And that is the premise on which they went and I don't have any trouble believing it.

MA: What techniques did you use to deal with the individual Japanese?
JB: (John places his hands together in a prayer/condescending type of pose) Fortunately, I did not have very much contact in that respect. The one humorous incident was in the last month or two. (1:24:12 name unclear) showed me his privates, showing me he had crabs (pubic lice). So I showed him the simplest way to take care of that was to shave the hair off. I think he probably thought I meant something else! (laughs) But he rejected the idea completely, and I am just now realizing what he probably thought. I wish I had pressed on that. Anyway, he got hung, so it did not make a difference.

I will tell you something stupid. Every now and then the guards would come in during sick call. These were guards from almost anywhere in Japan, we would guess from usually poor, rural families who maybe had a year or two of schooling. You really could not talk with them because there were so many different dialects. So here was a fellow complaining about something in his eye. I looked as well as I

could. I inverted his eyelid and could not find anything. I told him I couldn't and asked the Australian doctor (@1:25:18 spelling) Sandy Barrett to take a look. I sort of hate to say this but he pulled out a June bug -which I couldn't even find it! I'm glad he did.

The Japanese Command did not like people being taken care of by a prisoner doctor. Although, if they felt the need, they did not hesitate to do it. I had very little real contact with that. I did hear about stories. The best story perhaps was not a Japanese Officer asking for treatment. It was Doctor Weinstein, who Gordon knew. In fact, we had a man in our camp who was from that camp by the name of Whitlock (@1:27:03 spelling?) who was an Englishman. Excellent doctor, but was always belittling everything. We finally learned he was an alright guy. In reading Weinstein's book, before I lost it, I learned he tried to poison Sargent Wantanabe (@1:30:12 spelling?) who was a real bad guy. He would feed him stool, contaminated with amoeba. But, of course, it all got killed going through his stomach and he never got sick. But he did try it several times. And Weinstein would have been definitely killed if that did happen.

I feel different about Watanabe because he came to the camp while I was sick before I went to Tokyo. When I first met him, I usually got up out of the sick room around two o'clock in the afternoon and ate lunch in the Officer's Room. I was sitting in there eating with a few other Officers just chewing the fat., and in comes Watanabe. So you snap to attention and bow and he stayed there for about an hour wanting to see if I was going to sit down and start eating. But I knew better and he finally got tired and left.

Wantanabe, in retrospect, was the kind of guy who believed everything he was taught. All the bad things and so forth and that was the way he acted. If a person accidentally happened to touch him as you went by (John brushes a finger across his arm) he would get very upset. He was always criticizing peoples' altitude, that is where he didn't have to use an "l" but he did.

There wasn't a person in our camp, which totaled at that time about two hundred and fifty, that he did not beat up except the New Zealander who kept his books and me who had taken a post-graduate course at Shinagawa. I found every guy who I could who had been under him somewhere, or knew something about him. I learned all I could about the guy.

I also had the quick answers to three questions he always asked, I don't recall what they were right now. A lot of this saved me a lot of beatings including one day when they called for volunteers to unload a railway car. They shipped the railway cars for maybe a mile by guys pushing it! They did not want to waste the engine. In case this engine didn't work, they could beat on it until it goes. So this is a nice place! So anyway, I was in the sick room actually doing nothing, but I had a book in front of me because you had to look busy.

They called for twenty men. I thought, "Gee, this is going to be close, should I go out or shouldn't I?" I figured I was better off on the safe side being an extra man than a man short. So out I go, and they count off and I am number twenty one. I am told to stand "over there". He then called for the interpreter and quizzes me for half an hour and I gave all the right answers. He finally got disgusted and said "whoosh" so I turned around and slowly walked back to the building, but glad to get in there.

MA: When you say he "quizzes" you, what type of questions?
JB: All types of questions as to my "altitude", why I never laughed, why I was standing there, why I didn't join the group. And Kono, the interpreter, well you never know in the situation like this what

side he was on, he was probably on the quizzer's side. But at least I knew he would give a fair translation. Even though I was pretty sure Wantanabe knew what I was saying, he would wait for the translation each time. Sometimes I did wonder though, because I got a little daring being so successful. I did not really get worried until I got back into the room where the Officers were.
So the procedure is you repeat the conversation as best you can, every bit. Then in two or three days the guys would say "he asked me about this, he asked me about that" and I stressed the poker-face type without saying poker-face. This one guy had a heart condition, which I have got too (@1:26:00 medical term?) but I can't think of the reason why. Anyway, we were quite friendly. His heartbeat would go up a to a couple of hundred, he was living with that. Mine did not happen until two or three years ago, it doesn't get over ninety. I've got the slow kind.

