

CLIFFORD ARNOLD ROYEA

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War in the Far East, 1941-1945

Interviewed by
Charles G. Roland, M.D.
21 November 1985

Oral History Archives
Hannah Chair for the History of Medicine
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 3Z5

Interview No. HCM 83-85

Ex-Prisoner-of-War Questionnaire - 4CM 83-85

Full name: Clifford Arnold Royce

Birthplace & date: Bury Quebec 14 April 1913

Present address:

Street Ward 7B, Ste Anne Hospital Apt. _____

City Ste Anne de Bellevue Prov. Quebec

Postal code (Zip) H9X 1Y9 Country Canada

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____ Area code _____

Service number: E29813

Date of enlistment: 12 JULY 1940

Name of Regiment or Unit, Company, etc.: RRC HQ Co.

Date & place captured: 25 Dec 1941 Hong Kong

Rank at time of capture: CSM

Wounded at time of capture: Yes No _____

Date & place released: Sham Shui Po 16 Aug. 1945

Would you give me permission to examine your service record (in government files) in order to obtain additional information (having to do with exact dates, etc.), for my research?

Yes _____ No _____

signed: _____

Please return to:

C. G. Roland, M.D.
3N10-HSC, McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3Z5
Canada (416) 525-9140 ext. 2751

AGREEMENT OF DEPOSIT FOR ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The interviewer, CHARLES G. ROLAND, and
the interviewee, CLIFFORD ROYER, hereby
agree and give their assent that the interview(s) conducted
on 21 Nov. 1985 at MONTREAL on the
(date) (location)
subject of EXPERIENCES AS A POW IN THE
FAR EAST, 1941-1945.

deposited at the Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine,
McMaster University, and that the interviews, or transcripts
made from the interviews, be available for research after
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widest possible access for research and publication.

HCM 83-85

INTERVIEWER: _____

INTERVIEWEE: X AGREED TO VERBALLY; CANNOT SIGN

HANNAH PROFESSOR: _____

DATE: _____

21 Nov. 1985

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Charles G. Roland, MD:

Could you start by telling me a bit about your childhood, who your father was, what kind of work he did and so on?

Clifford Arnold Royea:

Well, my father was a laborer.

C.G.R.:

In Bury?

C.A.R.:

In Bury.

C.G.R.:

OK. Did you have brothers and sisters?

C.A.R.:

I had nine brothers and sisters, four brothers and five sisters, and they're all dead now.

C.G.R.:

I see. Where did you fit in the family? Were you the youngest, oldest?

C.A.R.:

No, no, in the middle.

C.G.R.:

In the middle. You were raised in Bury?

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

Went to school there?

C.A.R.:

Went to school there.

C.G.R.:

How far did you go to school?

C.A.R.:

Grade 10.

C.G.R.:

OK. What did you do after that? What did you do after you finished school?

C.A.R.:

Well, I worked in a sawmill, mostly.

C.G.R.:

If you were born in '13, you'd have finished school what, about 1930?

C.A.R.:

1927.

C.G.R.:

Did you work in the sawmill right through the depression? Were you able to have work right through?

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

Tell me then about joining up, how this happened.

C.A.R.:

Well, I had been in the army for 10 years. I have a long-service medal. I had been the army for about 10 years with the 7th Hussars, which was a component of what made up the Royal Rifles.

C.G.R.:

What, in the militia?

C.A.R.:

Yes, in the militia.

C.G.R.:

Once the war started, how did you come to join up full-time?

C.A.R.:

Well, I joined up because I wanted to.

C.G.R.:

They had taken the 7th Hussars into the RRC had they?

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

OK, so when you joined up what was your rank then? Did you have rank in the Hussars.

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, I was a sergeant in the Hussars.

C.G.R.:

You were a sergeant in the Hussars, OK. What did you do after 1940? What did the RRC do before you went to Hong Kong?

C.A.R.:

Well, we were in Newfoundland for a year.

C.G.R.:

And doing what there?

C.A.R.:

Well, just coast guard duty.

C.G.R.:

Tell me a bit about your trip to Hong Kong. Did you go on the Awatea?

C.A.R.:

On the Awatea, that's right.

C.G.R.:

What do you remember about the trip? What were you doing, how did you keep busy?

