ALVIN CHARLES POWELEIT, MD

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War in the Far East, 1942-1945

Interviewed by

Charles G. Roland, M.D.

4 March 1986

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Hannah Chair for the History of Medicine

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Charles G. Roland, MD:

Would you begin, Dr. Poweleit, by telling me a bit about your background -- where you were born, who your parents were, what your father did, where you went to school -- just briefly a few of those things.

Alvin Charles Poweleit, MD:

I was born in Newport, Kentucky, in 1908. I went to the public schools in Newport. My mother died when I was seven years old, and my brother and I were put in an orphan home for about five years. We got out of the orphan home and I attended public schools again and I attended Newport High School, graduated from Newport High School. I got a football scholarship at Kentucky, University of Kentucky, and went down there for two years. Then I left there and I went up to the University of Cincinnati and graduated from the University of Cincinnati in premed. From there I went down to the University of Louisville for medical school. I graduated from there in medicine.

C.G.R.:

In what year?

A.C.P.:

1936. I interned at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Covington, Kentucky. I took my basic work in Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat at Harvard University, and I practiced in Newport until the war, until 1941. I joined the ROTC and then I had a Second Lieutenantship in the ROTC. When I got through medical school I transferred over to the medical department, and then I was called into the....Oh, incidentally, I got married in 1931.

C.G.R.:

Not incidentally at all, I'm sure.

A.C.P.:

Then we had two children. One was born a year after I got into medical school. Alvin Donald. Then about three years later I had another child, Judith Anne Poweleit. Shortly after we got into general practice -- it was about a year -- we had this thing come up where you had to spend one year in the army. So I got called in in December 1940. I was stationed in Fort Knox.

C.G.R.:

As a medical officer.

A.C.P.:

Medical officer, yes. Then, while we were at Knox, I went on maneuvers and every man in the outfit had to learn something about how to drive the tanks, and gun carriers, and everything else. Ride a motorcycle, which I did, and also to use the various guns, like the 30-30s and the .50 calibers, and know something about everything -- which I learned because there wasn't much else to do, except to check on the medical clinic. Then men were always ready to help me to shoot the guns and everything else. I really enjoyed that.

Then we went on maneuvers, and while we were on maneuvers, our outfit, which was the 192nd [Tank Battalion], never made a single mistake on maneuvers, and we were selected to go to the Far East by Col. Robert Stack and George Patton and several other ones. Actually, when we were on maneuvers, we had some kind of a code, but the sergeants knew more about the code than some of the

officers and they broke the code.

Of course, then we vaccinated our men and got typed and everything else, and they were probably one of the, I'd say, the best equipped with knowledge of tank maneuvers and everything else of any group that went in the Philippines, because we were together for a year. That was one of the reasons that we never had any great difficulties in the combat we took part in.

C.G.R.:

Can I interrupt and jump ahead. One of the things I'm interested in is the amount of diphtheria that there was in POW camps. Were the men immunized for diphtheria?

A.C.P.:

No. We didn't have any immunization for diphtheria. We had smallpox and typhoid and typhus, but we never had any of that in our ranks. But apparently some of these people must have been immune -- had developed immunity -- during life or something like that, because the people who developed diphtheria in the camp were not of our battalion or the 194th or the 192nd, or the ordnance, or the headquarters company. That was a provisional tank group. Never had a single case of it. At first they really didn't know what it was, but I remember in my senior year in medical school, we had, I think, maybe 400 or 500 cases of diphtheria down at City Hospital in Louisville.

C.G.R.:

Really; that much?

A.C.P.:

Oh, yes. It went through there. Nobody wanted to work in the isolation. But you got five buck a month more if you worked

in isolation. I worked in there. I was working my way through medical school, too. We had several -- well, I think we had eight or ten cases, early at Camp O'Donnell, and then they -- I would really recognize it, because I'd seen so many. Of course, they had trouble breathing, because the membrane just about [blocked the trachea], and they did traches [tracheotomies] on some of these boys, and they used these pieces of hose from the stethoscope. Put it in their trachea. I think every one of them -- I know -- that we had, died. Then later on they had another outbreak. I think maybe some of these other outfits had immunity, had been inoculated before they got in. But we never had any. I was inoculated too. Not with the army, but before. I think that's the reason we never [had any involvement].

Another thing, I never saw any of these Filipinos, either, in this camp; we didn't have any diphtheria that I knew of in Bataan, but it was when we got to O'Donnell. This is what this Olson's writing about. They tried to get diphtheria vaccine in, so the truck drivers did get some for some people, who had just marginal cases who, I think, took it and they'd survive. I guess I was exposed to it so much it didn't bother me.

C.G.R.:

Well, let me take you back then to where you were. You were saying that the battalion was in good medical shape when you went overseas.

A.C.P.:

That's right, very good.

C.G.R.:

When did you go overseas?

A.C.P.:

We left in October 26th and we got into Manila in November 22nd, almost the time for Thanksgiving. We were there just two weeks before the war started. I was appointed to make a sanitary survey of the island of Luzon, which I did. I spent about four days. I visited all the places and we checked the sanitary conditions, sewage, and whatever else it was possible to find out. Went up on the east coast as far as Aparri, along the Cagayan River up to Aparri and Tuguegaroa. That's on the Cagayan. Then on the west coast, I went up to Vegan. That was our limits up there, and also down to Atimonan, which is down in the south part, Legaspi and Atimonan. Along with this survey, I noted that at Aparri, that's in the north-east part of Luzon, we had one regiment of Philippine scouts, and on the east coast up as far as Vegan and Baler, we had another regiment of scouts up there. At Legaspi, I think, and Atimonan, we only had a couple of companies down there. I looked at these and I just made a note of them. This is what we told General [Douglas] MacArthur, when we went down there for an interview.

We were poorly prepared. Along the coast of Lingayen -- we didn't have any troops, hardly, there at all, and these men in the Philippine Army, they had only been in the army about three or four weeks. Really didn't know how to use the guns. The Japs could have landed in the back of us because I was surprised that we had [no men to stop the Japs]. I told Colonel Wickard, who was our battalion commander, and Ernie Miller, who was 194th's battalion commander, I said, "I don't see how we could win." and

we went out and I told the general, I says "Gee, the Japs could go behind our line," I says. Of course, when the Japs did land there, at Lingayen, it was during a storm so they couldn't go up there. So they landed at Agoo, which is about 10 or 15 miles up the coast. But they did meet resistance up there with this scout outfit, which was really good. The scouts were really good.

C.G.R.:

The Philippine scouts?

A.C.P.:

There were 8,000 Philippine scouts; they were part of our army. Not part of USAFFE, but they were part of our army. They were well-trained and they had a certain morale that they lived up to. They were really good. They really gave the Japanese a beating, but the Japanese many times got behind our lines, because we didn't have anything, [no reserve line to back us].

C.G.R.:

Excuse me, you mentioned USAFFE. What is that?

A.C.P.:

United States Armed Forces in the Far East. See, when the war started, they made all the Philippine Army -- they had a lot of army there, but it was only on paper. They had only one battalion, or division, that was really partly good, but it didn't have enough training to do any good, really. I tell you, I was really surprised when I got there. I'd been in the army for a year before, but I had had all this training with the line officers, and I was surprised at what we had over there.

C.G.R.:

In what way? Do you mean...?

A.C.P.:

I knew we couldn't last.

C.G.R.:

There was so little?

A.C.P.:

That was right. Well anyway, in Legaspi, when we got down there, there was about two companies and the Japs landed without a shot, in Legaspi and Atimonan. Up in the north there, the regiment at Aparri, that's along the Cagayan River, the Japs landed about 10,000 up there and they only had about a regiment, so they went to the hills.

When the war started, though, we were in blackout when we got in there. This was on Thanksgiving. (That's the 23rd, something like that, I forget the exact date.) It was two weeks before the war started and we were in blackout, and of course, everybody thought we would beat the Japanese in four months. I said, if we're lucky, if we're going to beat them, it'll be three or four years, and that's what it was. This fellow, Lieut. Mozeman (he was a lieutenant in our army, I mean, I say tank battalion, but it's battalion-surgeon) -- he said, "We'll knock them out in four months." I says "Moz" I says "If we knock 'em out in three and half years we'll be lucky." And that's what we did. I said, "We don't have anything." I said, "You were on maneuvers with us," I said, "We didn't have really anything." We didn't.

C.G.R.:

No.

A.C.P.

It's terrible to see. Then he'd talk about defense. That really burns me up. Because we didn't have the proper defense I spent almost four years in a prison camp. If it wasn't for the atom bomb, I wouldn't be here talking to you.