He said "Well, you know John you told him how we played a lot of cards in the Philippines and this and that and you were in this sort of trouble because you never smiled. I told him about all the money you won in poker!" (laughs) If he ever came back and asked me those questions, I would have been lost. The guys were too good.

MA: So you made an effort to understand the Japanese?
JB: I never worked too hard on the language because that would be troublesome.

MA: Why is that?
JB: Because they thought, if you could speak a little Japanese, you could probably speak a lot. So they would beat the living daylights out of you and were surprised that was all you knew. For example, I was kidding one day that it would be nice if we had a phonograph to play the records we had. They dug one up, it was about this square (John's hands measure about two foot boxed) an old-fashioned wind up kind. You could put it in a back pack. They actually had us take it on a picnic so they could have music on a picnic. I'm sorry I ever brought it up!

One late afternoon there was a black out and Kono, the interpreter, was in the room and the records were playing. So smart-ass me thought I would make an impression and I like this number very, very much. I have heard it many times it is called "Moonlight on a Deserted Castle". Swoosh! Up comes Kono saying "How do you know that? It is only written in Japanese!" I said yes, it is written in Japanese, but it is also hand-written in pencil "Moonlight on a Deserted Castle" and when the light comes back on, you can see it. He did, and that was the end of that. But it could have been kind of serious otherwise. So you have to try not find out if your joke is funny, you better know ahead of time!

MA: Now, you were in Nagata.
JB: No, this was in a place called Naoetsu which I thought was very appropriate, NO IT'S NOT.

MA: This was after Nagata?
JB: Nagata was stopped in on the way to Naoetsu. The train went to Nagata and then went South. The only other time I was at Nagata was when we were being brought South, there were just two of us, everybody else had gone by train. We had a man that had been hit in the head with a sack of shoes from a B-29, it was a "glancing blow". I was trying to explain to him that the war was over, but I could not get through.

Anyway, we were taken up to Nagata and they wanted to take us to a military hospital but I said "we've had enough of that! Let's do a private place." So they took us to a doctor's home which had hospital beds. There were five or six lovely little girls. We were fed and had a party and so on. Then the next

day we boarded the bus.
It was the sick man, the Air Force Administrator that was with me, but the store keeper and my friendly Medical Sargent got off the bus on the way to the airport. When we got there, all the airplanes were lined up with the left wheel flat. We met the Captain who was in charge of the airport, all by himself. His mother lived in Naoetsu. We knew where her house was when he described where she lived. Funny things would happen like this.

Eventually we had gotten in touch with the Navy in Yokohama and they sent up a couple of planes from the (@1:35:06). One was a torpedo bomber and one was a fighter. We told them there would be three people to be flown out, and they sent two people, so with the sick man there would be three people flown out. But we would not be. They sent the biggest Americans they could find and they just lifted up the interpreter and said "We want to go to town." I said "Look, you can do better than that." I explained what we wanted to do and they all hopped into a taxi and went sight seeing for an hour and a half.

MA: Where were you when you heard the war had ended?
JB: Oh, this was very good. The prisoners worked in a stainless steel factory and a carbine factory. There were three shifts. So we never had cool bunks. Occasionally, (@1:37:41 unclear) was on a vacation. The power shifted somewhere else and the guys did not have to go to work. We were hearing various rumors. At eleven o'clock this morning, all the guards dressed in their best uniforms, went into the Quarters and stood at attention to listen to the radio broadcast. Which we subsequentially found out was the Emperor's recorded speech.

The guards at that point had not turned around, instead of facing in guarding, they were facing out to prevent people from tearing down the barracks and us limb from limb. I don't think anybody was interested in that all except it made a good show.

