JAMES WILLIAM LLOYD KING

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War in Korea, 1951-1953

Interviewed in Victoria, B.C.

by

Charles G. Roland, M.D.

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Oral History Archives

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Interview No. 46-85

Lt J. King
POW

姓名 NAME JAMES KING

年齡 AGE 24 性別 SEX MALE

國籍 NATION ALITY BRITISH

軍階 RANK CPL.

軍號 SERIAL NO. 1903823

疫苗種類 TYPE OF VACCINE	量 AMOUNT	日期 DATE	醫生 D R.
VACCINUM VARIOLAE		4/3	
TETRAVACCINE		4/4	
TETRAVACCINE		9/4	
plague.	1 c.c.	26/7	

22189601	Pte	WHITCHURCH, B.	PW	26.4.51	
5885398	Pte	WHITE, G.L.	PW	26.4.51	
22301234	Pte	WHITE, R.L.	PW	26.4.51	
4538627	Pte	WHITEHEAD, A.	PW	26.4.51	
22530091	Pte	WICKS, A.	PW	26.4.51	
62887338	Pte	WIDSHE, W.A.	PW	26.4.51	
22161036	Pte	WILLIAMS, C.R.	PW	26.4.51	
4032818	Pte	WILLIAMS, J.H.	PW	26.4.51	
5569908	Pte	WILLIAMS, O.G.	PW	26.4.51	
5569903	Pte	WILSON, J.	PW	26.4.51	
5772998	Pte	WING, R.A.	PW	26.4.51	
1609902	Pte	WINTER, P.G.	PW	26.4.51	
22530162	Pte	WISEMAN, J.E.	PW	26.4.51	
6287079	Pte	WOOD, G.	PW	26.4.51	
19043744	Pte	WOOD, J.W.	PW	26.4.51	
5619926	Pte	WOODROW, F.S.	PW	26.4.51	
5773268	L/C	WRIGHT, W.	PW	26.4.51	
22207712	Pte	YATES, R.	PW	26.4.51	
5499662	Pte	YOUNG, R.	PW	26.4.51	

THE EIGHTH HUSSARS

	Lt	COOKE, R.H.	PW	15.9.51	
330079	Sgt	ANDREWS, F.W.	PW	3.1.51	
7893300	Tpr	BATES, C.	PW	3.1.51	
22306377	Tpr	BAUGH, J.B.	PW	25.4.51	
7890706	Tpr	BECKERLEY, E.G.	PW	3.1.51	
321774	Tpr	BIELBY, K.H.	PW	25.4.51	
22273012	Tpr	CALVELEY, A.	PW	3.1.51	Returned
19045288	Cpl	CAMERON, F.C.H.	MPW	3.1.51	LD
22285128	L/C	CAMPBELL, A.E.	PW	3.1.51	
7893354	Tpr	CARR, S.	PW	3.1.51	
789695	Tpr	CHAPMAN, C.A.	PW	3.1.51	
22285934	Tpr	COATE, P.J.	PW	25.4.51	
6141695	Tpr	COCKS, R.A.	PW	20.1.51	
22249526	Tpr	COLLINSON, J.	M	3.1.51	LD
410960	Tpr	DOOLEY, R.	PW	3.1.51	
22275595	Tpr	DUNN, J.W.	PW	25.4.51	
22275546	L/C	ERRICKER, R.O.	PW	3.1.51	
7893412	Tpr	FAWCETT, E.	PW	3.1.51	
X/21001168	Tpr	GWADERA, M.	PW	3.1.51	
19042502	Cpl	HOGG, H.E.	PW	3.1.51	
19042666	Sgt	HOLBERTON, J.W.	PW	25.4.51	
4545784	Tpr	HOLLAND, C.H.	PW	3.1.51	
22276580	Tpr	JONES, B.	PW	3.1.51	
19038823	L/C	KING, J.W.L.	PW	25.4.51	

Charles G. Roland, M.D.

Could we start by you just telling me a little bit about your upbringing? You said you were born in Ipswich [England], in 1930. Tell lme, who were your parents and...?

James William Lloyd King:

My father was in the the regular army. He was in the Grenadier Guards. My mother was a district nurse, a municipal midwife that they have there. I was brought up mainly by my grandmother because as soon as the war started in 1939, my father was sent to France, and my mother went back to nursing. So I spent the war with my grandmother in a village just outside Ipswich. I lived there through till 1946. My father was demobilized and my mother found ja home in Norfolk, which is quite close to Ipswich. I couldn't see any future in the farming area, and I knew I was going toi be called up into the army before long -- as soon as I was 18. So as soon as jI was old enough I volunteered for the British Army, and enlisted into the Tank Regiments and joined the 8th Hussars.

I was jsent to Germany in 1947 and stayed there until the division was sent back to England and demobilized, sort of thing, in 1948. I was in Leicester, in the jMidlands, on a big air force camp where we used to train the Territorial Army. My enlistment was up in August of '51. At that time the Korean War started and we were sent down to get some extra intensive

training and be a tank commander. When I came back in the beginning of August, 1951, I found that the regiment had been inundated with the reserve list, and that all our young soldiers -- we were a training unit -- and our young soldiers had been sent somewhere else and jwe were assigned to go to Korea. In the interim I got married on the 16th of September, and we did all our training, getting our tanks ready and so on; I got married on the Saturday, and the Saturday night we had our honeymoon, and the next morning I had to be back at camp to get my tank ready to go to Korea. Shoot it in -- we'd got brand new Centurion tanks.

So anyway, the regiment embarked for Korea on the 12th of October, 1951, and we eventually, we went through the Suez Canal, Aden, Colombo, Singapore. We eventually got to Korea on about the 15th of November 1951. We were kind of disappointed because we thought we'd missed the war [laughter], because at that particular time MacArthur and all his crew were heading out towards Yalu, and the whole thing. Anyway, we disembarked our tanks and we eventually had the facility to get them embarked on railway trains. We sent them up to, we were sent up to Pyonyang, which is the capitol of North Korea. We stayed there and that was in the middle of December, or the beginning of December.

At that time the Chinese came into the war in no uncertain manner in the Chosin Reservoir area and so on. We covered the retreat back from Panmunjong, and we ended up in the place called Pyontek; we covered the withdrawl from Seoul, the capital city, and we held the line down at the Pyontek, which was about 40 miles south of Seoul. It was sort of no-mans-land. It was cold,

and it was 40 degrees below and there was nothing much moving.