C.G.R.:

Tell me a bit about the last of the time in Bataan, up towards the end.

A.C.P.:

Towards the end. I'll tell you what. We had this -- we really didn't have much left to do anything with and the men were in the last seven days, that was really -- I should send you a copy of this The Last Seven Days. I wrote it up for this ex-POW thing.

C.G.R.:

I'd be grateful if you would.

A.C.P.:

It'll say about why we weren't fortified. Would you be interested to know that?

C.G.R.:

Yes, absolutely.

A.C.P.:

I'll get all the stuff and send it to you, because you'll know about it. But the last seven days, it was Good Friday, they call it Black Friday, or something like that. It was really Good Friday, but it was the birthday of the Japanese emperor (I forget what his name was), at the time, but anyway.

C.G.R.:

Hirohito, I think.

A.C.P.:

No, he was the emperor, but this was at the beginning. I forget his name now. You'll get it on this thing though. So they really pour this -- we had 60,000 men and out of these, 27,000 were only good for battle, and only fairly good, and only 6,000 really could risk battle conditions. Six thousand. The Japanese had 60,000 men; 10,000 from the homeland. This is what we had to fight against, see. Oh, I tell you, it was terrible. You just can't imagine. It was day and night, over us and under us, and the artillery! It's amazing. The men fled, retreated. There was only half ration left for the men; by the time we got on the front line if there was a fourth of a ration left it was really something. They retreated, and where could they retreat? That was the reason, there wasn't anything left. They said, "Fight to the last man." These fellows were dying on their feet. Men who weighed 200 to 175 were down to 135, 125 pounds. Many of them were wounded. Many of them -- the hospital couldn't take anymore. There was only two hospitals down there. Hospital No. 1 down in Baguio and Hospital 2 at Cabcaben -- I'll give you this thing. I've got it all down there.

C.G.R.:

Good. Good.

A.C.P.:

Of course, they finally capitulated and the 192nd, 194th dumped all the ammunition into the tanks, dumped gasoline on them, set them on fire, blew them all up. So the only ones that

they got of the tanks we had, was up where they captured this company of tanks. They're the only ones they got of them. But the tanks really did a good job. They -- at least they broke their timetable up. The Japanese were only concerned about the tanks. They weren't worried about [the infantry], they were concerned a little about the artillery, and I met an Australian (this is about 10 or 15 years ago) and he's telling me, he says "You know", he says "If it wasn't for your tank outfit, they would have taken the Philippines." He said, "You had 1,000 tanks." I said, "We only had 105, or something like that." That's what he thought. He thought we had that many too. He was a general. He attended one of the meetings. I was surprised that he'd do that. It was really something.

C.G.R.:

Well, maybe you'd tell me a bit then about becoming a prisoner.

A.C.P.:

About the March. I tell you, that was something. They took us down near Marevales. I was on the west coast and I got down there about a day or so later, and I had a couple of cans of sardines. I met a couple of B company [men] and I gave them some of these sardines. They were in pretty bad shape. I got down to Marevales. A Jap kicked us over to where we were supposed to be, and, of course, they were stealing everything they could. Taking your watch and rings and everything. I have a ring, and I put the thing on a piece of dental floss, put it on my teeth. Hide it in there so they couldn't get it. I had this blanket -

- I fixed it with mustard so it looked like defecation, so they wouldn't take the blanket. I figure survival is important.

Well anyway, I got down there and they put us down there and a guy came over to me and he saw this Red Cross, and he says (I had some sulfa and some quinine in there and some of the atabrine) and he said to me, he says, asked me in Japanese. I says "Kusuri -- that's medical doctor in Japanese, and he was surprised that anybody knew any Japanese. So he didn't take anything out of that bag, or anything, on me.

C.G.R.:

How did you happen to know Japanese?

A.C.P.:

Well, you were talking about survival. I said to a fellow, a friend of mine. We were in San Francisco. I got over there. Before this we were on maneuvers, and I got this book. It was written by an Englishman, called White Dawn. It was written by a fellow named Poindexter, an Englishman. I read it, and it told that this fellow was cashiered from the English Army, and he said wherever he went, he learned something about the fauna and flora. I read this, and I gave it to Wickard to read, and all my battalion read it, I think, because by the time I got it back it looked like -- it was almost in pieces. But they knew about survival. We got down there in San Francisco out on Angel Island, and I told Major Pettit, I said, "How would I get a Japanese grammar?" He says, "What are you going to need that for?" I said, "We're either going to get killed or we'll get captured." He said, "You're crazy!" I said, "Well, I don't know if I'm so crazy, but I'm going to do that anyway." So,

strangely, I got this thing, and it was -- Japanese is like hieroglyphics, like the Chinese have, but they also have, they add to it, they call it katakana and hiragana. Hiraganas are written. I think, the katakana, they connect with their hieroglyphics, with their kanji. So I got this thing and I got on this boat, we went over on the Hugh Scott, and there was a guy there, he looked like a Filipino to me, and he said to me, he says "What are you studying?" I says "Nippongo." I said, "You Filipino?" He said, "No. Nippon." Japanese! Here he was on this Hugh Scott, our boat -- a Jap! So he said, "I'll teach you about it every morning for three hours when there wasn't anything to do." Took us about three weeks to get over there with that load of equipment we had, and by the time I got over there I knew about 300 Japanese words, with phrases, and knew how to pronounce them. And this guy, he says "Don't learn ten letters and ten words," he says "Learn two or three," he says. "How are you?" or "what are you doing?" See, that way you can remember it. He says "I'll tell you how the counting goes, so he told me ichi, ni, san -- all the Japanese numbers.

C.G.R.:

Yes, the counting.

A.C.P.:

Yes. So I really did. I learned that stuff and I knew 300 or 400 words. I learned 10 or 15 a day, I suppose, something like that. He was really surprised. I was surprised that, being a Jap, he was on the boat. We got in the Philippines, I looked up a guy named Suga San and he was very interested in teaching

me. I gave him a couple of pesos so he'd teach me something about the Japanese. Then I kept on looking over that stuff until we surrendered. I finally got to the point where I could look at some of this kanji [or ideographs]. I could get their newspapers, read their newspapers, see how we were doing. Finally, they wouldn't put them in the camp anymore. They always would look to see who in the hell was reading them, I guess.

C.G.R.:

Okay, well please go ahead. You were just telling me about the beginning of the march.

A.C.P.:

So on the march then. So we get down near Marevales. Boy I'm telling you, they really brutalized these people. They'd search them and beat them, hit them with their guns, everything. Bat them in the face, knock them down. Some of the Americans, they thought they knew every damn thing, so they get kind of wise, and boy, they were really tamed. What really tamed them down -- they took a whole bunch of them where they were raising cane over there on one side of there and they took the whole hundred-odd or so and shot them -- machine-gunned them. After that, everything was quiet. I'll tell you one thing, they were just looking to shoot you or having a cause to shoot you. All the time.

These fellows were dry, and they had this artesian well, and so I asked him if we could get some water there. I thought he was going to knock my block off, but he didn't. He said, "isha?" And I said, "isha." That means "doctor." I asked about what

they needed, you know, water. So he let them go. I said, "Tell them to go one at a time," and that's what he did. We were there a couple of hours and they all filled what mess kits they had with water and they drank what they could and someone went back to get more. Some of these other ones, they wouldn't let them drink the water at all.

C.G.R.:

I've heard that.

A.C.P.:

Oh boy. That was really terrible. But on the march up, you see, they were trying -- strangely, the guns at Corregidor were...they could have used those guns to help us and maybe would have knocked out maybe 10 or 15,000 men with those guns on Corregidor. [But the guns of Corregidor were turned out to sea and could not fire on Bataan.] That seems terrible to me.

Well anyway, they were getting ready to go to Corregidor and this one hospital was there. Corregidor shot their artillery and it was hitting the hospital and they killed a lot of Americans in the hospital -- a lot of Filipinos were in this Hospital #2, I think. Of course, then they telephoned Manila and the Japanese in there told them they were hitting in the hospital, and then they couldn't really do any damage. But they could have done it earlier, because they knew where the hospital was.

The march up there, I was struck in the eye with a piece of a bomb fragment, and I got an intraocular hemorrhage in this left eye, and I couldn't see very well except blurred, and it was kind of cut, and I tried to cover it. I'd patch it and then I

couldn't see where in the devil I was walking too well, because then you didn't have good fusion, or good depth perception. They took their helmets -- they had these World War I helmets -- you know, these flat things....