The men for the night shift fell out about a quarter to three which they did and then after about fifteen minutes they were sent back in. (@1:38:30 unclear) You could see the smoke coming out. There was no (@1:38:50 unclear) So we figured out six different reasons but never figured out the right one of course. So we waited and all we needed to do was see the expression on the first man that comes in. And that was all we needed. If you ever get to see the tape from Andersonville, or maybe it was Schenectady tape, I said we saw the face and that was that.

MA: Did you have any inkling prior to that the war had ended?
JB: Well, we had an inkling in June, which was a little premature. We had another inkling when one of the Australians came in and burst into the sick room and said "The Japanese have just said in perfect English (@1:43:08 unclear). I said "What did you say?" We calmed him down and asked again what they said "in perfect English" we called him a dope and realized he was saying it in Japanese! It just meant "the war is finished." Their words are funny, our words don't mean the same in translation there. I was always fascinated by the fact that they don't have any word for water. They have hot water and cold water but not just water.

Oh yes, when I first got there in April we had some people who were just evacuated the night before, their camp got bombed. So they ended up in our place. A night or two later when we were having a blackout somebody came up to me and said "I don't want you to know who I am. I am a recent arrival but I don't want you to identify me. The Japanese don't know it, but I am bi-lingual. When I have news, I will tell you.

Don't pay any attention unless **I** tell you. I asked "How will I know you?" He said "By the news!". (laughs) He did tell me that night, early in the evening that the war really was over. There were a lot of indications, the way the workmen were behaving, being especially friendly.

MA: How did you feel at that point?
JB: Just another day. On this story I got lost, I was just telling a guy this a few days ago. When we took the man to Nagata there were just four or five of us on this train car. The trains had no double track except through stations. They were all single tracks so they have an elaborate system of switching and so forth. There was this train going South, and we were going North and we were obviously prisoners. They looked like the guys in "Hee Haw" (60s country-themed variety tv show). If we didn't have bad luck, we would have no luck at all type of thing! They were just there. You didn't even know they were alive. I asked if Corporal Frances was there and he said "yeah, he is in the next car".

That was it, nobody would holler down or make a move. I think from the time I was in Naoetsu, those guys had an easier time than those guys in Nagata ever had. I think even though they heard it was finally over, they couldn't react to any stimulus. We had been through so much.

MA: When did you finally get to leave?
JB: Okay. The actual surrender was the 15th, about four days later one or two carrier planes came over. They flashed Morse Code, there were plenty of Australians who could read it, and it said "Good Wishes/ It's Over" and what not. Then there would be more planes up. The guys wrote in lime on the parade ground "Smokes/Food". I don't know when it happened but I looked out and there wasn't anybody in the parade ground. I should have had some brains, but I didn't.

So I walked out and was in front of one of their sliding doors. I looked up and here was a torpedo bomber with its Bombay Doors open with four sea bags fully loaded and going over the roof of the Japanese quarters. There were Japs on the top of the roof and they were about this far above them. (John's fingers measure about six inches wide) Then they let go of the sea bags which went through the doors, I went through the doors, everything went through the doors! And that was it, I did not get hurt at all. I hadn't gotten my glasses back yet, which was a good thing since I probably would have lost them again.

There were notes in the sea bags which I never saw, but there was also enough food in there that let everybody at least have a cup of cocoa or something that evening. They were saying when the next group would be up and gave specific orders where to put up a place to drop the stuff. So this was all arranged and the B-29s (Boeing Superfortess) came over and saw all the people heading toward the drop zone. Which did not bother us because we knew they wouldn't touch it. But they didn't so they dropped them on the street next to the barracks and killed five or six Japanese. They broke a couple of prisoner's legs and a few other things. They just wanted to be sure we got it. But we weren't in that much of a hurry. (laughs)

At the same time, we had an epidemic of measles start and two or three other things. We also had typhus. The troops were evacuated by trains. The non-Americans were evacuated one day, Asians, Dutch, English, etc. Then the Americans were evacuated on the next day. We were not in either of those two groups because we were up in Nakata.

The sick man got flown out that morning and we were put on a train at nine o'clock at night. It was a crowded train with the old-fashion seats. We were facing one way, and the seats were empty in front of

us. We figured they would put a couple of Japanese Officers there, and they did.

