RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUSTIN L. ANDREWS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on April 15, 2007, in Herndon, Virginia, with Austin Andrews. I thank you, Mr. Andrews, for taking time to speak with me. My name is Sandra Stewart Holyoak, and we are very pleased to be here with the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. To start, could you tell me where and when you were born?

Austin Andrews: I was born November 6, 1921 in Chester, Georgia.

SH: Tell me a little bit about your family background. If you would, talk about your father, for example, first.

AA: Yeah, well, my father and mother are both dead.

SH: Can you tell me about them? How they met, or what your father did for a living prior to your birth?

AA: Yes. He was a, I guess, a merchant man. He run his own store and worked for himself. My mother never worked outside the house.

SH: Did you have a lot of brothers and sisters?

AA: Yeah. I had three brothers and three sisters. They're all dead but one sister.

SH: Are you older or younger? Where do you fit in this?

AA: I was the youngest, one of the youngest.

SH: All right. Can you tell me a little bit about, please, how the Depression affected your family, because you would have grown right up through that time.

AA: Yeah, I was about, I guess, eight or nine years old during the Depression. We had a real hard time. My mother used to boil peanuts, and parched peanuts, and put them in a little bag, and we would take them and walk through the streets and sell them. … My mother used to take us down to the Red Cross warehouse and they would give us a small sack of flour, and a little grease to cook it with. Family meals were grits, morning, noon, and night. Sometimes, if we were lucky, we got some black-eyed peas. I went to the Lanier High School, and [at times] ice was on the ground, barefooted.

SH: Was everybody in the community affected pretty much the same way?

AA: Just about everybody in the community was affected the same way. Me and my brother, we sold newspapers on the street. At that time the only other communications was radio. So, when something big happened they would run an Extra and we would run through the streets and run through the suburbs, hollering, "Extra," and people would turn their light on and hollered, and we would go over there and deliver a paper, and they would give you a little tip.

SH: What was the town that you were living in?

AA: Macon, Georgia

SH: In Macon, okay, so it was a fairly large city.

AA: At that time, it was a fairly large city, and we sold newspapers all over Macon, Georgia. After school me and my brother worked in a bakery, in the evening and at night. During them days we wrapped the bread. There was no bread wrapping machines. They had an iron that was heated up, so when you wrapped the bread you would stick it in and leave it. Then, by the time you wrapped the other, it would push through and it was sealed. We worked in that bakery until one or two o'clock in the morning, then we would get up and go to school the next day. During that time, the owner of the bakery, a fellow by the name of Mr. Merkle, he would give us some cinnamon rolls or give us some bread they had brought in off their routes. I guess they called it, "Day-old bread" or something like that. So, he was good to us and he'd give us the bread and cinnamon rolls and stuff like that to eat.

SH: Were you able to finish high school?

AA: No. I quit high school in the third year.

SH: The third year. To join to the military?

AA: I went in the CCC.

SH: Okay, thank you.

AA: The Civilian Conservation Corps. [Editor's Note: This was a government program to get the people off the streets.] I got tired of coming home hungry with nothing to eat, so, I was about, I think, I just about turned fifteen when I went into the CCs.

SH: And they accepted you at that young of an age?

AA: Well, I had to fib a little bit. I told the sergeant that I was sixteen, and, at that time, I weighted about eighty-five pounds. He said, "You don't weigh enough to get in." He said, "I tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to give you some money, you go down to that fruit stand, down the bottom of the hill." He said, "You buy all the bananas this money will let you buy. You eat all the bananas you can and drink all the water you can, then come back up here and step on this scale." So, I did what he said, and went back and stepped on the scale. He said, "Well, you're just about there so I'm going to let you in anyway." So, he signed me up for the CCs and that day I went to Greenwood, South Carolina. Camp Star Fort, was a Civilian Conservation Camp, and what we did in there was plant pine trees all over the farms to keep the land from washing away. We built baffles on the highways, and we planted dry grass on the highways and we tapped it in with tamps, and we surveyed farms, and run terraces. We fought forest fires. I stayed in the CCs for thirty months. At that time, that's all they would let you stay.