C.A.R.:

Well, Brigadier Lawson was aboard, you know. We had a Major, a Major Lindon. They used to create activities for us, along the trip. It was a wonderful trip, really, until we got to Hong Kong, and then it wasn't too nice.

C.G.R.:

What were your impressions of Hong Kong? What did you think of Hong Kong when you first saw it?

C.A.R.:

Well, when I first saw it was just a big harbor full of small boats -- people living on the water.

C.G.R.:

A lot of people, I guess.

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, a lot of people.

C.G.R.:

Before the war started, did you have leave in Hong Kong?

C.A.R.:

No, no. No, no, we were never on leave. Well we were allowed out, out of the barracks. Actually I was the first man into Hong Kong. The first [Canadian] soldier in Hong Kong.

C.G.R.:

Oh really, why was that?

C.A.R.:

Well, of course, Major [Malcolm T.G.] MacAulay [RRC], you probably remember him through some of the books, Major MacAulay was the major in charge of headquarters company, you see. As a Sergeant Major I went up to take over the barracks at Sham Shui Po with him. We took an inventory there.

C.G.R.:

OK. Tell me about the fighting war as I saw it.

C.A.R.:

Well, the fighting as I saw it was very brief - 17 days or 18 days.

C.G.R.:

Where were you located? Where were you stationed?

C.A.R.:

Tai Tam Barracks, Tai Tam Gap was the name of the place.

C.G.R.:

Can you tell me anything about what happened during the fighting, that you saw yourself?

C.A.R.:

Well, a lot of people were killed, of course, and there wasn't any food much.

C.G.R.:

Tell me about being wounded. How were you wounded?

C.A.R.:

Well, my ears. Of course, the big guns were there and one day, when actually Steve [J.] Maloof [RRC E30287] was with me in the truck and I was in the transport seat, this day, it must have

been about, I would say the 17th of December when it happened. We went up to a British camp to get some ammunition. We were out of ammunition. I went up with this fellow Steve Maloof -- he's dead now, poor fellow -- but they weren't going to allow us any ammunition. I was senior in the squad so I just took the ammunition.

C.G.R.:

Why weren't they going to let you have it?

C.A.R.:

They were planning on defending the officers. I said, "Well, before the officers are defended you'll be prisoner of war and I will be too." It happened just like that.

C.G.R.:

OK. When did the thing happen with your ears?

C.A.R.:

Well, as I said, the Maloof chap and I were together in a truck, you see. We went up to try to get the ammunition, and when we come out of there the Japanese planes came over and bombarded the football field. We were pinned down there for about two hours before we could get out of there. I figured this was where my wound was -- the ears.

C.G.R.:

I see. So after that you had trouble hearing did you?

C.A.R.:

Oh, I had all kinds of trouble hearing. Then, of course, after the war they gave me a hearing aid.

C.G.R.:

Were you wounded in any other way?

C.A.R.:

No.

C.G.R.:

Tell me then, if you would, were there a lot of casualties in the Headquarters Company?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes.

C.G.R.:

About how many, do you remember?

C.A.R.:

Well, I don't know exactly but I would say there was probably 250 casualties.

C.G.R.:

Really. Out of how many? How many would there be in Headquarters Company?

C.A.R.:

Well, there was six platoons, you see, in Headquarters Company. There were the Signals, they were number 1, now wait I better get this right, the Signals was number 1, the Carrier platoon was number 4, the big platoon was where I was in Headquarters Company there. We were truck drivers.

C.G.R.:

Did you have Signals also?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, we had a Corps of Signals.

C.G.R.:

OK. Where you when the surrender came about?

C.A.R.:

In Stanley prison. No, not Stanley prison, Stanley Barracks.

C.G.R.:

Where did you go first as a prisoner? Where were you taken?

C.A.R.:

North Point.

C.G.R.:

North Point, yes, OK. What was it like at North Point? What were conditions like?

C.A.R.:

Oh terrible, terrible conditions. No food, and really, really adverse conditions they had. It was better at Sham Shui Po after we got over there. But we were, I think, let's see now, we must have been at North Point about six or eight months. Then we were moved over to Sham Shui Po, and the food was a little better there, but not very much.