Anyway, we went through that winter and we were in action in the Ujonbu area in the central part of Korea. We had three or four actions there and were in support of the Gloucester Regiment. Then we were sent to the airport, the Seoul airport, Kimpo Airfield in Seoul, and we were there for about three weeks when one of our other squadrons in the regiment who had 20 tanks and were up on line which at the time was about on the Imjim River, which was about 50 miles of Seoul, and we went up to relieve them on the Sunday, and they kidded us all and said, "There's no," you know, "there's no Chinese within 50 miles." Then our sergeant major had us digging refuse pits and tidying up everywhere and he said that, "We don't have any lax." Anyway that night, I was on the brigade link tanks, second in command to a tank, put me on there as an operator on the rear link. Sunday night we went out to an American camp about a mile down the road and they had a film short there. And we sat out watching a film shown and all of a sudden there was all kinds of banging and crashing, and so on and so forth, and they said everybody had to go back to their units.

The next morning we woke up and we were supposed to be four miles behind the lines, and there were Chinese on the hill just above us. That was four miles behind our infantry positions, so we knew we were in trouble then. We cleared the road up through because if it's just main MSR's going through you couldn't get off the highway -- tanks couldn't anyway, 50 tons. So that went on for three days. We just sort of sniped anybody that was coming out from the side of the hills, and kept the road open.

And then eventually the Chinese attacked in real strength and they broke through ourlines, and before we knew where we were, they were 20 miles behind us. Anyway, my tank was up forward. We were all young soldiers in the tlank, and we held our position because nobody told us to do anything else.

Eventually, you know, they came over and said, you know, "All stations at Baker 5 zero," which meant us. You know, make your way south as quickly as you can. But it was a bit late. Anyway we turned around and went down the road and we hadn't gone about the first village we came to and there was an ambush there and we managed to get through that one; the next one we came to, we came around the corner and there was a couple of the artillary tanks slewed across the road, and the Chinese put a box mines all across the road as well. Anyway, the driver slewed to the left and we went down this big ditch, big monsoon ditch. The gun stuck in the deck and we were thrown about. So I looked through the episcopes. I was in the gunner's position at the time because I was trying to clear the machine gun -- itjammed, and we'd run out of high explosive shells for the 20-pounded. Anyway, I could see out of the episcopes that, you know, the Chinese milling around all over the place. So I thought that the best thing to do was come out through the top with my hands up and hope for the best. Well, we came out through the top with our hands up [laughter] and went through the turret the chinese jammed a burp gun in my nose and he was all excited. Anyway he let the three of us out of the fighting compartment with the tank, and then he roughed us up a bit and then all these Chinese

came around. They were all excited and so....We tried to tell them there was another fellow in the driving compartment. I guess they couldn't understand what we were talking about. They got us away and took us down the back behind this village and had us kneeling down there, and firing guns near and things. We didn't have much chance at it. In fact, they took everything off of us -- a wrist watch, and I had a writing case in my map pocket, and they tookthat and I had some wedding pictures in it, so I said to the Chinese guard, you know, "Let me have the picture." He had one of these machine pistols that the Germans had those, Schmeisser machine pistols, and it had a wooden stock on it. And he gave it a bang right over the top of my head and the same time he pulled the trigger. One of the other two fellows nearly, afterwards, told me they nearly died with shock [laughter], he thought they had shot me. Anyway, we didn't ask for any more. We just hoped to God.

Then they marched us down, and eventually a Chinese officer came over and he waved these other ones away. And we were marched down the road and we found, we thought we were the only silly blighters captured. When we went down, we found there was another ambuscade down the road and there was two more tanks slewed across the road, and there was fellows laying all over the place. There was a jeep that had the commanding officer of the Northumberland Fusiliers, he was shot and his driver. They were both dead in the jeep, and there were guys laying all over the place, hollaring, in the ambuscade they were wounded. Anyway they wouldn't let us stop, and we got aroiund the side of this hill and found there was about 40 other guys there. We hadn't

been thre 10 seconds before there was an artillery barrage came over from our own lines. You know, the shells landing all around us, from our own lines. Eventually it let up and they marched us towards the lines that time. And we thought, "Hey, they're going to let us go back." We'd heard stories that they released prisoners. So we thought we were going, maybe they would release us, but I guess they just didn't know what to do with us. So they too us. The next morning we woke up and we were put in this little village. It was right in the Chinese command area, and they were dug in on the hillside and what they used to do, they used to, on one side of the hill, they'd dig a little ditch on one side of the hill and put little trees, and then they'd nip over to the other side of the hill. Then the Americans Saber jets would come in and strafe seven colors of hell out of the side of the hill. And as they went by the underside, they'd [the Chinese] fire when they went by the other side. And they put us in this little village and, well, the Americans strafed [laughter], they strafed the holy heck around there. We were in this hut, you know there was about 40 of us in this. There was just room to shape together, you know, and it went on all day. And eventually another prisoner was brought in. He was an American helicopter pilot. And he said, that, in fact they knew we were there. They knew there was some allied prisoners in the area and they hadn't strafed too close to the hut. You could hear the rockets close! And every time they went, the Chinese guard would come in with his [shouting].

Anyway, that night they marched us on the side of this hill

and we found there was a whole bunch of Gloucester Regiment guys that were captured -- the Gloucester Regiment, they had captured a mass -- there was about 200 of them. So the marched us through the night over to the other side of the river, which is a big river, the Imjim. The point of it must have been a quarter mile across but it was fordable. In about four or five miles across there we came to this big bunker area. There was a command that was all dug into the side of the hill and so on. And they stuck us in these and we stayed there for nearly three weeks, and we got fed intermittently.

Then eventually one night, just before dusk, they brought us outside and marched us off. We marched through the night and over a mountain. We never saw a road, you know, they just went over the hills and so on. But we met all kinds of Chinese porter batallions coming the other way, all packed up, you know. They didn't use the roads, they went over the hills with all these coolie packs. We went on the outskirts of Pyonyang, where the people were little excieted when they saw us. As I said, that was from about the middle of July. They marched us all over the place -- we went south, north, and all over the mountains, stopping in villages overnight, and so on and so forth. We got amongst Chinese convoys, and God knows what not. I even got lost one time [laughter]. I was frightened to death to get lost.