C.G.R.:

Right. British-looking.

A.C.P.:

Yes, that's right. They're British helmets. So I had a pith helmet that I fixed up and it was too big for me so I put some of this rubber in the top of it and a piece of this aluminum there and I pressed it down so it would fit the top of my head. I had that on and they'd hit you on the head, but it didn't hurt me too much. But on the march, they tried to -- the Japs would try to poke you with their guns, or these poles, when we were marching, and most of these people were in poor shape. They'd hit them and knock them over in the ditch, and then if a guard didn't like you, he'd run a bayonet in you, or he'd shoot you.

One of these Filipinos -- a guard went down there with his gun and he pulled the Filipino -- he pulled him out of the truck, and he landed on his head. About that time another guard, he was really upset, but he did this. He's trying to find the guard that that Filipino pulled him out on his head. Of course, the Filipinos were mixed with the Americans and they didn't know who was which anyway.

Then they'd sit you down on the road and these trucks would come by with artillery or whatever they were, and they'd try to run over you, or hit you. That was the way it was. All along the road, after you got to a certain point, you'd see dead all

over, coming over. There was Japanese too. There was a lot of Japanese there. They said 10,000. I don't think there was a thousand. I figure roughly that we Americans (of course it's kind of hard to tell who was or wasn't because of the dirt and dust) I roughly figured that about 1,000, maybe 2,000 Americans died on the road, either from, well, most of them, when they started on there, they weighed 125 or 130. A lot of them were wounded; a lot of men had malaria, dysentery. That's what killed them. If they moved their bowels on the road, the Japs shot them, or bayoneted them, or hit them on the head, and they killed them.

I kept this pith helmet on my head. It really did me some good. We got in these stops that they had where you could -- rest points. These were really something. "Rest points," they called them. It was like a pig-pen. Did you ever get to see a pig-pen?

C.G.R.:

Oh, yes.

A.C.P.:

Well, it was just like a pig-pen. It rained a little bit and water was in there, and the latrines were full of maggots. In the morning some of the fellows who would go to use it, would fall in and die in the latrine. Pull them out and they had them alongside the road. In every one of these places, these rest places, there was usually about 15 or 20 Americans that died or about 30 or 40 Filipinos you'd see die. Pull 'em over. We got in this one place that this Jap, there was water there and so I

told him in Japanese that I'd like to get some water. Chap said to me...and he hit me on the top of my head with that gun. Of course, I had that helmet on. It didn't hurt -- it wasn't too bad. Sort of jarred me a little bit, but it was -- the rubber and the tin foil on top bent a little bit, and after a while he came back and he told me, "Line up to get your water." So I told these guys, I said, "Don't try to rush it." I said, "He'll shoot you." He was crazy as a -- I guess he was, I don't know. So they got water in there and they went in an orderly manner, because everything had to be orderly. When I got through, this one sergeant, he came up to me and he said, "Doc?" Or he says "Captain?" He says, "You've got a hard head," he says. "Ask him if we can get some rice." So there was this Jap guard, and I told him. I thanked him for that water, and I said, I told him he was a very good soldier, in Japanese. I said, "How about Kufuku?" That's food, you know. He looked at me and he sort of smiled, and he brought us three or four tubs of rice. We had a lot of rice on this thing. I mean at that one place. After he did that I thanked him, and I called him friend. That's tomodachi in Japanese. He just grinned all over. I thought well...

That morning that I got this, everything looked like a pig-pen, and where the fence went together, there was a board there and I put it across the barbed-wire fence so I could sit down. I had a piece of some chipped beef, and the damn thing was full of ants. There was a couple of guys there, so we knocked the ants off, and we ate the chipped beef, and I'd sit in there, and I slept there until the next morning. The Jap, he gave me two

packs of cigarettes. I don't smoke. So I gave them to the fellows. They were really pleased with them.

We got, I guess it was about the second or third day of the march, or maybe it was the fourth (I have to read the book again) and the fellows were really bad. I think it was the fourth day of the march, and these fellows were really bad. I had morphine and I had about a hundred of these morphine-10, in a little bottle, and I didn't have anything much else to give them. I gave them that morphine, I think a quarter grain. It really pepped them up. I had some cocaine there that was used for the dentists. I gave all the cocaine I had on hand, and all the morphine, and all of them around me, I gave them this -- I had two bottles of 1,000 each, of the sulfa, American sulfa I had. I had 1,000 of this Atabrine and I gave practically the whole -- I gave them all one, apiece. They'd take it. When I got into camp I had, I think, about 1,000 of the Atabrine -- or about 100 of the Atabrine left and I turned that in to the people in camp, and also about 500 of the sulfa.

I was down there on one morning and I was giving this stuff out to one of the soldiers -- who was there, and -- you know how you feel like something's looking at you? Well, I looked up and sure enough a Jap was at bayonet point, like this. I thought, "Boy, I've got to get a gun." I think it threw me. So I said, "Isha." He looked up. He was surprised to hear Japanese -- somebody who knew Japanese. I told him "Kusuri isha." That means medical doctor. "Oh," he says, "Joto, Joto." He didn't know any English at all when he told me that.

Then I was saying to these fellows, and I think about the fifth day of the march, some Filipinos, they were brave. These Filipinos, our Filipinos, they were our really true allies. They really were. This woman, a woman who was giving stuff, and two of these boys -- they were about 17, 18 -- they gave us some rice. This lieutenant and I. They gave him one of these bananas, these fronds. The Japanese guard come over and got him, and he got me, and he got this lieutenant. I still had the damn rice in my hand. I was eating it while we were going down there. I said, "Boy, we're going to get it this time for something. I know." I had this Red Cross on my arm.

You see what they'd do to these Filipinos, these poor things. They took some -- tied them up, hands behind their back, knelt down. They cut their heads off. I'd never seen that before. I'm telling you, they jumped around like chickens; have you ever seen a chicken with its head cut off? Well that's just they way they were. They kept spasm-like. I never saw -- and then the second time I saw was when we were in camp. They cut these guerrillas' heads off. A guy got a new sword and he was showing me how he did it. Boy!

Anyway, then I got up to a place, we were about one day off from San Fernando, and this was about 56 [miles], it depended on where you were caught, if you were caught in Marevales, well, there was about 56 or 60 miles. If you were caught by Bagac, it was about 100 miles. If you went all the way up to O'Donnell, it was about 120 or 130 miles. It depended where you were caught and if caught early -- you made the whole march, if caught early. So we got there in about four days; about a day before we got in

San Fernando I met some sergeant. He was telling me about, they caught part of this 91st Philippine division that gave the Japs a little trouble, so they picked all the officers out and noncommissioned officers, and tied their hands behind their back, and cut their heads off. Bayoneted them. Went down the line, and murdered the whole bunch. They knew that this one Japanese, I forget his name, that he is in that group, he came back and told them what to do. But they didn't say anything when we got in camp. This Japanese commandant there, he told us that we were captives and we were prisoners-of-war and to get all our ornaments off like our major's signs, or whatever it was, and everything that....

C.G.R.:

Insignia?

A.C.P.:

...insignia of any kind, off. He told us this in Japanese, and I could get most of it, and then he had an interpreter. Boy, I'm telling you what, that guy really got my goat! He was really nasty. He was frothing at the mouth when he got through.

C.G.R.:

This the interpreter or the officer?

A.C.P.:

The commandant. Yes. When they got in camp, the guys thought they were going to get a ride -- when we got to San Fernando, this is what they did. They put us on this train. Then they closed it. These boxcars weren't very big, and they put about 100 in one of these things. You had to stand up. They

took us up to San Fernando, to Capas. That was about five miles from Camp O'Donnell. Anybody with any Japanese money or flags, or any of these things that they captured, were immediately shot. Nelson, a friend of mine, Major Nelson. He had a Japanese flag, and he went into the combat zone. They gave it to him; they took him out and shot him.

Then this Tsuneyoshi, that was his name, this Jap. I thought, well, this would be a little nicer place. The train got into Capas from San Fernando and we had to march up from Capas to Camp O'Donnell. When we got in there they searched us again. I couldn't -- I reached -- I'll have to digress here.

We got in a water hole down there in a dam in Lugao, and these mussette bags, they hold water. So it was dusk, or just dawn, and I took my mussette bag down there. I looked, and we didn't see these Jap guards, so I went to this artesian well and filled it up and filled our canteens. I had a canteen. I took it up and then I went back with another can. It was of the enlisted men's mussette bags. I filled that up with water and this little Jap guard came at me. He was, I guess, a two-star private or whatever it was. You could just barely see anything, just ahead of us. It was just beginning dawn. Then he hit Russell, the sergeant, he hit him and knocked him down. He came over and hit me and I didn't see anybody around, so I hauled off and hit that son of a bitch in the god-damned mouth and broke his jaw, and picked him up and I really knocked him out. So with Russell, we went up and picked him up and we threw him in this bamboo thicket. I came back and picked up this thing, and Russell took his gun and shoved it in his chest. That's how we

liked them.