C.G.R.:

In the camp, were your officers with you?

C.A.R.:

No, not at first. They came later on. But the thing is, while our senior officers were really...they looked after themselves. I have to take that back. All the men wanted to be upgraded one rank, which would have been minimum or absolutely nothing compared to the government status at that time. It wouldn't have been anything to upgrade the person one rank. There might have been a few that weren't already NCOs. The one's that were NCOs were really good NCOs.

C.G.R.:

Now, this is after the war, you're saying.

C.A.R.:

No, no, during the war.

C.G.R.:

I'm not sure -- where was this upgrading to take place -- you mean in the camp?

C.A.R.:

Well, it would have taken place in the camp. Of course it never did.

C.G.R.:

Why not?

C.A.R.:

Well, I don't know why, because I was supposed to have gone up to a subaltern.

C.G.R.:

How were the officers? Were they good officers?

C.A.R.:

Very good officers.

C.G.R.:

Were they good?

C.A.R.:

Very good officers until we got back. Then they looked just for themselves.

C.G.R.:

I see, I see. But in the camps, they looked after the men, did they? They helped look after the men.

C.A.R.:

Well, some of the would, and some of them wouldn't.

C.G.R.:

How about the medical officers?

C.A.R.:

The best, the best, the very best. Captain [S. Martin] Banfill [RRC, RCAMC] was a wonderful man.

C.G.R.:

Tell me a bit about him.

C.A.R.:

Well, I can't say good things enough about him. He is one of the finest men that I have ever seen anywhere in the world.

C.G.R.:

Did you have any dealings with him? Did he look after you, you personally?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, oh yes.

C.G.R.:

For what kinds of things? Tell me something about the sicknesses you had.

C.A.R.:

Well, I had a long, long, history of malaria and he looked after me. And there was another, Captain [Gordon Cameron] Gray. He was very, very good. He saw me through so many malaria situations; it's almost unbelievable that I got out at all.

C.G.R.:

Where did you first get malaria?

C.A.R.:

I don't know?

C.G.R.:

I mean, were you in Hong Kong?

C.A.R.:

In Hong Kong, yes.

C.G.R.:

In Hong Kong. So you didn't have it before then.

C.A.R.:

Never, never.

C.G.R.:

OK, what else did you have besides malaria, what other problems, medical problems?

C.A.R.:

Pellagra, and the avitaminosis, and all the usual things concerned with the prison camp.

C.G.R.:

Did you have "happy feet?"

C.A.R.:

No, no, I never had "happy feet," that's the one thing that I didn't have. I used to, there was a little place in the camp there where you could exercise. I used to walk about, oh about, sometimes up to 30 miles a day, outside of that little area. That's the one reason why I think I never got "happy feet." But I never had the "happy feet."

C.G.R.:

Well that's good. How about diphtheria, did you get diphtheria?

C.A.R.:

No, no. Well, I was accused of being a carrier.

C.G.R.:

What did they do to you as a carrier? Did they do anything to you as a carrier?

C.A.R.:

No, no, they just isolated us.

C.G.R.:

They isolated you. For how long?

C.A.R.:

Just for a couple of days.

C.G.R.:

Oh, I see.

C.A.R.:

I remember there was a fellow from camp by the name of, from Valleyfield, his name was.....What was his name now? A sergeant, anyway. But anyway, him and I, we lay in this tall hut on the cement floor there one night. Of course, the bed bugs were so bad that I killed 123 bed bugs during the night -- squashed them on the floor.

C.G.R.:

Yes, I guess there were a lot of bugs of various kinds, weren't there.

C.A.R.:

Oh yes.

C.G.R.:

Did you have dysentery?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, I was about the first one to go to Bowen Road Hospital with dysentery.

C.G.R.:

Oh really. When was that, when you were at North Point?

C.A.R.:

At North Point.

C.G.R.:

At North Point, uh-huh. How did they get you to Bowen Road? How did they take you to Bowen Road? Was there an ambulance?

C.A.R.:

No, no, they took us up in a, we went up in a Japanese truck.

C.G.R.:

How long were you there at Bowen Road?

C.A.R.:

About, oh, I would say a month.

C.G.R.:

About a month. What did they do for you?