Anyway we eventually got into the camp. We didn't know where we were going or when we would get there. But most of the guards we had were Chinese, young Chinese soldiers that were either sick or wounded or something. They were going back to the back area. In fact they were in worst state than we were, I

think -- some of them. But we eventually got to the camp and we were put on this big parade ground, which was in a school, in the village. We realized that there were other prisoners there. They were mainly Americans, and there were about 60 of us. We had officers with us at the time. They separated the officers and the senior NCOs from us and put the est of us into these huts.

There we saw the conditions, the general condition of the prisoners that were there. It was a pretty frightening thing to see because they were in pretty bad shape. They were mostly Americans from the 2nd Division, American 2nd Division, which was caught in the north in the mid of winter. They'd been prisoners through November, December, January, February, March, through the real cold weather. They were a pretty sad sight to see. They were very emaciated, shuffled along, and they mostly had their winter uniform, well, winter uniform, long coat, overcoats and flap caps and things. They were just shuffling along like pictures you've seen of other camps.

Right then and there we made a conscious decision that we didn't want to get like them. And we found out that, perhaps, if we stuck together and keep our morale up or something, that we'd be able to do it. So, throughout the first year we were subjected to a lot of brain-washing. But, I mean, the ridiculous part of the brain-washing was that they were educated people -- the Chinese trying to justify Communism, Marxist, Leninism, and all the rest of this stuff, and the fundamental contradictions between capitalism and communism, which were competely over all

our heads -- we hadn't got a clue what they were talking about. But, I mean to say it was so ridiculous trying to tell us people, living under those conditions, that communism was better, or that under these the conditions that the world would be better. Communism it seemed a bit ridiculous to us. But to argue with them it just set you up for more and more of this other old stuff. So when the brain-washing was on we found that it was better to agree with them with a simple "yes" or "no" than to argue the point. Otherwise they would prolong the thing for evermore and you'd be singled out for special education and stuff like that. So if they said, "Is there a fundamental contradiction between capitalism and communism?" you said, "Yes." If you said, "No" [laughter] they'd walk right over you. Anyway, I can tell you a lot more about their attempts at brainwashing, but a lot of the facts and figures they had and stugg, were no more obvious than the...pretty hard to dispute. But, I mean, the main thing was we couldn't equate our less than happy condition with any advantages of communism.

So we were pretty cold through the winter.

C.G.R.:

Excuse me. Before we get away from that, how long would these sessions go on?

J.W.L.K.:

Oh, pretty well all day. What they'd do is they'd lecture about communism, Marxism, Leninism, theories, and crap like this -- all over our heads completely. Then they'd give you a; piece of paper to study. And we were stuck in these damn huts, you know, like sardines in the living quarters. I mean, everybody

lived in a room that was about 8 feet by 6, and there was 12 of us in it. When you lay down the guys feet werej under your chin, you know. And we were cold -- we just didn't have any blankets, we had rice mats on the floor.

Anyway, they'd give us these questions. I can't really recall too much about it, except that they had theories which were natural communist theories about dialectical materialism and things like this, which -- we are not educated men -- Imean they were talking about things that were completely over our heads. But they did get down to specifics. And when they got down to specifics, well, first of all we used to argue with them, but we found that it was just a waste of time. They didn't know, they hadn't got a clue. I mean, they were just stuck with their lines. They couldn't vary from it, they couldn't admit there was any other way of going about it, so I mean, it would be just as well to reply to them in a monosyllables and things like that. At that time, too, we were subjected to a lot of "peace," you know, this is what annoys me, is why should peace be associated with communism? We had a lot of arguments about that, but the big thing was that I always thought of myself as a Christian; I still think myself as a Christian, but I found it very difficult to, and I had many talks with the padre on the way up. Our padre from our regiment, who was captured with us, of all things. We tried to talk him to see...we really didn't get a lot of confidence, I suppose the word is, from Christianity versus materialism, or whatever you want to talk about. And one of the fundamental problems I had was the fact that I used to say to

them, well, "This is Easter and we should", you know try to talk to them about Easter and christianity and so on. And they'd say to me, "Look, we'll go out and ask four of your soldiers waht Easter means." And they hadn't got a clue. We didn't have...we knew what we liked but we didn't know why we liked it, we didn't know what the system was founded on; to explain it to somebody else, you know, it's very difficult. I mean, the Americans since that time, since their prisoners came out the last time, you know, all the experiences that they've had.

But I think the pressure was on us, all the time we were there, that mental stress, plus the living conditions, but the mental stress was always there on anybody that cared. I mean, you could ingnore the situtation but if you cared, you wanted to justify yourself being there. Justify your country being there, and so on and so forth, because we weren't trained to understand what we were supposed to represent. I think we were very proud to belong to the United Nations forces that were out there and we thought that we were doing the right thing, and so on and so forth. But the methods we had, and the respect probably that we had for the local indigenous population, in retrospect I can see that, really, we weren't equipped to, mentally, to contradict a lot of the propaganda that was going on. I mean, we knew that the peace talks had started in Panmunjong in late July. But all the time I was a prisoner they never let us know <u>anything</u> much. We didn't get any information, except <u>bad</u> news. You know, if there was some bad news like the peace talks had broken down or that, that somthing had happened; the Americans had bombed this or something had done that.

We lived with the idea in the back of our minds, that if things didn't change and the Americans got too fed up, they were going to drop that H-Bomb, right? I mean, we were subjected to pictures -- part of the brain-washing was the Hiroshima and the Nagasaki documentary. You've seen it, I've seen it, right. But when you've seen it two or three times a week, for a length of time, I mean, it must have an impact on you. And it does and still does to me now. I've got pictures indelible in my mind. Their contention was that it would only be done to an oriental race; the fact that the Americans could do this tomorrow, sort of thing.