Then I got up there, and everybody was asking where we were. They said, "What happened to that guard?" I said, "I don't know where that guard went."

Then, when I got to O'Donnell, I reached in this, we passed that mussette bag all around and they drank the water. When they were searching us I reached in and here was three .45-caliber bullets. Anybody with any ammunition, they shot. I said, "My God, what am I going to do with this?" Sort of hid them in my hands. A guard was over there watching everything, so I told him, I said "benjo". That's "go to the can," I told him in Japanese. He said, "Okay. Go over there." He goes over there and I urinated, and I told him I had some stones in my shoe. Takusanishi is stones in Japanese. I took my shoes off and emptied them out, and emptied that bullet in that kogan grass. That's one thing, every once in a while, I dream about that darned thing. Oh yeah, I dream they're looking at me, and, "Oh yes, they were stones!" I was dreaming once and my wife said, "What did you holler?" I said, "I was dreaming about emptying my shoes out, where there's stones." Oh boy!

Then you'd get down there and that wasn't much better than anything we'd been in. They were just remodeling this place, and what a dump! They didn't have enough water, and they tried to fix the water. It would go out. Finally they got the Americans and they fixed the water supply, but there was these long lines continually, trying to get water, and then they fixed another couple of pumps. The food was terrible, the flies were bad, and

in this camp about 30- or 35,000 Filipinos died in about three or four months. The peak death rate of the Philippines was 700. I don't know whether John's got this. He just had the Americans. I think we lost almost between -- almost 2,000 Americans there.

I'll tell you, we didn't have any medicine, really. The Philippine Red Cross, the Philippine Women's Federation, were at the gates with food and drugs, but the Japanese wouldn't let them in. They probably wanted to starve us. That's what they were. Of course the Filipinos, a lot of them were in this army, and they had really no idea about sanitation. There was defecation all over the grounds. Of course, we tried to keep that [under control] too, as much as we could. Our peak low was 75 a day, and when they broke up the camp there was 350 of us --

C.G.R.:

Excuse me. Peak low of what? You said your "peak low".

A.C.P.:

When they were breaking up the camp there was 350 left. They were in such bad conditions, they didn't want to take them. They were laying there almost dying. So they picked out ten of us. Me --

[End of side 1.]

...was one of these tank outfits. Anyway, I was telling the fellows, "Boy," I says "I heard what they did to these people in Nanking. They'd pick them out and then they'd shoot the whole bunch." So I thought, "Boy, I guess we'll get it this time." Strangely enough, they had taken Corregidor, and they were in a good mood. So this Colonel Ito, they got this other Tsuneyoshi, whatever his name was, Tsuneyoshi, they left to get rid of him.

They said this Colonel Ito was a fair sort of a man. Now he really was. I think Ito probably saved some lives. He tried to do what he could. And they brought this other, this medical officer from Bataan, who was in Baguio, that's the No. 1 Hospital, and they came in there and they were taking care of the Filipinos. They had so many Filipinos, but they wanted to put a good front up for the Philippine government. See, Marcos was in this camp with us. I knew him.

C.G.R.:

Really?

A.C.P.:

Yes. Ferdinand was in with a guy named Magasaysay, and he was one of the presidents of the Philippines, and so was Ferdinand later on. He just got kicked out. Anyway, I said to him, "Boy, I don't think we're going to last long here." Well, they doubled the rice. They doubled the rice, and this Ito, I went up there, and tell him, I said, "I think we need some more meat." I said, "Everybody's in real bad condition." So they gave us a carabao. They gave us a carabao, which was pretty good too.

The Filipinos were dying like flies and the Americans -- there were people where they went down that 31st one -- the Air Corps had a -- I think when they were leaving, there must have been about 40 or 50 bodies that were dead. Just left them down there and we picked them up. But 75, I think, was our peak load.

I went out on a detail. You could go out to get these guava leaves, that you could...incidentally, I've read this book Fauna

and Flora of the Philippines, so I get over there and I figured what you could eat. This kogon grass had [vitamin] B in it. This ali bang bang had vitamin C in it, and I didn't lose a tooth. I didn't get scurvy. They rest of them got scurvy. I'd tell them about this -- they wouldn't do it. I told them there was a lot of other things, there's guava leaves, which would clear some of these mild diarrheas, but it'd give you a little more water into these people too. I went on this detail and we had a surly guard there. He was really sort of nasty. I told him "tomodachi". That means friend. I don't know whether he wanted to be friendly or not. [laughter] Anyway, he sort of smiled and I talked to him in Japanese that I knew. He didn't know any English. There was some druggist that came in there with quinine and so forth, and I told him we could use that in camp, and he got some Atabrine and quinine and charcoal and some other junk that they had. Wasn't much use, but the Atabrine and the sulfa was good. I brought that back in camp and another woman gave me two dozen of eggs. I ate a couple. They were boiled. One of them had a chicken and it was baloot. Did you ever hear of baloot?

C.G.R.:

No.

A.C.P.:

They hatch these eggs to about ten days or something like that. Or I mean 21 days. They hatch for about ten days and then they eat 'em. Baloot: chicken with an egg. Or chicken in an egg. I didn't like that too much, but I was eating. So I brought about a dozen back to the camp. I ate some and gave them

to some of the other ones there, and some bought some potatoes. I brought them in. By God, I went out this once and I thought I could do pretty good out there with this, because I could understand a little Japanese. They wouldn't let me go out. They said, once was enough for me. And here I'd brought in all that stuff, and I said, "Yes, well, maybe I could get some more stuff." But they wouldn't let me go out.

I gave old Ernie Miller, I gave him two eggs. He wouldn't eat the rice. I said, "Eat your rice Colonel." I says "You're going to kick the bucket." I said, "The ones that survive got to eat." Well, then he ate these two eggs, and I gave Mr. Wickard one and I gave the general a couple, and some of these other guys that looked like they were about half dead, till I'd used them all up.

Then I went out on a detail. A 30-man detail. Nobody could speak English on that -- Japs. I went out there and the Japanese, he hollered at us in Japanese. Of course, these guys didn't know what he was talking about. So he hit them all in the head. Went like this, and hit them all in the head. So he came over to me. I said -- he told us yasume -- that means rest. I told him, I says, "Sit down. When he says yasume" I said, "that means rest." The Jap, he was so surprised, he was a sergeant. He was surprised that somebody knew Japanese. I told them.

Then we went out there and God, they didn't have a place to cook. They had an old wheelbarrow, one of these steel wheelbarrows, fill it with rice and dump water in it. We ate out

of that damn thing. I'll tell you one thing, that was terrible too. It was about half cooked, but I ate it. And they had some pigs. So I'd have to slop the pigs. I was a doctor, and so I had to slop. They had a lot of slop. They'd get the pigs -- there was about 40 or 50 Japs in this place -- and I could have gone into the hills too, but I was with these men. See, we were divided into groups of ten. One guy got away, they'd shoot the other ten. So I went out there and, geez, it was -- went out there to dump that slop for that pig, and that guard I had, he was sitting there. He wasn't looking at me, he was staring the other way. He went to sleep. So there's this pig, and I says, "Gee, we haven't had any meat." So there was one of these round boulders, and I hit that pig between the eyes. That pig, his eyes turned, made him cross-eyed. I hit him a couple of times. He staggered around there. So I call this Jap. I said, "This pig is (in Japanese) takusan byoki" (that means very sick). He comes down, and he goes up. He runs up, and gets the commandant. In the meantime, I corked that pig a couple of more times!

So the Jap commandant comes down and the pig was walking around there and laying down, and I said, "Probably dysentery." I don't know what. Well, he said, "Have your kitchen come down here right away and kill that pig," he said, "you can have the meat." But I always think that guard kind of thought that I did it, and I thought, well, I said, I told the men that that was from the Empress, Hirohito's wife. I told them, I says, I told the old commandant, I said in Japanese, I said, "The emperor, he'll be pleased to know that we really like this." God damn. What a bunch of bologna. But they thought that was us pretty

good, and then we got a couple of goats we ate. Then we were there about three weeks and finally they broke us up. What they were doing was fixing up these things on the road. Where the water ran under the road.