C.A.R.:

Oh, they gave me cascara to start off with, and then they tried to build everybody up, you see, but of course, it wasn't working. We were going downhill instead of going uphill.

C.G.R.:

How did they get you going up? How did they manage to get you going uphill again.

C.A.R.:

Well, this was unmanageable.

C.G.R.:

Who looked after you at Bowen Road? Do you remember the names of any of the doctors there?

C.A.R.:

Dr. Squire was his name. [There was a Rev. S.J. Squires, RChD, and a Major J.E. Swyer, RAMC.]

C.G.R.:

Squire?

C.A.R.:

Squire.

C.G.R.:

Was he British or Canadian?

C.A.R.:

British. And there was another doctor, Dr. Harrison [Major G.F. Harrison, RAMC -- not known to be from Victoria; could this be Major J.W. Anderson, RAMC, who now lives in Victoria?] there that was a Canadian. He was from Victoria. He looked after me some too. He was a fine man too.

C.G.R.:

After you moved to Sham Shui Po, how were things different there than they had been at North Point?

C.A.R.:

Well, the sanitation was so much different. Oh, they were terrible, terrible at North Point -- the sanitation. You couldn't, there was no latrines or anything there. At Sham Shui Po we at least had latrines to go to. At North Point there was none.

C.G.R.:

How is it that you didn't go to Japan? Why did you not go to Japan?

C.A.R.:

Well, actually, this was the "happy feet" affair. There was another Sergeant Major by the name of Bert Kirousac [CSM Albert Kirousac, RRC E22849]. He had happy feet. Of course, at that time there was no other Sergeant Majors in the camp and he had the happy feet and I had to do all the work.

C.G.R.:

I see. So they couldn't do without you.

C.A.R.:

That's right, not very well. I used to make up the working parties to go to the airport.

C.G.R.:

Kai Tak.

C.A.R.:

Kai Tak.

C.G.R.:

Was that difficult, to make up the working parties?

C.A.R.:

Oh, well, it was. There was so many men sick, you see.

C.G.R.:

That's what I meant, yes.

C.A.R.:

There was so many men sick that you couldn't, you'd go in to a hut at night and ask for volunteers for a working party first,

and then you started by, "Well, you're going anyway, whether you like it not." That was the attitude the Japs took. You were going whether you liked it or not. So you had to get down to that part, eh.

C.G.R.:

Did you have trouble with the men because of that?

C.A.R.:

Well, the odd....I never really had much trouble. I think the other Sergeant Major would have a lot more trouble because he was quite a different sort than I was. But I didn't really have an awful lot of trouble with the men. But there were so many men sick that you'd just go into a hut at night and ask for working party, volunteers first, and then we went on from there. You had to say, well, you were going to go whether you like it or not. Be ready at 4 o'clock in the morning.

C.G.R.:

This was because the Japanese insisted on a certain number.

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

They didn't care whether they sick or not.

C.A.R.:

That's right, they didn't care whether they were sick or not.

C.G.R.:

As far as you know, were sick men ever taken from the hospital to work? Would there ever have been sick men taken from the hospital to work?

C.A.R.:

No, no. Once they were in the hospital they were....

C.G.R.:

They were safe there.

C.A.R.:

Safe there.

C.G.R.:

Did you know Boyd, Robert Boyd? I think he was the CSM with the Winnipeg Grenadiers. A man by the name of Boyd.

C.A.R.:

No, I don't recall him.

C.G.R.:

Can you tell me anything about the men who were orderlies in the hospital? The men who were orderlies in the hospital, do you remember any of them?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes.

C.G.R.:

Can you tell me the names of some of them?

C.A.R.:

Well, I don't know the names off hand, but some of them were good and some were bad, the same as they are in this hospital.

C.G.R.:

Sure, yes.

Did you have anything to do with picking the orderlies? Did you have anything to do with picking them?

C.A.R.:

No, no.

C.G.R.:

Because I've heard that some of them were volunteers.

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

But that had nothing to do with you?

C.A.R.:

No, no.

C.G.R.:

I've interviewed a number of the orderlies, and I just wonder if you remember any of them. There was Claricoates, Ron Claricoates [Rfn. Ronald Claricoates, RRC E30161].

C.A.R.:

Claricoates, I knew him well. Yes, Clarence Claricoates his name was.