But I mean, peace to me was, peace to me was great. I was all for that, let me say. And we all agreed, that perhaps, the wording of them were so "officialese"'; no, "communist officialese," if you can understand that. We though that well, perhaps people would not associate us with -- sure we wanted peace. We wanted to get the hell out of there -- but they wouldn't blame us for signing the thing, for the simple reason that we felt that if we signed the thing, at least someone would know we were alive. So after a long debate the majority of us signed the peace petitions. Well, I don't feel sorry even now for doing it. Although, as I say, everytime there's a peace march, I'm there. I want to be there. But it just annoys me that people should equate that the communists, the Chinese or whatever the hell they are, should feel it was their perogative for peace and part of their propaganda machine to promote it. And that we should not have a stake in it. I think we should have a stake in the thing. I think that somewhre along the line,

our desire, that Nagaska or Hiroshima or any other way, be it Vietnam or Korea -- and, I mean, the Korean War was a very destructive war, It was destructive to the civilian population. Well, we've seen it since, but I would say that the United Nations forces, you know, that a Gook was a Gook, we couldn't tell one from the other. The South Korean Police treated their people worse than anything you can imagine. And we blasted many villages and town dead away. It was pretty disastrous for the civilians that were caught in amongst the whole thing.

As I said before, I fell that I wished we would have had a lot more brain-washing on our side of the line, so that we could have combatted some of the....Because it did worry me. It did worry me and I mean, I say I wasn't affected by the brain-washing -- I think we were, because I was desperate. I used to argue with these silly people; not silly people, they were much more educated than I. But I would argue with them but I come from a Christian society, and yet we couldn't expound those values to convince this communist ideology. I think it bothered me, anyway, amongst other things. I mean I still feel now that I would like to see the world at peace.

I'm rather glad that the Chinese have supposedly mellowed. I mean, their big thing was, "Hate America." That's how they joined their peoples together, was a big hate. You have to have a big hate to get these things. They must have had a fundamental change in their dialectic materialism or whatever the hell the word is, that they can equate the present situtation with it. So they're no more elementary pure communists, or ideologists, or

whatever in the heck they were. but, as I think I told you, I think they were mostly hostages to their own -- the instructors and the people like that -- they would argue for the sake of communists but, were actually capitalists at heart. They were nationalists, purely and simple, and they were hostages to their own families back in China.

Anyway, if you talk about food it was a diet. The food we were on was the diet of the Korean peasant, the poor Korean peasant. I mean, the Korean peasant lives simply but he had a lot of spices and stuff like that goes with the food and the kimpshi and stuff like that, that they eat with it. They eat simply but they have very...even the peasants have other things to go with it. Our basic diet was sorghum, maize, beans, chinese cabbage occasionally, and cucumber, and the additives were rock salt. We had three spoonfuls of sugar each in a ration. There was a brown sugar.

C.G.R.:

What, every day?

J.W.L.K.:

No, no, once a week, three spoonfuls, we had. And we had little bags we used to hold it in. The beverage we had was hot water. All water was boiled and we drank boiled water. If you added the sugar it tasted, it made it taste a bit different, anyway. But I mean the food was amazing because everybody had some type of advanced diarrhea, I suppose it was, or dysentery. You'd eat this darn stuff in the morning, and within 15 minutes it would be through you. The beans, if you didn't chew them, would come through you whole, just like that. The visit would be

to the open pits they had with the boards across, and you defecated the way the Chinese or Koreans, you'd get both feet down there like that across the boards, right. You've seen them. Well, we used to be up there, spend most of our time there. And the only thing, they didn't have any medication for it except charcoal tablets. And if you went you lined up for hours, they would give you a couple of charcoal tablets. If you went to the hospital -- nobody ever came out of the hospital. You went there as a last resort. They just, well, it was just like a hospital, it was like a hospice, I guess.

C.G.R.:

Were you in there?

J.W.L.K.

No. I took people there, right.

C.G.R.:

You were physically there.

J.W.L.K.:

Physically there. I took people there on bamboo stretchers, in there. And we took them out and we buried them, right? We had a burial detail who'd take them out. I would imagine that in Chungsung camp, I would imagine, on the hillside there there must be over 200 guys buried. We buried them in the summer; when the winter rains came, it would all get washed out, and we'd bury them again and stuff like that.

C.G.R.:

Who was running the hospital? Was that Chinese?

J.W.L.K.:

Well, there they had some Chinese orderlies. There'd be Chinese orderlies, they had the Red Cross things on their arm. But they didn't have any equipment. You know, all they did was just....

C.G.R.:

But there weren't any of your regimental medical officers or anybody like that. They were strictly orderlies.

J.W.L.K.

No, they took them all out. They took them all away and put them in a separate camp. There was nobody over the rank of corporal in our camps. And this is what they did with the Americans too, and with them it disintegrated the morale and the disclipine completely. Where I think, fortunately, the British came along and saw the result of what had happened and they decided that they would more or less pull together, and we formed a camp committee that wasn't recognized by the Chinese or anything like that, but at least it sort of made sure that what ever was available was given out fairly.

When we first got there, we had a couple of medical guys and two other fellows who had planned an escape and they didn't tell anybody. Off they went and what little medical supplies we had they took with them. It was two days before the Chinese realized they'd gone. In fact, they didn't know they were gone until they'd captured them. And there was nowhere to go. You couldn't disguise yourself amongst the local population or anything. You couldn't keep on the roads because the Chinese had guard posts every 200 yards along the roadways. What thy used to do was they'd be in a little trench thing along the main roads, well you

could call them the main roads.

But they had no radar or anything like that. So when they heard a plane come, they used to fire their rifles. And you could hear the babble way down the valleys, and out the other side. And immediately all the lights would be out and everything would be off the road. Then the American planes would come over, look for targets and so on. So, I mean, to say, if you stuck to the roads, you didn't get very far. Then they brought them back. They didn't do anything to them except parade them in front of the guys and say, "Look these people here have taken your medical supplies. They've taken your food." All this sort of stuff, right. "So, consequently you're not going to have any medical supplies. You're not going to have any food." I mean all this was....So from that time on, none of our people had as much as an aspirin or anything like that. But you can't blame people for trying to escape. I mean, I never had any...I would have loved to have escaped, but I couldn't see any point in it because, (a) didn't know where I was; (b) I was in no shape to go climbing hills. No shoes, no nothing. And where we were, in part of the country, jobviously we couldn't expect any help from the local population. And, of course, the peace talks were in the back of my mind, were the things that kept us alive. I mean, if someone had said to me when I got to that camp, "Hey, you're going to be here two years." Why, "The heck, come on now, no one could live this life for two years."