SH: Did any of your brothers join the CCC, or were you the only one in your family?

AA: No, I had another brother who joined the CCs and he was away in South Georgia.

SH: After thirty months what did they offer you at that point? You are now almost eighteen.

AA: Well, you see, the CCs mainly was to get young people, I guess, off the street. Actually, it was building a reserve army. We really didn't give it any thought at that time. They had a thirty month stay, that is all they would let you stay in the CCs. We'd get five dollars a month for what they call, "Health and comfort." It let you buy toothpaste or cigarettes, stuff like that, with the five bucks, and the twenty dollars a month went home to your parents for them to live off of. So, after thirty months they wouldn't let me stay in the CCs any longer. So the Captain tried to get me to go into the tank corps in the army. I said, "No, I'm going into the Navy." So I left Camp Star Fort and went straight to Greenville, South Carolina and enlisted in the Navy. That was June of 1940, went up to Norfolk, Virginia. Went through training in Norfolk, Virginia, then, after we graduated from the training I was sent to San Diego, California.

SH: Were you sent by ship to San Diego?

AA: No, they took you by train. The whole platoon that I was in, most of them wound up on The *Arizona*, The *Mississippi*, and The *California*, and they're the ones that really got blasted at Pearl Harbor. I was kind of a rebel, I guess you would say, at that time. When I was in the CCs I had first aid training and I was a diving instructor and life guard.

SH: Where had you learned to swim and to do all this, in Macon?

AA: Yeah. We learned to swim in mud holes in Macon, Georgia, and, I mean, they were mud holes. [laughter] When we started to, I wanted to go into the submarines, the lieutenant commander said, "You don't have enough education to go in the submarines." He said, "I'm going to send you to hospital corps school." He said, "I have already made arrangements over at Portsmouth Naval Hospital." He said, "When you finnish here, which will be in the next few days, we're going to send you over there."

SH: This was in Portsmouth, you're in Virginia still.

AA: Well, it's kind of a long story. [laughter]

SH: That's what we're here for.

AA: I went back to the barracks and some of these guys were going to service schools, some of them went to submarines, some of them went to other service groups, so we was talking and this guy said, "You know," he said, "You [are] going over to that hospital corps school, you're going to be giving enemas," and he said, "You're going to be emptying bed pans and all that stuff." I said, "No," I said, "That ain't for me. I ain't going to no hospital corps school." So I told the commander, I said, "Commander, I thought about this, I don't want to go to no hospital corps school. I joined the Navy to go to sea. I want to go to sea." He said, "I already made arrangements over there and I've already put the paperwork and everything in." I said, "I'm sorry,

Commander, I ain't going to no hospital corps school." He said, "Well, damn you," he said, "I'm going to send you to sea." So, he sent me to San Diego, California, and, at that time, they were putting in those four pipe destroyers left over from WWI. They were giving them to England under that lend-lease, and I wound up down in the bottom of that ship down there painting, and scraping, and rust. I was down in that hold for three months. Then, finally, he said, "We're finished with this ship here." He said, "I'm going to send you down to the destroyer station. I'm going to [assign] you to the USS *Dale*," which was number 353, the second of eight destroyers in the Pacific fleet. I said, "That's fine with me, Commander, I'm ready to go."

SH: Anything's better then the bottom of this ship.

AA: Right, so I wound up on the USS *Dale*.

SH: What was your rank?

AA: I was a seaman, second class seaman, the lowest above the prettiest. So, anyway, we went to Pearl Harbor.

SH: What was your job?

AA: I was a deckhand.

SH: A deckhand, okay.

AA: A deckhand, all you did was scrape rusted paint, also, everybody on the destroyer had a battle station. My battle station was on the number one gun, which was a five-inch thirty-eight on the bow. We would fire at targets, and airplanes would tow a target, and we would fire at them for practice, and so forth.