C.G.R.:

Yes, what can you tell me about him? Was he a good man?

C.A.R.:

He wasn't a bad little fellow, no not a bad little fellow.

C.G.R.:

How about Les Canivet [Pte. Leslie M. Canivet, RCOC C94119]? Do you remember a Les Canivet?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, yes. He was the one that was, the Japanese was going to cut his head off once, this Canivet guy.

C.G.R.:

That's the man, yes. That's the man.

C.A.R.:

That's right. Because he stepped out line. Well, of course, he was right and they were wrong.

C.G.R.:

Well, I interviewed him this summer.

C.A.R.:

Is that right.

C.G.R.:

So he's doing very nicely.

I'm trying to think of other ones that I've interviewed. There's a fellow by the name of Poirier here in Montreal.

C.A.R.:

Poirier, I knew him too.

C.G.R.:

Yes, I haven't talked to him yet, but I'm hoping to. I've interviewed Dr. Banfill and Dr. Cunningham. Do you remember him the dentist.

C.A.R.:

Dr. Cunningham, yes.

C.G.R.:

Yes, I've interviewed him also.

C.A.R.:

That's right. How is Cunningham now, I wonder?

C.G.R.:

Well, it's almost two years since I saw him. He was in good health and seemed just fine.

C.A.R.:

Is that right.

C.G.R.:

Who was the great tall doctor from Winnipeg? John.....He was a Major....Crawford [Major John N.B. Crawford, WG RCAMC].

C.A.R.:

John Crawford, that's right.

C.G.R.:

Yes, yes. Did you have much to do with him?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, I was under him. He threw me out of the hospital one day and Dr. Banfill threw me right back in again.

C.G.R.:

Is that right? Why did he throw you out?

C.A.R.:

Because of an orderly. An orderly stated that he didn't like me. John Crawford said, "I don't like you either. You get your rags and get out of here." So I was going across the road, and I met Dr. Banfill. He said, "You come with me," he said, "you go right back in the hospital with me."

C.G.R.:

Why did Dr. Crawford not like you?

C.A.R.:

I don't know, I don't know why.

C.G.R.:

How did he seem as an officer? Was he a good officer? Was Crawford a good officer?

C.A.R.:

I think he was a good medical man. I think he was a good

medical man, but after we came back, when we got home from overseas, I think he then made a difference in the significance of giving priority pensions. I think the Winnipeg Grenadiers got a better pension than we did, in part anyway.

C.G.R.:

Now they're all the same, aren't they? I think they're all the same now, aren't they?

C.A.R.:

Well, pretty much the same.

C.G.R.:

What happened to your leg? [Has an amputation.]

C.A.R.:

That was an industrial accident.

C.G.R.:

I see. That had nothing to do with the war?

C.A.R.:

No, no, after the war.

C.G.R.:

How were you after the war when you came back? How was your health and so on?

C.A.R.:

Oh, not good, not good. Of course, I had stomach ulcers in the camp, you see.

C.G.R.:

Oh did you? Tell me about that. How did you get stomach ulcers?

C.A.R.:

Well, poor food. We would just lie around at night and your backbone was sticking in your belly.

C.G.R.:

What did they treat you with for the stomach? How did they treat your stomach?

C.A.R.:

Well, there wasn't hardly any treatment in the camp for the stomach. They gave me -- Dr. Banfill used to give me a little bottle of milk once in a while, when he could spare it, which was pretty often in my case. Otherwise there was nothing. There was no pills or anything in any hospital.

C.G.R.:

What happened to you after you came back? You were able to go to work, I guess, were you?

C.A.R.:

Well, after about two years I started working. I was working in a machine shop, and running a big crane sometimes. This is when I lost my leg. I was up in the crane and two men got into a truck to put a big cylinder that we used to get from up in Ontario. We used to bring it down to machine it, you see, and this day I was up in the crane and the men couldn't get the chain underneath the 5000-pound roller. So I stepped down into the truck to help them and when I stepped into the truck it just upended. It was a short wheel-based truck, and it upended and threw us all out. Happily they didn't get injured, but I did.

C.G.R.:

What, did this thing roll on you?