We had our canteens filled with sake and we had loads of food, so we stuffed ourselves. They didn't have anything so I guess we were just showing off. Quite soon there was a civilian who was sort of traveling with us. We didn't know about it until he introduced himself on the train. Every now and then he would say in Japanese which was translated to us "We have American prisoners here, you should behave like grown ups and not children. We've got to look good in front of these guys!" (laughs)

Suddenly, the train stopped somewhere South of Tokyo, we were probably very close to Yokohama. Everybody got off except us. They disappeared, there wasn't anybody around us so we got off and started walking in what we thought was the right direction and ran into some BIG Americans. (John indicated with his hand that they were very tall) and that was it. We did not want to turn ourselves in because we thought we might have a good deal on the (@1:45:23 unclear) We hung around for about three or four hours for getting nowhere.

The amusing thing was that the Japanese civilians were sweeping out the warehouses, as lazy as could be. So I used a couple of choice words and they were raising the dust. The Americans wanted to know what we said to them? (@1:45:47 unclear term) and that is all you have to say to them and it really worked, it's close as they got to a swear word. Eventually, we turned ourselves in. We were unsuccessful in getting through the chaos that was Yokohama. We never did see anyone from (@1:46:04 unclear) again. But we did send them back the twenty dollar bills they gave us, which we found no need to spend. And that was that.

After dinner we walked around Nagata by ourselves and we were literally passed from hand to hand. We said "Nothing can happen, the Emperor spoke!" As far as I know, there wasn't an incident involving more than one or two people in the whole Islands.

MA: Had you heard about Hiroshima?
JB: Oh yes, and Nagaski.

MA: When did you hear about that?
JB: I think the day it happened. We didn't know exactly what, but we knew it was the biggest ever and that sort of thing.

MA: Did you hear about that from the Japanese?
JB: Yes. They had English-language newspapers. We managed to get one now and then. There were sources of radio news where the guys worked.

MA: When did you get to go Stateside?
JB: Well, it was the coincidence of sailing out on October 4th of 1941 and returning October 1st of 1945. I was greeted by General Summerall. We were told you could not find a General to do it, but we did.

Dinah Shore (popular singer) was supposed to be on a fire boat to greet us as we went under the bridge, but she didn't. But that was no great loss I don't think. The amazing thing to me was that San Francisco was deserted. There was no traffic, no nothing. And this was a good month after (@1:47:10 unclear)

So we went to a hospital there, a San Francisco military hospital, can't remember the name at this

moment. We had a chance to call home, which I did. Of course there were telephone operators in Burlington and I got one I knew. She recognized my voice. We were told that no calls could go through unless it was a military emergency. So we told them who we were and they said that was a military emergency and we got through in a minute. My wife was home, so that took care of that.

She asked me what was going to happen next and I told her I don't know, I will keep in touch. We got screened and had an option to go home by train or by plane. I decided a plane would be simpler and more interesting, and more hazardous. It was all of those things. I don't remember what day we first got out of San Francisco, but we went to Ogden, Utah. There I was treated, as the only viewer of a great movie. It was sort of fun to be sitting there with just the projector and nothing else. We stayed overnight each place we stopped and ended up in Midway on Sunday morning. There was one stretcher patient, all the others were technically hospital patients.

We started to take off and then began to smell gasoline. It was a DC-3 (Douglas propeller transport plane) and I saw gasoline flying off the wing. So I raised my hand up, I didn't know if the nurse was looking or not, but she did. She walked by, I pointed out the window. We had gotten about five hundred feet up and came down in the midst of the fire department. They put the gas cap back on and took off. I said "What irony, we get this far and that could have been it at five hundred feet above Midway!" We ended up at a hospital in Fort Devens, Massachusetts on Sunday night. I was home the next night.

MA: What was it like to no longer be a prisoner?
JB: It was a sense of not having a worry in the world. Peaceful and quiet. I went into a restaurant in San Francisco and couldn't pay the bill because everything was on the house, very nice. I don't know why, but in October we went out and ordered a roast turkey dinner in a San Francisco restaurant. It was pretty good. We were there for about nine days and eventually were booked on a hospital flight. I guess there were three overnight stays on the way home.

I was told I was a doctor and could order what I wanted. I knew what was the matter with me and thought "you have got to be kidding." So I wrote down everything that I thought I would need. I also arranged that I would only be examined on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday so I could go home for a long week end each time. Turned out the doctors that ran the Ward could care less. Everybody could care less, you sort of were on your own. We weren't given any advice. It was sort of like "Gee, we don't know what to do with you. You are an embarrassment to us. We never had prisoners like this."