C.G.R.:

Culverts?

A.C.P.:

Culverts. Yes.

Then they had a lot of quinine -- Japanese quinine -- and they had some Japanese Atabrine, and sulfa. So I said to this Jap sergeant, "Hey," I said, "We don't have much in the camp." I says "How about putting some...." He put some in a little box. I said, "Big box!" "Okay, very big." And he put a whole bunch in there. I said, "Write letter that this is presento." I knew enough of Japanese kanji anyway, and so he wrote it down and he wrote mostly in hiragana, which I could understand a little better. He wrote that darn stuff, and I thanked him, I told him what a good heitai (that means soldier) he was. So we got in the camp, and I gave that guard at the gate -- where this group came in, they surrounded us. They were going to search us again, and I gave him that note and they said, "Go in." They said, "Welcome back home," I guess. I don't know. Maybe it was this presento from this good work we did out there.

C.G.R.:

I wonder if I could ask you to jump ahead now? I'd like to hear whatever you can tell me about Shirakawa.

A.C.P.:

Shirakawa. Yes.

C.G.R.:

How you came to be there and what went on there.

A.C.P.:

Well, at Shirakawa, when the....

C.G.R.:

When did you go there, first, approximately?

A.C.P.:

They were shipping everybody to Japan they could. At the time when these fellows, when they're early, they could go there, because Japan controlled the seas. The China Sea and the Yellow Sea and all that. They controlled it. When we went there, this is October 1st, that's when we went. 1,800 of us. We went on this boat.

C.G.R.:

Of 194--

A.C.P.:

1944.

C.G.R.:

1944. Okay.

A.C.P.:

They took us to this, we went on this boat and it wasn't a very big boat. They put 900 in one hold, 900 in another hold. The first day out on that boat, when there was about 800, six or seven smothered to death in this hold, and then every day we'd lose about ten. We went over to Hong Kong. We got over there on the 16th and Americans came over with some B29s. I thought they -- B17s. And this guy told me B ni zyu kyu, that means B29 in

Japanese. Then the Mustangs came over. They strafed it. They sank about everything in the harbor of Hong Kong. They got a ship right next door, but they didn't hit us.

Then we went out in a seven-ship convoy back to Taiwan. Formosa. We got out there pretty far, and they sunk seven of this convoy we were in and we were by ourselves. They pinged us, but they didn't sink us. We were out there a couple of days in the China Sea, and we picked up eight -- four of these of another boat that went out on the 11th. It was sunk and they only had eight survivors in that boat. The whole thing went down. Those that tried to get on -- it was a Japanese destroyer -- and some of them tried to get on that boat, and when they get up to the boat, they'd take a pole and shove their head under the water. Shove this pike in there and shove them under the water and drown them. Wasn't that something? They didn't care.

Well anyway, we got out there and then we got into -- I was on that thing 39 days. Mostly in the hold for 39 days, but we had a couple of good guards there that let the air in. If it got to rough they would put the top on it. Like they did on these trains going up from San Fernando to Capas. Steel boxcar and close the lid.

Anyway, we got into Shirakawa, and the Chinese, they knew that we were prosecuting the war, some of the Chinese there. They were trying to -- they'd run after these people. A lot of these English soldiers had false teeth. They'd get real close to them and try to pull their false teeth out -- what the hell they were going to do with it? I guess they could use them. Because

some had gold in them. Gold in their false teeth.

Shirakawa, the camp, was a lot cleaner than the one we were in. But still they were beating the people, and the officers had been there -- the general officers -- had been in Shirakawa and Haito, and some of these other places in Japan. This was along with -- in October, when we left, we got into -- November 9th we got in there -- and this one boat that went out in December, they got in there and they bombed them in Takao and they sunk their boat there in Takao. They were sunk in Subic Bay, and then they loaded them on another, and by the time the 1,600 left Manila, only 150 got in Japan. In our boat, we had 200 in the forward hold, that died -- 200 to 300. In the back hold, I think we had an equal amount too. The thing is, by the time we got there, the feces and the urine and the stuff was about a half a foot deep. Imagine that.

C.G.R.:

Not very good conditions.

A.C.P.:

Well, I don't know -- I didn't like it.

Then it was getting near the end of the war, and they weren't any better, but they were starving us. We didn't have anything. There were a couple of Christmases that I had that I think were terrible and that was one of them. We had English, Dutch, Canadians, and they all looked like they were on their last lap. I think that most of them, the most they weighed was 110 pounds. The English, they were catching these rats and eating them. I'd go out on a detail sometimes with these guys. This one Debuck, he was a Dutchman, he and another guy, Lafleet

was his name, they were catching -- they'd take a thread -- needle and thread, they'd catch these grasshoppers and thread them on this thing and then take them back in camp and eat them. I don't like these grasshoppers. Did you ever eat a grasshopper?

C.G.R.:

No, I never have. They'd be crunchy, I imagine.

A.C.P.:

Well, they put them in this hot water and dunk them down, and ate them.

C.G.R.:

How big a camp was Shirakawa? Roughly.

A.C.P.:

Shirakawa. Well, it wasn't very big. The Americans strafed it. I guess it covered about two acres at the most. I don't know -- were you ever in combat?

C.G.R.:

No.

A.C.P.:

Well, the Americans came over and they strafed this camp. We asked Hyoki, he was camp commandant, we says "How about putting up a Red Cross?" He said, "The Americans would strafe it anyway." They would. He says "Better not to." He was born in 'Frisco and he came in to see his mother, and they conscripted him in the Japanese Army. They never trusted him, and he told us that. When Roosevelt died, he came down there and he told us Roosevelt died, and, of course, the Americans, they hated Roosevelt. Of God, they called him everything they could think

of. SOB and whatever. That was really terrible.

C.G.R.:

The Americans hated him?

A.C.P.:

Oh hell, yes! They figured they were sacrificed over there. They knew that that thing could have been fortified. They knew it in '37. When you read this thing that I send you, you'll -- they knew that and MacArthur knew that, it was generally known; they knew they were sacrificed. And they knew that they could send good ammunition -- if they could send it over to France and those places, they could have sent it to us. They knew that. These grenades wouldn't go off. There were more. We picked up a Japanese grammar and it said they were more afraid of getting hit by a grenade than they were if the thing exploded. These 155s, half of them wouldn't go off. Can you imagine that? Some of the artillery that they sent wouldn't go off.

Well, anyway, that was the way they felt about it. Boy, they really, except Donovan, Captain Donovan, he said to me -- he was a medical officer -- he says, "Well," he says, "Really, the fellow is worth ten of any of us." I said, "Might have been worth ten of you, but he wasn't worth ten of me."

C.G.R.:

In Shirakawa, were you working as a medical officer?

A.C.P.:

Yes, I was a medical officer, but I had to work out on the fields and everything else. I'd go out there and they'd make you work anyway.

But this dinner -- Graysbrook, that was the fellow. He had

the diarrhea and they went to put him on the boat, and I said, I didn't think he could land. He was in such poor shape. If you ever go to England, look him up. He's really nice. He's a minister. He could play this accordion. He played the accordion, and they gave us an extra ball of rice for Christmas, those generous jerks. I never saw such a sad bunch of people. Boy it was terrible; you see, the war was over in April, but we were still -- boy it was terrible. The food was terrible. They could get it in if they really wanted to, but they really didn't want to.

Then we heard that some of these fellows that come back from other camps. They worked in the copper mines up there. Some were in the coal mines. These guys couldn't work. They were starved to death and they beat them to death, if they couldn't work.

Finally the capitulation. Hyoki came down and he had a talk to the men and he said we were in poor conditions, but it wasn't through any of his fault. He gave a really good talk. I always thought he was fair. Even the rats were sick. I thought they had this [Pasteurella] pestis, and I told this Japanese sergeant. I said "These rats must have plague." I said "They look sick." They gave us all shots for that.

C.G.R.:

Is that right?

A.C.P.:

Yes. They gave the Japanese shots, and they gave us shots. He gave me a box of sardines, and he weighed me. I weighed I

think 130 pounds, or 112. I don't know. There wasn't much difference. But I was over there. There was a Canadian over there and I had these notebooks which the Japanese marked on there. I was out on this camp on this detail, and they were starting to ask me what I was doing with these things? I said I was keeping notes for the men that died and so forth. And I said, put your what-do-you-call on them. And that's what he did. I kept those all during the war, and that's what I wrote that book on. That was really something.