But, you know, after a year, after they'd exchanged prisoner-of-war lists, things did get better. Suddenly

cleanliness became next to communism with the Chinese, and they had a big clean up. We were allowed to boil water and get rid of the lice. We were allowed to shve once a week; hair cuts, we would just keep our hair farily close. And we had washing facilities. We could wash our clothes and stuff. Life became better. And they also, instead of sleeping on the floor, they first of all came up with a thing that they had, they cleaned us out of the rooms and they built us a sort of a wooden frame. They they showed us how to put this rope stuff, the bamboo rope across it. And then we went up into the hills and got a whole bunch of brush. We interwove this brush into the thing, and we had a sort of a brush bed. But at least it was not laying on the dirt floor, right. And your back was a little better, because when we were there, you had callouses on your arms, and your shoulders and yiour legs and the side of your feet [laughter], strictly on the floor. That was improving. Later they allowed us to build bunks. You know we had two-tiered bunks, with the rice mat over the top of the bamboo ropes.

C.G.R.:

Now, how long was this before you actually were freed?

J.W.L.K.:

Oh, the peace talks started in July, that was July '51, the peace talks started. And that was the time we got to camp. We didn't know. But they told us about it sometime in October. They told us the peace talks were going on, but they weren't going on very well. The Americans had bombed Kaisong, but I mean, at least.... And we, at that point, of course, we thought,

well hey, we've only got to hang on for a little whle and we're going to be out of here, right. So that was the incentive that we had to adapt. Then,m as the years went by, your bodies adapted to the stituation.

The food got a bit better. We got polished rice, and we had meat once a week, and one time they brough in three mules that had been strafed and they'd been carrying diesel fuel in the packs. You couldn't get anywyere near them! But the Chinese cooks went at them and they carved them all up and they cooked these damn things. They put saki in it and God knows what. And God, they tasted really good. It was amazing what they can do with what they had.

Christmas 1952 was the first time we saw any tinned meat. They gave us one each for Chrsitmas. It had pork. Of course we ate it and everybody became violently ill [laughter]. Anyway, they recognized Christmas; they gave us a few candies and stuff.

As far as letters went -- we don't have any now, I don't know where they went. We've lost them. But, Bet had, over the two and a half years I was a prisoner, she had seven letters from me, and I had [end of side 1]

And the Chinese held onto the letters. They didn't, you know, there were more letters came to the camp but they never gave them to us. We found that they would letters through to somebody if it had bad news in it or, you know, someone's wife had run off with the next door neighbor or something like that. They used every trick they could for their propaganda machine. I mean we didn't know that King George was dead until somebody got

a letter. Somebody got through, and we found that King George was dead and we had a Queen.

We had no news. Shanghai News used to come in now and again. They used to bring what they called the Shanghai News, which was a newspaper in English. Shanghai News, I think it's still in existence. You know, it was extremely biased, but, at least it was some sort of news, and some sort of print. And the books we had.... We didn't have any playing cards for the first six months or so. The guys used to find pieces of paper and do things like that, to while away the time, because there was nothing but time on our hands. They wouldn't allow us to do any work. The only work we used to do was as soon as dawn came, they used to march us up to the hills and we used to have to scour for brushwood and wood or anything we could find on the hillside to bring down for the cooking fires. I mean to say that probably there was opportunity to escape then, but where were we going to go.

C.G.R.:

Yes, you don't look very oriental.

J.W.L.K.:

No. So, anyway, the fellows used to tell stories. You know, there was always a story teller. There was fellows that knew the theories of calculus, and God knows what. And they used to try to expound to us. We had a French language class. Somebody would try and do something. But we didn't have anything to write on or any thing at all, so it was pretty difficult. A few people had pens, but they'd run out. Then they used to bring in -- occasionally we used to get books, and a lot of the books they had were Russian books. They were Stakhanovoits, and

Gorky, and books on philosophy and things which were just above our heads. But I used to enjoy -- but somebody used to get a book and read, right? We didn't know what the hell it was about about. I mean when you'd get around the daylight, because as soon as it was dark, we had no lights. That was it. It was dark, it was dark, that was it. So you made the most of it. And, of course, in the wintertime it was dark from 4 o'clock at night til 8 o'clock in the morning. Cold. So they were pretty long nights. But, I mean, again, God knows what we did. I scratched most of the time.

C.G.R.:

Yes, tell me about some of the diseases. You mentioned some of these things earlier.

J.W.L.K.:

Yes, well, we were lousy with lice. In the Korean huts they had newspaper on the walls for insulation. When these people left they used to paste the walls with old newspaper. They were full of these damn bugs, you know. What do they call them? They were rite in our part of the world too. The bug things that come out of the walls and they bit you and go back. I forget what in the heck they call them now, but anyway, some sort of thing. But, anywat, they wre nocturnal things that come out of the woodwork and God knows what. That on top of the lice.

But most of the fellows got dysentery. As I say, everybody had that to some degree or other. I remarked about a fellow we had, one of the corporals thatjust had a, well, I'm not a medical doctor, all I can say is that he had a collapse of his intestines

or something, you know. He just bled, like acute hemorrhoids. We could do nothing about it, and nor could they. He was a fellow about 30, and he died. There was a lot of night blindness. They couldn't see a damn thing when it got dark. But mainly their skin was so -- with the diet their skin was so dry and flaky and itchy. You know, you could flake it off like that. Your testicles were all red, raw, sore, they just peeled. And generally, that's what everybody had.

I think one of the funniest part about it was, of course, all you think about is food, right? If anybody, woke up in the morning, and we were all young at the time, you know, and you had a sort of a thought about sex [laughter], they were all proud as anything of this, because it was just nothing that anybody thought of the first year, I don't think. I mean, they'd talk about food. I mean the guys with youth, you've heard of it all before, endless shopping lists of what the heck they were going to buy when they got home. Talk about food evermore.

But, about the fifth month we were there, the Americans strafed the camp just the other side of the village we were at, which contained a bunch of the American officers, and they brought them over on stretchers and paraded them in front of us and had the big lecture about, you know, the American air force and stuff. But in the main, these fellows were hurt badly and they needed medical treatment. They brought in a doctor and she was a woman doctor, and she could speak English. In fact, she'd been educated for a while at the University of Edinburgh, in Scotland. She told us that if you wanted eggs and bacon for beakfast, then you have to fight people to get eggs and bacon for

breakfast. That was virtually what she said. And she said, our army is short of medical supplies and we have none for our own troops, so there's no way you people are getting it. That was basically it. But she was a very pleasant lady but she was, again she was a Chinese Nationalist, that was mainly what she was. She didn't stay there long, but after the fellows had died and they'd put them away, they didn't have enough stuff to do any amputations with or anything like that. A lot of the people used to disappear now and again from these interrogation places, and we had to get used to that. But a lot of the other times, if you went sick, there wasn't particularly any use lining up for sick parade because they had nothing to give you. If you became so sick and they carted you away to the hospital your chances of coming out again weren't too good. So most of the time we tried to nurse whoever we had. Just try and give him companionship or something like that, rather than get them sent away.