C.A.R.:

Yes, that's right. My arm, I've still got a big scar on my arm too. I pretty near lost my arm at the same time.

C.G.R.:

When was this?

C.A.R.:

That was on July 23rd, 1947.

C.G.R.:

Oh really.

C.A.R.:

I just got to work then.

C.G.R.:

Oh, that's too bad. So you've been a long time without that leg.

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

How long have you been here at St. Anne's?

C.A.R.:

I came here on the 20th of October 1971.

C.G.R.:

Were you able to do anything at all by way of work before 1971. Was there anything you were able to do after your accident? Were you able to work in any way after your accident?

C.A.R.:

Not very much.

C.G.R.:

No. I just wondered.

Can you tell me about the diet. Tell me about the food you got in the prisoner of war camps.

C.A.R.:

Well, practically no food.

C.G.R.:

What would be a usual meal? What would you get for your average meal?

C.A.R.:

Well, it's just rice, rice, mostly rice. Sometimes a few vegetables with it. But I seen men going around eating grass and that, just to get a little greenery and stop the scurvy.

C.G.R.:

How much rice would you get at a meal?

C.A.R.:

Well, of course, there was different cases, eh. Like the one time I was at Bowen Road in 1943 and I saw an orderly there take two bottles of milk from one of his patients, one of my men. I chastised him over that. So he got his sergeant and they railroaded me for stealing the milk. Then I said, "Well, you wait, this won't happen again." So finally one day the Japanese caught him, he had shorts on and he had two bottles of milk in his belt. They fell down on the floor and broke. So the Japanese, after that they gave me double rations for what I'd missed.

C.G.R.:

So he was stealing from you.

C.A.R.:

That's right.

C.G.R.:

Was this a British orderly or Canadian?

C.A.R.:

British. Oh yes, I'm telling you there wasn't too much love lost between the Canadians and the British.

C.G.R.:

Is that right?

I understand that a couple of the men were court martialed after the war. Did you have anything to do with that? Do you remember that?

C.A.R.:

No, no, no.

C.G.R.:

I think there was one sergeant and one officer who were court martialed.

C.A.R.:

No, I never knew that.

C.G.R.:

Did you not?

C.A.R.:

No I never knew that.

C.G.R.:

Were there, would you say, were there bad apples in the Canadians? Were there people who behaved badly?

C.A.R.:

No, no, not really. Oh, there might have been a loner or something that would cause a little trouble, but a very, very

happy bunch, the Canadians.

C.G.R.:

And the officers too?

C.A.R.:

The officers were this....The junior officers in the regiment were the very best. So, of course, I'm saying that after the war there, that they grabbed for themselves.

C.G.R.:

But during the war they were good.

C.A.R.:

Oh yes.

C.G.R.:

Why were you at Bowen Road in 1943? What was wrong with you that you went to Bowen Road in '43?

C.A.R.:

Well, of course, this goes back again to, like Dr. Banfill had put me on the draft through Bowen Road to go up there because I was so sick in 1941. Then Crawford took me off the draft and put McFadyen on [CQMS Colin A. McFadyen, WG H6251?]. McFadyen was one that was court martialed, I think. But he put McFadyen on. But Dr. Banfill, I don't think there was too much love lost.

C.G.R.:

I see.

Can you think of anything else that might be of interest to me medically that happened in the camps?

C.A.R.:

Well, no, not really.

C.G.R.:

OK.

C.A.R.:

One incident that I remember that happened, in Bowen Road, when I got to Bowen Road in 1943 I was lying in bed one night, I was on the top floor of the Bowen Road Hospital at the south end, and all of a sudden the light came on in the ward, and there were Japs all around my bed. I wondered, "What have I done now." So they said, "Come with us." So I got out of bed. I went with them. When I got down in the bottom of that part of the hospital, there was a place there where it was almost a dungeon. There was a man hanging up on the wall. His name was Jimmy Archibald [Rfn James Archibald, RRC C65411] from down in New Brunswick [Fredericton]. He was hanging up on the wall with his thumbs -- a wire around his thumbs.