Capitulation. When they -- boy they were really angry with the Americans, the line officers were. Not so much with the medical officers; they were with the line. Then I remember I had a fellow that had appendicitis and he was one of the Japanese sergeants, and I told him about him and I said, "Do you want me to take his appendix out? I did one while going on over in the boat. I took an appendix out on the boat." He said, "No," he said he'd get one of their surgeons to do the operation. And they did. They did a very good job on it.

C.G.R.:

The Japanese surgeons.

Tell me about doing the appendix on the boat. That must have been an experience.

A.C.P.:

Well, this is a funny thing. This is on the Hugh Scott, and we were about three, a couple of days before we got into Pearl Harbor. This guy, one of our battalion, got sick. No it wasn't one of our battalion. It was one of the conscripts that they had on the boat that were taken over, you know, to replace. He got

sick. He was in our group and Wickard told me, he said, "Go over and see what's wrong with that man over there." I went over and I said, "I think he's got appendicitis." So I told this Jewish officer on there who was a doctor, and I told him, I said, "That fellow's got, I think he'd got appendicitis." And he said, "Well, if there's any operating on this boat," he said, "I'll do it." "Okay. Don't make any difference to me. I don't give a darn." So he went over and he said, "I don't think he'd got appendicitis." I said, "What do you think he'd got?" He said, "Well, it's probably an upset stomach." I said, "Okay." Pretty soon Colonel Wickard came over. He said, "Hey Doc!" he said, "Do you see that fellow?" I said, "Yes, I saw him. The ship's surgeon said he just had a stomach ache." He said, "Hey, he's got more than that." So I called this fellow over, this surgeon over. I said, "Hey." I said, "He'd got appendicitis." You know, he'd never done one. I didn't want to make an ass out of him, so we had a couple of nurses on the boat and Mosman, our doctor, we propped him up and he gave the anesthetic, ether, drop ether. And this fellow, he'd never given one. I think he saw a couple of pictures. I said, "Go ahead," and I thought "I bet he don't know how to do this." So I tried, like this, making fun of the nurses. "Let's go down here and do a rectus incision." They split the incision and I said, "Go down to the peritoneum." Fortunately, his appendix, which was gangrenous, popped up. He didn't even know what to do, so I put some stuff around, I turned the thing, cut it off, and turned that thing in. Inverted it, you see, and I put some stitches over the top. I wonder what

happened to that fellow. [laughter] That nurse, she said to me, "Do you think he knew?" I said, "Sure he knew all about it." I said, "He would know all about that." I said, "I was just helping him." I says, "He was letting me help him." He didn't know that. I'll tell you one thing, it was really something. The boat going over. I learned my Japanese on that boat.

C.G.R.:

Any particular, especially medical things, any particular cases that come to mind? While you were a prisoner, I mean?

A.C.P.:

The biggest trouble we had was trying to get food. The proper amount of food. A growing man needed about 50 to 75 grams of protein a day, because if he didn't have that, then he used up the protein in his body. That was the trouble. These people used the protein in their muscles -- see, even the carbohydrates, the glucose that you took in your system, the brain needed two-thirds of it to function right. If it didn't function right, you'd lose a lot of your memory, and that was the biggest trouble. I don't think we got 40 or 50 grams of protein a day in the whole time that we were there, except maybe special occasions. We were always trying to get more food. I always look back at this thing. All the men talked about was food. Nothing else. Or when they would get back. That was the whole thing. The whole situation. Any discipline action they really tried to kill you. Use the [inaudible] to get rid of you.

C.G.R.:

What about sex? Was there any?

A.C.P.:

Well, I was going to say. I never heard anything about sex or homos, or, what the hell they call them, AIDS? -- any of those things, over there. The only thing they talked about was food.

This guy said, "Did they have shows over there?" I said, "No they didn't have any shows at all." But at one place right after they had the Victory, I participated in a show, for them. They had "Down with the United States." That was really something! They showed us running, with an American flag, and the Japanese after us. I haven't learned whether they ever showed that thing. I would have liked to have seen how I looked.

C.G.R.:

What was this, a movie they made?

A.C.P.:

Yes, a movie they made.

C.G.R.:

Oh really.

A.C.P.:

Yes.

C.G.R.:

Where? Where were you?

A.C.P.:

We were at, we were up at Takao at that time, when they made this movie. I remember they gave us each two packs of cigarettes and some bologna sausages we had, and I don't smoke so I traded mine in for some rice, whatever they had. I was particularly interested in my own food. At one time we were out on this detail, and we caught one of these, like a salamander or a...they

look like a....

C.G.R.:

Lizard?

A.C.P.:

Lizard. It was about this. Weighed 24 pounds. They're like chicken if you eat them. I caught that there thing. I hit it with a spade. I was out there. We were digging in these ant hills, these termite hills. Sometimes they make a nest, I guess, in these termite hills, these salamanders or whatever they call it. Iguanas. That's what they call them.

C.G.R.:

Iguanas. Yes.

A.C.P.:

I got this and boy, they put that in the soup in little pieces, so you'd get a little piece. All the time, every time, when I'd go out, I'd try to get something to eat. We had a fellow named "Air Raid." He'd beat these people unmerciful. So I got there. We were planting, picking this telelum. I was working in the field as a doctor. You'd have to pick it a certain size.

C.G.R.:

What was it you were picking?

A.C.P.:

Telelum.

C.G.R.:

Telelum? Don't know it.

A.C.P.:

Yes. T-e-l-e-l-u-m. It's a sort of a green. So I picked

this telelum, and if you didn't pick it the right size this "Air Raid," he came over so I asked him how long to pick it, and I had a piece of stick. I put the stick, maybe like this, show me how long to pick it. So I'd keep that stick. I'd pick it any damn way I wanted to. When he came up, I'd show him that stick. He'd say "joto. So one day we were out there picking that darn stuff. No, we were digging those camotes. I was picking sweet potatoes up, and he asked me, he says "wifu" (that means "wife" -- they were trying to say English), so I says (kodomo? means wife) I says "nie kodomo," that means too wise. "Kusuri" One black and one white. I told him I had two wives, one was black and one was white. And I says, I told him how many kids -- I had 22 children. "Oh, oh, oh." He says, "joko." Joke. Every time he'd see me, he says "nie kodomo."

C.G.R.:

One of the things I'm interested in is the kinds of people who survived and the kinds of people who didn't survive. Do you know?

A.C.P.:

You mean why they didn't survive?

C.G.R.:

Yes. Can you put your finger on it?

A.C.P.:

Yes. I think people just got to the point they didn't care. Like we were on a boat. They hoped somebody would sink it. They didn't care. They got to the point where it was probably better to die than to live. I think that was -- in an interview last

September down at Fort Knox, something similar -- on survival. This general, he was asking me about -- they knew all about this platoon. I don't know who in the heck told them about that, where we wiped them out, and he told me, he says, this General, he was asking me questions, he said, "Why did you do that?" I said, "Well," I said, "Do you know, that came across, it flashed through my mind, whether I wanted to survive or wanted to get killed. It was only the first day of the war." I said, "What would you have done?" He said, "Probably I'd have done what you did." See?

C.G.R.:

Maybe you'd just tell that story again, because you told it when we were at dinner, and not on the tape, about the platoon.

A.C.P.:

Well, we were retreating and the day before I told the general, I said, "Are we going to retreat tomorrow?" General Weaver. He said, "No." He said, "Listen, doctor, that's not a retreat," he said, "That's a strategic withdrawal." I said, "Well, it looks like a retreat to me." He says, "No, that's what it is. A strategic withdrawal."

So every day we had this radio and they'd tell us where we were wanted. I'd go from -- we were spread out over a hundred miles. We had to go to -- we had two of these aid men (not these aid men that we have here; these were first-aid men -- medical men) and they were spread out and that's how the Japs told we had so many tanks, but we didn't have an infantry to back us. You see, you had to have infantry, or your tanks are at the mercy of your infantry.

So. They told us to park down there. It was about four miles down and Wickard told us where to park. He was on the ball, Wickard was. I liked him. He was a real fellow. He died. He had a heart attack. I think he had "beriberi heart," from the famine that we suffered.

So anyway, we had to go down there and we came into this place and we dug this ravine there to put the trucks in so they wouldn't get hit by the artillery fire. We just got through digging our things out and it was kind of just getting dusk and I looked down. I thought I saw a movement down there in the creek. There was a little creek that went through there. I said, it must be Filipinos, and I looked and they had vines in their hair and branches. I said to Massey, Sergeant Massey, (we had a Sergeant Massey, a Private Massey, and a fellow named Reynolds). I said, "Sergeant," I says, "Those are Japs." He said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "What the hell can we do?" I says, "We're either going to get killed or we're going to get captured." I said, "I don't want to get either one." You see, if we'd have given up our weapons, we wouldn't have been able to take care of those jerks.