As soon as we got some variation in the diet, we overcome all these problems after about a year. In fact, we were skin and bone. I remember seeing myself, walking through this village, and saw my reflection -- because there'd been no glass, no mirrors, or anything -- I saw my reflection in the shop window [laughter]. I though all the other guys looked like that.

C.G.R.:

Did you lose much weight? Do you know?

J.W.L.K.:

Oh, yes, I imagine I did about 20 pounds. But when I came out I was pretty fit. We had built ourselves pretty good. I was

about 168 pounds when I came out -- 164, I think. And I was about 172 or something when I was captured. But then between times I went down pretty low, I would imagine. I suppose the main thing was the degradation and the hopelssness, in the first instance, and the illness in itself.

But tobacco, for one thing; lots of fellows used to smoke like old heck, and then they were deprived of that. And people like myself lost...I should have been wearing glasses, and I didn't. I didn't see [laughter] when I was in the camp, because I used to get vicious headaches. And not a damn aspirin around. And I mean, there was fellows with a toothache, which was a major problem. You know, some people had broken teeth and bad teeth and they were in absolute agonies and there was nothing you could do for them; they just went on and one and on. I didn't actually see anybody die of it, but they sure went through a lot of hell with the whole thing. There was fellows that had wounds, slight wounds, and there was a fellow there had a bullet in his back and used to touch the spinal cord quite often, and he was quite a problem to deal with.

But I think the bravest fellow I saw down there was an American marine corporal. He was about 20, I guess. He got this damn trench mouth; you couldn't stay in the room with him, he just stunk to high heaven. His teeth and all gums were just like sponges. Anyway, the Chinese put him in this dugout thing that they had for potatoes or what have you, because they didn't know what to do with him either. I guess the guy lived in there for about... but we used to give him whatever we could. One of the thing they had, they used to make a sort of milk out of beans,

crushed beans, a bean juice they called it. And that's all that guy ate or had -- squashed something or other. And about six months later he came out of there and his mouth was all dried up. He looked like hell, but he got over that. I mean most people -- I would have laid down and died if it had been me. It showed you a lot of intestinal fortitude.

As I say, I think the mental pressure was hard. As I told you, I've got a thing I've written. If you don't mind I'll just get it and I'll just read it to you. Well, my story is that up to about a year and half I'd been there, I was climatized to the whole thing. I had my daily run-in with the Chinese instructor about something, I just wanted to exercise my brain a bit [laughter], in what I believed in. I though it was all fun [laughter]. But one day I was playing basketball and a Chinese came up with a couple of guards and said, "King, come." And he marched me off just the way I stood, in my shorts. That's all I had on. He marched me down the road about five miles away from the camp, and we came to this compound place and he puts me in this room by myself and told me that I was considered to be an enemy of the Chinese people. I was kind of scared of it all.

It was a quadrangle place. And I realized that there were other people in there. I looked through -- there was just paper walls and if you put your finger through the wall you could see out through the side there. Some people they used to take from these rooms into another room, and I realized that they were going there for interrogation. I never did see the Chinese do any beatings or anything like that, but they had more fundamental

ways of doing it. They used mental pressure with whoever they were dealing with. And mainly they realized that, as a prisoner, your only hope is to get the hell out of where the heck you're in. Your strength is in the strength of all of you together, and your weakness is when you're out on your own, and you don't know what's going to happen next. I think we were all able to cope with...I don't think I coped very well, personally. I feel that it did make a vast impression on me.

The Chinese guard was otuside my place all the time. They'd just come in to check you and they'd put some food in now and again, and take off. You never knew when they were coming back. So I'll give you an example of what happened. One evening, some food came and I thought, "Hey, I don't know when I'm going to get fed again. I'd better keep some of it for tomorrow." So they had a Korean house built so they've got a centralflue thing so that heat comes up and there's some stones, flat stones that heat up and retain the heat for the house. So I eased up one of these things and put some of this food in a bowl, this rice stuff, and put in a bowl and put it under these stones. Well, in the middle of the night, in burst a couple of Chinese officers with the guards and they're kicking up hell's delight, and unearthed the stone; he said that "It's robbing the Chinese people and sabatogeing their food." It sounds ridiculous but there's all mental pressure.

And this time we weren't allowed to bathe. We got lousy again. No shave, no nothing. With all the uncertainty of things. In about three weeks time they came in and took me into this commanding officer's, well, this interrogation place, I suppose

it was. And there it was all immacuately clean. There is clean everything. The Chinese officers that were there were, -- they were immacuately clean people, the Chinese, immaculate -- all in white. They'd wear these slip-on shoes and they were all white, and canvas socks, and everything about it was...And there was me!

And he started to talk to me about, interrogte me, and I thought he was going to do a real interrogation. But he wanted to know what my officers did, what their habits were, and whether they had any concubines [laughter]. You know, ridiculous sort of stuff. And then he started talking about military interrogation. I told him a bunch of old baloney; and he obviously had military books there that contracticted everything I said. He told me that, he said, "We have officers, even generals of your army." And he said, "We're not having any trouble like a little corporal like you." This is virtually what he told me. He said, "We have told your comrades that you have gone to another camp for further education." And he said, "And you willl not go back now." He said, "The questions we asked you a Chinese child could answer." So I guess I said to him, "Well get some of your Chinese children to answer them." He got really upset, and rant and rolled and gave me a big, you know, condensation of the evils of capitolism, and how I'd argued with the instructors and how I'd sabatoged the trying to communicate the truth to the people, and all this sort of stuff. So then they put me back into this place. I never saw a soul, except the guard, for another couple of weeks or so.