So unless you knew enough to ask and persist, you would just lie down and not let them do anything. You were sort of at their mercy. We were told that we could not be ordered to do anything. We were Project -J. This was in contrast to Project-R which was just any ordinary prisoner. Project-J was special.

@1:52:45 TAPE STOPS AND JUMPS FORWARD TO MIDDLE OF A DIFFERENT TOPIC

MA: So the Army lost you at….
JB: No, not the Army. I was on leave from the Army and with the VA (Veterans Assoc.) and they wanted to know. Technicalities are involved. Okay, my wife had stayed in a town in Jersey, right next to Glen Rock with friends, whose husband worked for (@1:53:19 name?) in Paterson as sort of a front man. He was an Engineer who had a very pleasing personality. He was the host for guests of the plant and so forth. That was where we stayed, which in a way was a help. I'm trying to get to a convenient

starting point.

First of all, I went home and sort of just stayed there. My wife asked people not to call. I didn't go out for four or five days. I needed some clothes and went down to a men's store, Hayes & Carney which I had known for all of my life. I drove down to that. I parked close by and got into the store without anybody recognizing me. Then they did. I was there for about an hour and among other things I was bought a uniform jacket which was worn by a Colonial Airlines pilot. It was a real Army jacket but I didn't have any, I needed one, and it fit for a couple of weeks. (laughs) Then it gradually flared out at the bottom.

I was sort of exhausted on that. The questions weren't bad, I mean I knew these people all my life. Then I went home and stayed there pretty much. I gradually got out, but I didn't do very much. I was supposed to be in a parade and all that. My wife turned all of that down. My wife made a comment to the effect of "you haven't changed at all." But it was the way she said it.

We had to continually go back to the hospital for tests. We were finally examined there and given a diagnosis, or lack of it by the Army examination. Then when I was home for a time I reported into the V.A. The smart thing to do of course was to go to a Service Officer immediately because you don't know anything about the V.A. and they aren't going to tell you. You have to find out for yourself, that is why you need a Service Officer. So many people never found that out, it was a big secret. So that was one reason I say we were an embarrassment. They would urge these Service Officers to look us up and do it.

I never joined any of the Veterans Organizations. I figured I would just get lost in it and that was what happened. They did not care about us as far as I could tell. In fact, probably about seventy percent of the P.O.W.s don't belong to any organization, which is too bad. They are losing a lot because they don't know what you can get or what you are eligible for unless you go to an expert and pay attention to him.

MA: How were you feeling when you were finally home?
JB: I would say peaceful. I got tired very easily. My normal weight, well I won't say my normal weight, but my weight when I was captured was about two hundred and twenty which was a very good idea. That was in December. In April, I weighed one hundred and sixty pounds. That wasn't a very good idea. In August, I weighed ninety-five. That was a worse idea. I don't know how I happened to regain conciseness after ten days of having a high temperature. But I did. Maybe my vision had something to do with it.

You don't really get terribly concerned about the future because you did not have any so it isn't something you don't think about. I would think about how nice it was between my third and fourth grade vacation when I had nothing to worry about. Or if I had, I didn't bother.
The idea was to get re-habbed, as far as your brain was concerned. I had, on my own visited St. Vincent's Hospital in New York and managed to secure a Residency there on one interview. Of course, that didn't mean I was necessarily accepted, but that was the way it looked.

My friend had went to Vermont and talked me into applying at The Hartford Municipal Hospital where he was an Intern then became a Resident and suggested I go there. So I did, in fact I went down and got interviewed on a Saturday evening and was accepted right then and there. He said "You've got to be more mature than the rest of these guys here!" (laughs) And he was wrong! In fact, they had accepted a guy and put me in his place and turned him down.

I think in a way that was good, it was an experience you would not ordinarily get. Meaning, there was no immediate oversee all the time. You had to make the decisions and live with them. You had to prevent doctors from saying "well, he told me there was no need for me to come in!" The doctor had to make his own that when he stressed he should come in. Things like that, things of self-protection. Of course, if I wasn't there I would not have met the head of the Draft Board for Connecticut. I would not have been in (@2:00:55 unclear) and things like that. But that never troubled me.