So I said, "I'll take the first one, You, Reynolds take the second one, Massey the third one, you take a fourth one. You take the first one" and so on. He said, "That's okay with me." You know, we knocked them out before they even knew what the hell happened. We got that damn ambulance out and we got the truck out and the jeep out and we went down and rode about five miles, and then pretty soon we dug in down there. That's a lot of

work. The ground was dry.

Wickard came down and he said, "Where in the hell you fellows been?" He said, "Where were you up there?" He says "There's a whole bunch of Japs dead up there. There's eight of them." I told him just what I got through telling you. I said, "I didn't think we wanted to get killed or get captured." He said, "Well I'm going to tell you, I don't want you to mention this to anybody." He was really upset about it. He says "If the newspaper gets out that a medical detachment wiped out a platoon," he says, "That'll be bad for the medics." So I never said a damn word. I never said anything.

Private Massey was killed later on. Sergeant Massey, he was killed. And Reynolds, I don't know what ever happened. Maybe he was killed too. I don't know what happened to him. I was the only one left. I said to Wickard, but you know, somehow it got out. I think Wickard told them. After the war. Because when I went up there. I didn't tell him. I said, "Who told you?" They said, "Oh, somebody told us." See, he knew about Wickard, I think, because he was from Maywood. Maybe he told him about it. But he told us, "If that gets out and the Japs find out in the newspaper, they'll kill every hospital and everything else." And they would have.

C.G.R.:

How has all this affected you? Has it affected you?

A.C.P.:

What do you mean?

C.G.R.:

Well, do you have nightmares about this sort of thing?

A.C.P.:

The only thing I ever had a nightmare about was about that bullet.

INDEX

added to his POW folder

Why Were The Philippine Islands Not Fortified?

By Alvin C. Poweleit, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Alvin C. Poweleit, M.D., F.A.C.S.—Medical Advisor to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He was with the Provisional Tank Group until the surrender to the Japanese, April, 1941.

A member of DAV Officers of World Wars and Medical Advisor to American Ex-Prisoners of War National Medical Research Committee, he was the first medical officer decorated in the Armored Forces in WWII.

Poweleit has authored medical papers and four books such as "United States Army Forces in the Far East" "Kentucky's Fighting 192nd Light GHO Tank Battalion" and many more too numberous to mention.

★

This question was asked many times by the prisoners of war from Bataan and Corregidor. Many of the American generals who had been stationed in the Philippines before World War II knew the answer as did our Filipino allies.

The League of Nations was designed to reduce armaments yet its efforts were being crippled by the non-membership of the United States.

In December, 1920, the month after President Harding's election, Senator Borah introduced a resolution in the Senate designed to bring about a Tri-Power Disarmament Conference.

Borah's proposal was approved by mid 1921 unanimously in the Senate with only four dissenting votes in the House.

Secretary Hughes next sent informal inquiries as to the desirability of a Washington Conference on arms limitation to London, Paris, Rome, and Tokyo.

In line with British suggestions, he later broadened this invitation of July 8, 1921 to embrace not only arms but problems of the Pacific and the Far East.

Four smaller powers were thus included; Belgium, China, Portgual, and The Netherlands.

Japan was the only one of the powers to delay its response to Hughes initial inquiry because it

See Philippines, Pg. 15

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might have effected their recent grabs in the Far East.

1. After Tokyo had carefully qualified its delayed acceptance, Secretary Hughes issued formal invitations to the eight select powers, on August 11, 1921.

2. This conference—the most important of its kind yet to assemble—should be meeting in a capitol of the New World.

When the delegates first assembled in beautiful memorial Continental Hall, on November 12, 1921, the dynamic Secretary Hughes bowled them over.

In an astonishingly candid speech he declared that the way to disarm was to disarm, and that the time to begin was at once-not in the distant future.

He thereupon proposed a ten-year holiday in the construction of capital ships-that is, battle ships and battle cruisers.

In addition, he would scrap other warships built and building, so that the navies of the three great naval powers, America, Britain and Japan would ultimately be left in the ratio of 5-5-3 in all categories.

3. The great powers called upon to junk ships were faced with different problems. The United States had potentially the most powerful navy.

Having also the longest purse, it could continue the armament race to a point that would bankrupt war-burdened Britian and over-populated Japan.

4. The Japanese were far less tractable, for Secretary Hughes was asking them to accept the small end of the 5-5-3 ratio.

Ever sensitive to slights, they insisted that the proportions proposed fell short of their defense requirements.

The ration of 10-10-7 would have been far more acceptable.

5. After protracted discussions, Tokyo consented to the Hughes ration, with a minor modification, on December 15, 1921.

But Japan insisted on important safeguards.

America agreed not to fortify further her Pacific Islands (except Hawaii), particularly the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, and the Aleutians.

Without adequate bases on these outposts, the United States, even with the 5-3 ratio, could not expect to attack Japan successfully in her home waters.

The British also agreed not to erect further fortifications on important island outposts, including Hong Kong.

6. As far as naval limitation was concerned, the nonfortification agreement was the crucial compromise.

Japan accepted a smaller naval ratio, but obtained greater security.

Britain and America consented to leave certain of their insular possessions inadequately protected, but regained greater tonnage in capital ships.

7. The Five-Power Naval Treaty of Washington, signed February 6, 1922, was to remain effective until 1936.

In 1934, Manuel Quezon, a favorite for the Presidency of the Philippines, arrived in Washington to discuss the formation of a military mission to shield the islands.

At that time, Quezon asked MacArthur if the Philippines could be defended. MacArthur told him the Philippine Islands could take care of themselves with proper equipment, air, navy, and land forces.

In 1935, MacArthur became military adviser to Manuel Quezon. Military defense of the island was discussed again and again with only feeble progress.

One of his plans for 1937 for defense of the island was to acquire a fleet of fifty sixty-five foot PT boats, each boat carrying a torpedo.

However, on December 7, 1941, he had six American PTs and three English "Q" boats, (other PTs that were marked for the Pacific were sent to England as a part of the land-lease program).

While Quezon was soliciting for early Philippine freedom, MacArthur was shopping for munition.

MacArthur's request for equipment went unheeded by the war department.

In July, 1941, Douglas MacArthur was made a four-star general in charge of United States Military in the Far East.

All during his time as military adviser, he tried to get modern equipment for the Filipino army.

In September, 1939 he asked for additional weapons and munition but was turned down.

As late as July, 1940 MacArthur asked Washington to allot him $50 annually for each Filipino draftee and was turned down.

Later, despite an appeal from Mike Elizalde, The Philippine Resident Commissioner in Washington, Congress even refused to include the Philippines in the land-lease program.

London was considered more valuable than Manila.

In 1940, Major General George Grunert advised General Marshall to send more American troops and a really strong air force and a strong submarine force, both based in the Philippines.

Grunert pointed out that the target date for MacArthur's defense was six years away.

In November, 1941, the Philippine Islands were critically unprepared for war.

The planes in California were held up for lack of parts.

Much of the ammunition to reach the Philippines in the last months of peace, including 70 percent of the mortar shells proved to be duds.

The mortars themselves were twenty-five years old, like the obsolete Enfield rifles and the shiny pith helmets.

In the entire archipelago, there were just two radar sets to warn Manila of approaching bombers.

MacArthur largely depended upon Filipinos to look out with crude telegraph sets on the beaches close to Formosa.

The only first class defensive fortification in the Philippines was Corregidor's one hundred foot long Malinta tunnel.

Corregidor was known as the rock, it was vulnerable to artillery salvos from Bataan, and to air bombardment. Corregidor's artillery pointed to the straits and to the sea.

This gross unpreparedness proved costly to the Americans on Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines.

Half the men who did not die in combat, died on death marches, in prison camps, on work details or Hellships. During the occupation of the Philippines, one seventeenth of the population was decimated.

Philippine Holocaust- 43rd Anniversary

Defense of the Philippines:

1.) Orange Plan (Worked out by General Gruner).

1.) Fight them on the beach.
2.) Fight them on the planes.
3.) Retreat to Bataan.

2.) Rainbow Plan.

1.) Intact Navy.
2.) Intact Wake Island
3.) Intact Guam Island.

3.) Japanese time table.