I said, "Let that man down." So they let the man down -- he just collapsed off his feet. So I said, "What the hell have you got him up there for?" Well, the Japanese interpreter said, "Somebody has stolen stuff." And I said, "Well lads, I'm sure that man never stole any stuff," I said, "that man came from my own regiment," and I said, "he doesn't steal." They said, "Well, the British had said that somebody had taken a suitcase from some old guy." So I said, "Well it wasn't that man." So anyway, forever after that he was grateful to me.

C.G.R.:

I'm sure, yes. And I assume he didn't steal the suitcase.

C.A.R.:

No, of course, he didn't steal the suitcase.

C.G.R.:

Did you lose a lot of weight?

C.A.R.:

When I joined the army I weighed 172 pounds, which is actually my weight right now. When I got out of the camp I weighed 98 pounds. That's true.

C.G.R.:

Were you married before you went overseas?

C.A.R.:

No, no, I was married afterwards.

C.G.R.:

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One of the questions I ask people is, what about sex? Was the absence of sex a problem in the camps?

C.A.R.:

Oh no, there was no problem then because there was no food. That's the biggest reason, there was no food so there was no sex.

C.G.R.:

No interest.

C.A.R.:

No interest.

C.G.R.:

Any homosexuality that you know about?

C.A.R.:

No, not that I know of.

C.G.R.:

What do you think was the worst part of this experience for you, the worst part of being a prisoner of war for you personally?

C.A.R.:

Well, it was the long days and the long nights of waiting to get released, you see.

C.G.R.:

Was this all a bad experience? Was the whole experience bad? Did you get anything good out of it?

C.A.R.:

Well, there were times when you had a laugh, when you think about it now. But there were times when you laughed just the same even through that experience.

C.G.R.:

Did you have brutality against you? Were you beaten up?

C.A.R.:

No.

C.G.R.:

Was there much of that?

C.A.R.:

Oh, quite a lot of that, yes.

C.G.R.:

How did you manage to escape? Do you have any idea? How did you manage not to be beaten up? I mean was it just good luck?

C.A.R.:

Just good luck, I guess.

C.G.R.:

When you were at Sham Shui Po, what was your normal day like? What did you do on a day, on an average day?

C.A.R.:

On an average day I'd get up in the morning and get the working parties out of the camp first. Then we'd have breakfast around 9 o'clock, and then you'd have free time till noon. And then the afternoon was the same way.

Of course, I never went on a working party because the Japanese forbid me to go on working parties, because they said that I'd do sabotage. Well, I did, too. Of course we were supposed to get the people away from the camp. And this day when I went on the working party there was a fellow by the name of Billson [Cpl Walter G. Billson, RRC E29839], he lives in Lennoxville, Quebec. Walter Billson is his name. We had those cars that would go up the mountain and then you'd dump them and fill them up with earth and then the long drags coming down. And Billson said, "I think I'll take one of the cars down this time and wreck them." I said, "Go ahead and do it." So he did it and I got the blame for it, because I was the Sergeant Major.

C.G.R.:

What did they do about that? Did they punish you in any way?

C.A.R.:

Well, they punished me in the way that I didn't get so much rice as the other men.

C.G.R.:

Were there any sort of celebrations, like at Christmas. Was there anything -- did you have any kind of a Christmas?

C.A.R.:

No. Of course it depended on if we got our Red Cross

parcels. Of course, the Red Cross parcels was a big thing in the war, eh. I remember getting only three. Mr. Denison [Capt. Everette E. Denison, RRC, or Lt. Elmer N. Denison, RRC?] said there was seven altogether. But I don't remember getting only three.

C.G.R.:

Why do you think that you came through and so many didn't?

C.A.R.:

I don't know, I don't know. Just luck again.

C.G.R.:

How many times were you at Bowen Road? How many times did you go to Bowen Road?

C.A.R.:

Twice. One time with the dysentery, and then another time when Dr. Banfill put me on the trip to go.

C.G.R.:

So you weren't sick the second time?

C.A.R.:

Oh yes, I was sick. I had ulcers at that time. That was why he sent me up there.

C.G.R.:

Did they have more supplies at Bowen Road, more medical supplies?

C.A.R.:

A little better, a little better, not a lot, but a little better.

C.G.R.:

Were there any nurses there?

C.A.R.:

Not at the time that I was there.

C.G.R.:

Anything that you can think of all that would be of interest, about medical things?

C.A.R.:

No.

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