My wife was always upset, and I didn't find that out for a long time, but she knew that I could have been excused. And I thought I probably could because Residents and Interns were a high-priority. It never entered my head. There are two reasons for that. One- I was a great reader of the American Revolution, Indian Wars and that sort of stuff. There was an old book in the bookcase that belonged to my father. It was twice as thick as the Bible and in finer print.

When I finally got old enough to read it, I don't recall the name of it, but I do know the author. He was the British Kipling- G.A. Henty, and I saw the other side of the American Revolution. And I have been looking at the other side ever since before I make up my mind about something. The other thing was that my favorite Army people were the Philippine Scouts all my life. I read about the Philippine Insurrection, I didn't really know what I was reading about but I liked them. They seemed like pretty good guys and I ended up with them. P.S. this is a Philippine Division (John points to a gold pin on his jacket (@2:01:04 unclear). The regular Scouts were something, they were really soldiers. They only accepted one out of one hundred applicants.

MA: So you are home, you went back to work when?
JB: I went back to work July 1, 1946. I spoke about St. Vincent's in New York. I didn't speak about it, but I did acquire into Boston City Hospital and had a Residency there. Except, there were misunderstandings about putting me in Obstetrics when I wanted Medicine but that could have been straightened out.

In October of 1945 (did he mean 1946?) I went to New York with a brother who lived next to me and I became very well acquainted with and he told me where to go. He suggested I try the doctor, I can't think of his name, who was head of Medicine at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. It so happened he went to New York because he wanted to resume his interrupted Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sloan Memorial.

So we drive down, stopping at Hartford Municipal along the way and get there at nine o'clock at night. We were both in uniform, so we walk into the hospital building on 168th Street right through the guards. We got on the elevator and ride up to the eleventh floor where he had lived before, it was the Resident's Quarters and he was a Resident there.
I was just tagging along and he explained the situation to the Resident and arranged for meetings the next day. Then he said, "Well, now we have to do something for your friend." I said, "Well, I'm just down for the ride." He said "No, you have to do something, what are you interested in?" I told him "Internal Medicine." He said "Okay, we will get you an appointment with so and so."

Meanwhile, I had found a parking space across the street at nine o'clock at night. I get over to the car at one o'clock the next afternoon and it is in the middle of a bus stop. But I had Vermont plates with "M.D." on it so they didn't bother me. That was the first of many good things that happened.

So I had this interview and after about ten minutes I was being politely ushered out because I was not a graduate of PNS and so on and so forth. I said "Well, I'm quite willing to leave, but before I go I would like to tell you where I have been. I think you will be interested and I told him." He said "Young man we have got to do something for you. I can't do it here, but you can Intern in Bronx V.A. Hospital." Actually, there was a guy there in Nutrition and is still there. It would have been a good deal.

So we arranged for that plus he said "We can do something for you right now. You are going to be separated on the first of April, and there is something that is going to start on the first of April and I can get you into a three-month program sponsored by Colombia Medical School and it will do you a lot of good. And while you are here, you can spend all the time you want looking around to see what else is available to you. It is with Dickinson W. Richards who later got the Nobel Prize for Cardiac Cauterization, so we watched a few of his operations. He was a wonderful guy. So I agreed to do that. This meant I would be coming back to New York by the first of July.

Meanwhile, I had stopped into the Medical School and talked with the Dean of Admissions. This was before I had sewed this thing up and I was thinking I may just have a year in New York, and then get a Residency in Burlington. This was the way that was proceeding.

The way it ended up was I did go to Bellevue/Columbia Division for a few months. Then in view of what happened while I was down there for those three months I met the President of the Milbank Fund, Dr. Boudreau who was the Health Officer for the League of Nations back in the 1930s. He was quite a gentleman.

So I was down to visit Dr. Cruz (@2:05:52 spelling?) who had been doing studies on children and it was just an exploratory affair. His phone rang, of course, in fifteen minutes and I could have been ushered out, but I was there from two to five. I did go down the next day to talk to Doctor Bob Goodhart who was head of the Food Program for the country in World War II, and was just made head of The National Vitamin Foundation. Which is a reincarnation of the old Vitamin Institute supported by pharmaceutical houses in contrast with the Nutrition Foundation which is supported by food stores. I got to know Glen King pretty well too.