1.) Take Philippines by January 15, 1942.
2.) Take Malaya, Singapore and Java by Feb. 15, 1942.
3.) Take Midway Island by the 5th or 6th month, 1942.
4.) Take Australia, and New Zealand, 9,000 Japanese on Gilbert Island
5.) Possible Invasion of Siberia

Our Weaponry and Combat Units

1.) 192nd Tank Battalion (Four companies)

1.) Pt Clinton, Ohio
2.) Jamesville, Wisconsin
3.) Harrodsburg, Kentucky
4.) Maywood, Illinois

2.) 194th Tank Battalion (two companies. Lost one due to fouled up command.)

3.) 31st Infantry (Regular Army)

4.) Philippine scouts (8,000 - part of our regular army)

Last Seven Days

60,000 Japanese, plus 10,000 from the homeland against 60,000 Filopinos and Americans, of which 27,000 were on the battle line (only 7,000 were in fit condition to fight). At the American capitulation, only ½ ration was left for army and civilian.

Final Analysis

Due to the five companies of the 192nd Tank Battalion and the 194th Battalion, and maneuver strategy by Brig. General James Weaver, the Japanese thought we had six tank Battalions.

2.) Only the Tanks, Scouts, and 31st infantry had modern weapons, the rest of the army had 1914 weapons and ammunition.

3.) Bataan had no supplies, food medicine or ammunition.

4.) Guam was taken, Wake Island surrendered in one week, and our navy was sunk at Pearl Harbor. But, because the Philippines was not contained, the Japanese brass would not allow Yamashita to take Australia, the Japanese on the Gilbert Island to take New Zealand, or to take Midway. This all happened because the five tank companies of the 192nd and 194th tank held them back.

As a result of the unpreparedness, 50% of the Philippine garrison were killed or died in prison camps, one million filipinos died during the Japanese occupation. In Germany, less than 1% died in the prison camps.

Alan C Powell

Bataan, The Last Seven Days

At the surrender of Japan, the prisoners of war at Shirakawa, Taiwan were taken to Taihoku, a city at the north-east part of the Island. While in this camp the Japanese officers were very unfriendly to the line officer prisoners but talked freely to the medics. The Japanese regarded the medical officers and men as neutals (belonging to the International Medical Society).

A Japanese General told us that it wasn't for our holding the Philippines they could have taken Australia, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands. Acoording to this general and some of his officers, we upset their time-table.

General Masahara Homma was to take the Philippines by January 15th, 1942 but it was not until May 7, 1942 that the Islands were contained, too late to take Australia.

General Tomoyuki Yamashita had finished off Malaya and Singapore by the middle to February 1942 and was ready to invade Australia. Australia had roughly a division of men to guard the Island. The Japanese had close to 9000 men on the Gilberts ready to take New Zealand and the Fijis.

Because the Philippines had not surrendered it posed a threat to General Yamashita's "4000 Mile" supply line. The General Chief of Staff , Sugiyama, Tojo and other war planners did not persue his plan of invading Australia.

From these Japanese officers at Taihoku, we were of the opinion that General Yamashita was the invading force that conquered Bataan April 8, 1942. This is still the thought of many X-POWs.

But what really happened, Premier Hideki Tojo was much distraught with the stalmate in Bataan and General Douglas MacArthur's miraculous escape. He doubted General Homma's ability to achieve quick success but did not want to speak directly to Army Chief of Staff General Sugiyama. He delegated his secretary Colonel Susumu Nishimura to convey his concern to the Chief of Operations, Colonel Takushiro Hattori. After much study Colonel Hattori decided that the weak point in taking Bataan would be through Mount Samat. Colonel Hattori had not difficulty in convincing General Sugiyami to approve of the plan. The plan was then presented to General Homma who approved of it immediately.

On April 2nd, 1942, The Eve of GoodFriday and the birth of Japan's first Emperor the legendary Jimmu, by nightfall, 50,000 Japanese, 15,000 fresh troops from Japan were massed for an all out attack on Bataan .

Waiting on the opposite side were 77 ,000 starving Americans and Filipinos, but only 27,000 were listed as "combat effective" and three fourths of these were weak from malaria, dysentery, and malnutrition - actually only about 7,500 were healthy enough to fight.

In the morning the firing began. The intensity of the firing, bombing and artillery was so great that out weakened forces could not stand but retreated in rout. Only the men who were there could understand.

PROVISIONAL TANK GROUP (192-194th Tank Battalion)
31ST INFANTRY - PHILIPPINE SCOUTS
SAVED MIDWAY

After the capitulation of the Japanese in August, 1945, I was moved from Shirakawa (Taiwan) to another Prisoner of War Camp at Taihoko, Taiwan. At this camp were a number of Japanese officers (Colonels & Generals). These Japanese officers would not associate with line Officers; but did communicate with the Medical Officer as we were told we belonged to the International Medical Society.

One General in particular, because I could speak his language, and he some English, became very conversant with me. He told me that if it had not been for General Weaver's six battalions of tanks, the Japanese would have taken the Philippines on January 15th, 1942.

I told him that I was Provisional Group Surgeon and that we had men in two battalion of tanks - the 192nd and 194th. I also told him that the 194th had two companies and lost one company early in the war; that the Kentucky 192nd had four companies who had one year of training before going to the Philippines. I stated that with our five companies, General Weaver with no Infantry to back them up stratigically manipulated them as to appear to have more tanks than he really had.

This General told me that Yamashita had taken Malaya, Singapore, Java and landed some troops on Timor (an island north of Australia) by February 15, 1942. He was ready to take Australia.

He also stated that Japan had eight thousand men on the Gilbert Islands ready to take New Zealand and plans were made to take Midway at the same time.

Since the Philippines were not contained, it posed a threat to the Japanese supply line of 4500 miles and the Japanese brass in Tokyo would not give the "go ahead" sign.

As it so happened, the Philippines was not contained until June, 1942. During the six month interval, we were able to recuperate our Navy, save Australia, New Zealand and Midway from being invaded. This, the General told me was due to our Kentucky's 192nd Tank Battalion of four companies and 194th with two companies (one was lost early in the war).

Had it not been for the Kentucky 192nd Tank Battalion's four companies, Midway Island would have been loaded with Kamikazi planes, dynamite ships, etc. and Midway might not have been saved.

The Kentucky 192nd Tank Battalion had 650 men; but only 250 came back. The rest died in combat or in the Japanese starvation camps.

As stated above, and as the Japanese General said, it was the tanks that broke up the Japanese timetable allowing our Navy to recuperate its losses at Pearl Harbor, save Australia, New Zealand and Midway Island from being invaded.

Alvin C. Poweleit

ALVIN C. POWELEIT, M.D., F.A.C.S.
RETIRED MAJOR - PROVISIONAL GROUP SURGEON

comprehensive care centers

Operated By: No. Ky. Mental Health/Mental Retardation Regional Board, Inc.
503 Farrell Drive, Covington, Kentucky 41011

416 Fourth Street
Carrollton, Kentucky 41008

February 25, 1986

Dr. Alvin Poweleit
802 Scott Street
Covington, KY 41011

RE: Marshall Beach
SS#: 403-11-8619

Dear Dr. Poweleit:

Recently the above mentioned individual was seen in your office for an eye exam. For years, Marty has had eye problems. We understand that you recommended glasses to help with vision in the one eye but that you stated that no surgeries, treatments, etc. would be helpful in his case. I would appreciate receiving a copy of your report from his exam for our records. Thank you for your time. Enclosed is a copy of the signed release. Please send the information to Carrollton office of Comprehensive Care.

Sincerely,

Janet K. McNeel

Janet K. McNeel, M.S.W.
Certified Social Worker/Case Manager

JKM/pac
enclosure

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

1. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY AUTHORIZES Dr. Alvin Poweleit, 802 Scott Street, Covington, KY 41011
(Facility)
(Address)

TO RELEASE INFORMATION FROM THE MEDICAL (HEALTH) RECORD OF:

BEACH, MARSHALL
(Name) (I.D. Number)

(Birth Date) Dates of Treatment/Service

2. INFORMATION TO BE RELEASED TO: Comprehensive Care Center
(Person/Agency, Address)

3. TYPE OF INFORMATION TO BE RELEASED: Relevant to client - recent eye exam etc.

4. PURPOSE FOR RELEASE:

5. It is understood that this authorization for release is subject to revocation at any time, and that unless another date is specified this release will expire sixty (60) days after date it is signed.
TIME LIMITATION OF RELEASE: one year

* * * *

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February 25, 1986
Date

Marty
Signature of Patient Resident/Client

Janet K. McNeel
Witness

Signature of Patient's/Resident's/Client's Agent or Representative

self
Relationship

Address

Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources
Department for Health Services