Then he came in and said, one day they came in and brought me back again, and he said, "You will write a confession." Well,

by that time I'd realized that the Chinese went in a lot for self-criticism. That's part of their doctrine. So I realized that whe he wanted me to do was to write up a self-criticism of what I'd done, and what I wouldn't do, and all the rest of this stuff. I said, "Well, you've got to give me time to think about it." He said, "You've had plenty of time to think about it." So he gave me a pen and some paper and he said he'd be back in an hour. So I wrote up a bunch of old B.S. And he came and read it, and gave another one of his passionate speeches. Virtually what he said was, you've got to realize that you're in a very tenuous situation here. You want to go back to your family and your country. He said, "We believe that you're a political saboteur." [laughter] And I mean, they took that more serious than any other problems. So anyway, I did write that I realized that I'd argued with the Chinese instructor, and that I had tried to undermine the teachings of the Marx-Leninism theology, and the rest of that stuff. And I suppose he thought that was good enough. So anyway, he sent me back in again for about another week. I was away seven and a half weeks.

One day they just packed them up and "Come." And away we went back to the camp. Boy, was I relieved. The guys treated me real good, came back like a long lost brother, and so on. But just realized that....

But, while I was there, one of the things I did find out was in the hole in the wall, I put through, it was in the quadrangle thing, and there was a Korean family living in the compound in the far end. It was obviously part of their house. I used to watch them everyday. There'd be an old papa-san, mama-san, and

there was obviously their daughter with a young family. It made you think about home and realize that these people had a family. And while we were there, one morning, about the middle of the morning, there was a hell of noise going on down there. So I poked my nose out to see what was going on. Obviously a Korean soldier, young Korean soldier, had come home. He was probably passing through or was on leave or something like that. But he came home and of course there was all the excitement in the house. I've written a word about it and I can't find it. But what it did was, you know, and he had something for the kids, and some candy for the papa-san. I could see all this going on. It was about from here, you know, to the end of our sun thing there. You know, highly excitment, members of the family crying and the whole thing. It was just like I would have hoped it would happen to me if I went home.

C.G.R.:

Yes.

J.W.L.K.:

Yes. This was all in the middle of this old nonsense that I was going through. Then next morning he was gone, he was gone back to the war. But that was a little episode that I found quite memorable with the whole thing. And then, towards the end, I think our minds were that adapted to the situation that if they said to me, "King you're not going home. Here's an oxen and we'll find you a wife, and up you go to a hut up in the hills there. And that's going to be your life." I think I could have adapted. That's was how much a native we'd gone, into the

situation. But I could tell you all kinds of stories that went on.

But the last day I think is very relevant to the whole thing I say the last day, the last day of the war. We didn't know the war was over. We didn't know anything about it. We heard, that about two months before, that peace talks were getting close. Then all of a sudden President Syghmun Rhee let the prisoners go, down in the south. Oh, before that there was a big hastle when the Korean prisoners rioted on that big prison island, it was Kwechong or someplace, and the Americans went in there and they killed a lot of the Americans but the guard killed about 200 prisoners and they sorted them all out because the communist cells were in there, and they ran the camp, right? Anyway, you can imagine the repercussions we had up in our place there. The talks and the sabre rattling and the stuff that went on. Anyway, we'd heard that the peace talks had collapsed. So, we knew the Americans at that time were getting pretty bloody fed up with it all [laughter]. Were they thinking of bombing, bombing this damn place? What were they going to do? Were they going to bomb China and then we'll be in World War 3, or something? Well, anyway, one morning they whipped us all out into a line and had us march down. We were in different part of this place, and they marched us down to this original playing field when we [first] got to that place. I hadn't been there for a year. Anyway, there was Chinkie troops all over the place with machine guns set up and God knows what. There was a stage where the commandant came on his loudspeaker. The usual stuff. He ranted and raved. And then what usually used to happen was, you know,

that the interpreter would say, "My Commander says you are not good men." After he'd rattled on for 10 minutes, there'd be this so and so thing. So, I mean, off he went. He was chatting away in Chinese for about 10 minutes. Of course, we'd heard it all before. And then he said, the Chinese officer said, "My Commander says that he had good news for you. That the war is over. The armistice is signed." We're not really listening. There was dead silence, you know. "What did he say?" [laughter] So there was all hell breaking loose. The Chinese were getting all excited. "What did he say?" And then he rattled on again for 5 minutes, and the officer said, "You will soon go home to your loved ones" he said, "and good luck to you." You know, we realized what we did here. We all cheered and got up. And then they fired a few shots over us, and stuff like that. We were all congratulating each other. Then they filed us back to our part of thee camp, and we just had to sweat out, wondered how long it would be before we got out of there. It was the 27th of July 1953.

Two weeks went by and nothing happened. Just the same routine. Then they came along and brought some Russian trucks in. We all boarded these trucks and went through the night. We got through the green countryside or whatever the hell it was, mountains and things and so on. While we were there one of the trucks went off the road, about three trucks in front of us. It went right down the mountainside. Fortunately the guys were all right. I mean, anybody in their right mind would have jumped. The driver, I guess the Chinese jdriver didn't know any better,

and he just steered it down the mountain. They just landed down at the bottom. They were all brusied and battered around, but none of then were hurt badly.

Anyway, we got, eventually we got along these bad roads and things -- because you can imagine the condition of the roads after two and a half years of war -- till we got to this place called Manpo, which is a railway center near the Russian bordr. They entrained us in these cap trucks, and we spent four days going down towards ourlines. It's incredible the railway line. In some places it was under water; the railway line was built under the water. It looked like it was broken off either end, but they'd built the thing under the water and the train would go right through the water. The tunnels were just full of equipment and stuff. But then we came down towards the front and there were, the truce supervisory people, and they were on the Korean side (the North Korean side, rather), they were Poles, Indians, and East Germans probably, I don't know. Anyway, they were the first ones we saw. We went into this big camp at Kaeson, like a big village, and we were there with a bunch of American prisoners. There was about 400 of us, I guess. We could see in the distance there was two big searchlights, that was over Panmunjong, over the truce area. We were about fourmiles away. We were there for three days. I think that was the three longest days of my life, because we were frightened to death they were going to start the damn war up again, just when we're that close.

Anyway, we were handed over. We went through the neutral zones, when they called our names one day. We went through the neutral zone and we met the Korean and Chinese prisoners coming

the other way, and they were all throwing their clothes off, and they were all naked as the day they were born, singing all the communist songs! We came into the truce area, with all the Chinese guards around us and they called our names on the list.