It ended up that Milbank offered me one year to run the study that was going on in my home town. He said that is all we can do at this point because it is just a two-year grant. It looks as if it will depend upon you if we will renew it or not. I did have it for that first year, and it got renewed. That was where I lived and worked for two years with many trips to New York meeting everybody in the country that was interested in nutrition and knew something about it. I was on a sub-committee of a committee of the Food Nutrition Board. All of that sort of stuff so I was really getting a boot-strap start. (John indicates with his hands that he was getting a lift-up)

This worked out very well. It was a princely salary of four thousand dollars a year. I know a guy who gets that a day (laughs). Meanwhile we the state of New York got interested in the Nutrition and Health Department. Harvard had done a scratch survey for them getting some idea from the people in NY what some of the problems were. It ends up I was quite critical of that but it didn't make any difference, the ground work had been made. The position had been established and so I went to work for the State of New York on July 1, 1946 and retired in 1977.

MA: So it was a long and fruitful career!
JB: Right. I heard a woman say to me not too long ago "You can't understand, I am a female!" And I

said “Heck, I used to work with fifty of them. One in each state and we got along. I think you and I can get along.” She never said that again.

MA: We have just a few more minutes. Is there anything you can say in summary of your Service career?
JB: Yes. I was asked this in another interview. I said I will answer what comes to mind at the time. It still seems good. I hope I can remember it! (laughs) It’s really the best thing that ever happened to me. It was miserable of course for years and years. There isn’t a day that goes by after fifty-five years that I don’t think about it.

And yet, I had it relatively easy compared to the big men who worked in Japanese-size mines and could not straighten up all day long, things like that. We mentioned the torture, there was plenty of that. I knew of people that were beheaded outside my wall. These things I never actually saw. The worse I ever saw were heads being carried on bamboo sticks. All of these things were happening all around me but I was sort of like in a little room of my own unintentionally, I was protected. Except for the last year plus when I was in direct contact with them.

I found them very fascinating and I was looking forward to the day I would not have to deal with them. I was awfully curious as to why they got the way they did. And then I found the wonderful camaraderie among them who had also been Prisoners of War no matter where. Even if it is someone who had been in prison for only a day. It is different, you are changed. And when you are changed for three and a half years, it leaves a mark. My wife was very disappointed when I answered the question “What was the most significant thing that happened to me?” I didn’t say marrying her, I said my war experience. That was unfortunate but it was the truth.

MA: Thank you very much.
JB: Thank you.

Transcriber notes:
PAGE 1

1:40 -- VOCNC? meaning?

PAGE 2

6:00 spelling of name

PAGE 3

10:34 name unclear

PAGE 5

18:45 unclear

PAGE 6

22:04 name unclear

PAGE 7

26:06 then 26:20 John references an event being in 1939 then says it was in 1940

PAGE 8

30:16 unclear term

31:10 name unclear

PAGE 10

37:09 spelling of name

38:35 unclear

40:28 unclear

PAGE 11

41:18 unclear

PAGE 12

47:19 town unclear

47:51 name unclear

48:00 place unclear

PAGE 13

52:05 and 52:10 unclear name

53:07 term unclear

PAGE 14

58:03 name unclear

PAGE 16

1:09:53 name unclear

1:06:18 name unclear

PAGE 17

1:11:30 name unclear

1:15:00 name unclear

PAGE 18

1:16:26 spelling ?

1:17:25 and 17:55 confirm name

PAGE 19

1:20:40 unclear

1:20:58 name unclear

1:21:53 spelling?

1:22:20 spelling?

PAGE 20

1:24:12 name spelling?

1:25:18 name spelling?

1:27:02 name spelling?

1:30:12 name spelling?

PAGE 21

1:26:00 medical term unclear

PAGE 22

1:35:06 unclear

1:37:40 unclear

1:38:30 and 1:38:50 term unclear

1:43:08 unclear

PAGE 24

1:45:23 unclear

1:45:47 unclear

1:46:04 unclear

PAGE 25

1:47:10 unclear

PAGE 26

1:53:19 company name?

PAGE 27

2:00:54 unclear

2:01:04 unclear

2:01:54 did John mean October 1946 instead of 1945 here. questioning it because of prior sentence reference to July of 1946

PAGE 28

2:05:52 spelling?