SH: You would do that as you traveled from San Diego to ...

AA: No, this was after we got to Pearl Harbor.

SH: Oh, you didn't do any of this before you got to Pearl Harbor.

AA: No [en route to Pearl Harbor] we had [duty station, standing watches, cleaning, prainting, and had gunnery instructions].

SH: How many ships went from San Diego to Pearl with you, with the *Dale*?

AA: Four. That was the Second division. What they had was four destroyers and a destroyer leader

SH: Do you remember what the other ships were that were with you in the division?

AA: Yeah. There was [USS] *Dale* (DD-353), the [USS] *Monaghan* (DD-354), the [USS] *Farragut* (DD-348), and the USS *Alewyn* were the other ships. They were all there. We were 353, the [USS] *Alewyn* was 360, the [USS] *Monaghan* was 354, and so forth. We took a bunch of flyers to Pearl Harbor. They got real seasick on their way over there. We told them flyers there, they were laying all over the deck, they were puking their heads off. I told that flyer [laying on deck] down there "You know, the galley's got some good greasy pork chops, they'll just cook you some." He was, "ahha." He said, "If I ever get off this damn ship, I'll never get on another ship. I'm gonna stay in the air." I said, "Well, we're doing the best we can for you. We're taking you over there. That's where you wanted to go."

SH: What does a deckhand do for entertainment because it is a long journey?

AA: No, we played a lot of cribbage. We played a lot of cards, played canasta, played other forms of cards. We gambled a lot on the ship, with dice, and we played blackjack and poker with the cards. So we kept pretty busy. You stood watches, too, about every twelve hours you had a four hour watch.

SH: Your watch was where your battle station was, is that where you stood your watches?

AA: Yeah. We had stood watch on the bridge. We had to man the wheel, that's what they steered the ship with.

SH: Right, right.

AA: Then we had a watch, up in the crow's nest, which was about eighty feet up in the air. I was in there one day; that was the only time I ever got seasick. We had a pretty rough sea and that ship was rolling and going where you could see the ocean, right over the ocean like this, and then it would sway back, all the way back like this. That's the only time I ever got seasick. I had the four to eight watch. About eight o'clock, quarter to eight, my relief called up there and he said, "Come on down, I'm ready to relieve you." I said, "Man, I ain't about to come dawn that ladder, I'm sicker then hell." I said, "I'm just going to have to stay up here until I get better." It was that afternoon before I, finally, got able to climb down that ladder.

SH: Oh, dear. Now what months was this that you are traveling then to Pearl? This is 1940?

AA: This was 1940.

SH: This would have been?

AA: This was about September, October. In Pearl Harbor we had training. We'd go out and fire, battle practice at night, practice maneuvers at night, and then the day-time they had a target plane would fly over towing a sleeve. We'd fire at that target and see if we could hit him rather than knock [the place] down. [laughter] So anyway, we patrolled between what they called Diamond Head, you know that's the volcano, between Diamond Head and Barbares Point, on [the other] end. That was [the entrance to] Pearl Harbor, where we had gates that closed up and opened up.

So we were patrolling up [and] down there. We did pick up a Japanese destroyer; at least we think it was a Japanese destroyer about, I guess, nine or ten before Pearl Harbor.

SH: So you were still there a year later in 1941.

AA: Yeah. We had, I don't know what you call it, sonar or what, but anyway it was a sonar device, and we pinged him and picked him up. The *Monaghan* or the *Farragut*, got on the other side and they pinged him, so we had him in between the two of us. We wanted to depth charge him and bring him up. The Skipper, called Pearl Harbor and they said, "No, don't depth charge him."

SH: Don't engage him in any way.

AA: They said, "Just keep him down and follow him and see where he goes." So we kept him down for about two days and we finally lost him over around Diamond Head. He got into some shallow water, we couldn't get in there, and at night he got out of there and we lost him. Many of us never seen or heard from him since, but he was down there.