We went over the other side there jand there was a British officer, and he shook our hand and put us in the back there. I wish I had the picture. It was an old picture, but what it is, they had a sort of blue tunic uniform that they gave us. It was light, cotton, just a cotton uniform. Blue, with a blue Chinese hat thing that they wore. I wanted to keep it. Anyway, the first thing that happened to us, the American MP's were there and they DDT'd, pumped it all over us and took all our clothes off and put them in a big bonfire thing, and gave us some jungle greens. We went through a sort of a pen thing, and there was a Church of England canteen there. A lady gave us coffee and cookies and things. Then they took us down to the British...there was about 50 British with me. They took us down to this Nissen hut. We'd only been about an hour through that pen ting, from about three quarters of an hour, through to this Nissen hut. They had a film of the coronation, would you believe! It was hotter than hell. It was in the middle of Agusut and they had a film of the coronation. Well, you can imagine that the guys hollering and screeching, and telling them what to do with their bloody coronation film. "Where's the beer?" you know. So anyway, we were all duly impressed.

The next day they flew us. Well, in the night they gave us three bottles of Asahi beer, I remember that. The next morning

they flew us to Japan and we went through, the next day we went through debriefing, you know, interrogation business. That was a bit scary. But they seemed to know. What happened was, the end of February of 1953 they exchanged wounded prisoner of war. So several guys who were wounded or really sick were repatriated, exchanged prisoners of war. It was about February or March 1953. So a lot of the fellows had gone back and they virtually knew what was going on. So what they did was, they debriefed us and when they were satisified, they let us go.

We were in Kuri, Japan. And I wanted to see Hiroshima. So I met a Japanese girl and told her what I wanted to do, and she took me in by train from Kuri to Hiroshima. I went over the place, and she had some relatives there and we stayed in a hotel. The next morning the Japanese police were there and they took me to the police station and the next thing I knew there was an Australian MPs came and took me back to Kuri.

C.G.R.:

Why? Were you not supposed to be away from Kuri?

J.W.L.K.:

Oh yes. Well, I mean, I didn't ask anybody. I mean, I felt that I wanted to see Hiroshima, that was the thing. And, I knew I wouldn't get there by officialese it would take too long or something like that, so I went.

C.G.R.:

So you just went.

J.W.L.K.:

I just went. I saw it all. They took me back to the camp and thenthey took me to the airfield. We were supposed to go to

Hong Kong. My aunt and uncle were in Hong Kong at the time and they were waiting for us at the airport. But there was a tropical storm and they couldn't land there -- it was a big DC-4 with a big four engine Dakota thing, and it flew to some place in North Vietnam [laughter]. We landed in a jungle airfield. God! that was the last place we wanted to be. There was all these French Colonial troops there. The bush hats and the whole thing. They gave us some wine and stuff. And when we were there, there was like a few bangs and things. They were having a little bit of trouble around the area. We were glad when they had refueled and they flew us to Singapore, and we were on the ship going back home.

But I guess, when we got back, you we were just glad to be home. Then one morning Bet and I were having breakfast, and I was on leave. I'd been home about a month. A knock came to the door and there was this very sophisticated gentlemen with a black suit on, bowler hat and rolled umbrella, striped pants, and he said he was Colonel somebody-or-other of MI5. And that he would like to talk to me now. Well, I was a nervous bloody wreck then. You got debriefed again. But mainly they were interested in the fact of who'd been affected by brain-washing and the rest of that stuff, and so on. So, I don't know what to tell you except that he was just as intimidating to me as the Chinese were.

C.G.R.:

I'm not surprised to hear that.

J.W.L.K.:

But he just stayed the day and then he went back and I never heard from him again. But he just virtually told us that, "Be quiet, don't talk about it. We don't want to hear nothing about it." I'd spoken to several of the guys and they had the same sort of message that, "Be glad you're back. Forget it." So we forgot it. Not very well. But I suppose, unless somebody talked about it, you know, we'd forget it. I mean, again, I would think the Chnese were allowing us to live. I think that now I know more about in retorspect, I realized that they reconed that the Chinese commissary had about a dollar a month to feed us. And never any medical supplies. They were on a war footing. They were just a brand new communist regime. They were not organized at all. We were just a damn embarrassment to them. They could have shot us, or got rid of us, or starved us to death, or something like that, which they were well on their way to doing. But they didn't realize until the peace talks had progressed to that stage where we became a political prisoner, more or less, in-as-much as we were the ploy that kept that bloody war going for so long. You know, that it was the matter of the exchange of prisoners of war. If you recall the truce talks, that was, like they called it, the major stumbling block. I mean they argued for months about the shape of the table and everything else. But when it came down to it, it was ja matter of voluntary repatriation that our side, that the UN side, was trying to preach, and they said that they were insisiting that <u>all</u> prisoners should be returned whether they wanted to or not.

C.G.R.:

Ye, I remember that.

J.W.L.K.:

Yes. But it's all vague stuff, that only if you were involved in, you remember these things. Thank God that they did realize that we were some political use to them, because otherwise, I don't think they would have considered us worth their worry at the time.

C.G.R.:

They would have saved their dollar a month. Used it for something else.

J.W.L.K.:

Yes. I don't know what to say except the majority when I look back on it, well, it might...My best friend was a prisoner there, I never met him until we got, as I say we were captured in April, and in November of that year it was extremely cold. One day, we were looking out the hut, it was very cold, and we saw these guys being marched in. There was about three of them. They just had the bamboo mats around them and nothing on, and so on and so forth, and they eventually got them and led them into the camp and we all got around them. This friend of mine was a corporal in the marines. I didn't know him at the time, but he came from the same part of the country as I did. So we got buddies. What happened to him was, he was on the island of Wansang, which was on the east coast. He was in the commandos and they had these landing craft and they went up to test them. The damn motor conked out. They couldn't get it going again, and the current carried them onto the North Korean Coast, two of them, him and a private, marine. So anyway, they were just in

their bathing suits, bathing suits with a sweater on top. Of course, the Koreans wanted to shoot them for being saboteurs and spies and God knows what. I mean, he went through quite a bit of military interrogation. And he wasn't in a group either like I was. I was fortunate, I was in a group. But they were threatening to shoot him every other day. And yet, when I go back there now, he's now a captain, or he's just retired as a captain in the Royal Navy. The last few years he's been in charge of the marine cadets.

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