SH: So there was a submarine that close.

AA: They were spying at that time, there's no doubt about it. They were probably watching traffic going in and out of Pearl Harbor. Naturally, they were reporting that information.

SH: Now this was in the early Fall of 1941.

AA: That's right. At that time, there was a big build up of the Army and the Navy and the Marines was slowly building up Pearl Harbor.

SH: So you saw that because you were there in '41.

AA: Yeah, I was there in '41. So, there were so many soldiers, Marines, and sailors coming into Pearl Harbor that when you went ashore in Honolulu you almost got pushed off the street because there was so many people. It almost looked like Times Square, you know, on New Year's Day. So I got tired of Pearl Harbor on account of that and I put in what they call a "chit," to transfer off the *Dale*. At that time, there were some destroyers going down to Australia on a *Good Will* cruise, so they were asking for some more sailors, more deckhands. So I put in the order and the commander, he turned it down. So, about a week or so later, another draft come in that was going to the Asiatic Station. I put in again and he turned it down. Then the next time the troop transport, the *Henderson*, was going to the Asiatic Station. So I put in to transfer off and when he turned it down, I went up and talked to him, his name was Commander Heel. I asked him, "Commander, how come I can't get off this ship?" "Every time I put in for a transfer you turn it down." He said, "Son, I'm going to talk to you like a father. You don't want to go to the Asiatic Station." He said, "We're on the verge of war. At the Asiatic Station you're going to be on the front line." He said, "You're a good sailor and we don't want to lose you." He said, "Take my advice and stay on the *Dale*." I said, "Well, I appreciate it, Commander, but I still want to go to the Asiatic Station. If we go to war, we go to war. That's why I joined the Navy

for in the first place." So he says, "Okay." He signed it, and away I went. So, we took a bunch of Marines to Wake Island. This was the last troop transport that went across there before the war. It went to Wake, Guam, Manila, and then Shanghai. We dumped a bunch of them marines at Wake, and dumped a bunch more in Guam, and between Guam and Manila they put a roster on the board of where each one of those sailors was going to go. Because they were building up the Asiatic Fleet out there. A lot of them went in different directions. So, I got the USS *Wake*, which was on the Yangtze Patrol in Shanghai.

SH: Now, what was the name of the ship you're on now? What was the transport? Does it have a number?

AA: The troop transport was the USS Henderson. When the transport unloaded you in Shanghai, he went back. He went back. He picked up some people and was going back to the States. Some of them had their tour of duty expire, and so forth. So, anyway, I was up in the bow and working with an old chief and he was teaching me how to splice wire. A guy, another sailor, got assigned to the USS *Houston*. The *Houston* went down first and he came up to me and he said, "You got the *Wake*?" I said, "Yeah, I got the *Wake*." He said, "I'll give you fifty dollars to swap with me." I said, "I don't know. I'll have to think about it." So I asked the chief down there, because I never heard of the Yangtze Patrol, never heard of the gun boats, or anything else out there, so I asked the chief, "What is the *Wake*?" "Did you get the *Wake?*" he says. I said, "Yeah, some guy wants to give me fifty bucks to swap with him, he's going to the *Houston*." He said, "Don't you do that." He said, "You got the best duty in the American Navy on that Yangtze Patrol in Shanghai." He said, "You're damn lucky and very fortunate you got the river." He said, "Don't let him swap you out of that." So the next day this guy come and offered me one hundred dollars. I said, "No, I'm going to go on the *Wake*." So I went to the *Wake*. We had three ships in China on the Yangtze patrol. We had the *Wake*, the *Oahu*, and the *Luzon*. But prior to that, the USS *Panay*, which the Japs sunk up at Nanking. We had the one ship stationed in Shanghai, one stationed in Nanking, and one stationed in Hankow. Hankow was six hundred miles up the Yangtze River. We would rotate, about every three months we would rotate around. So, just before the war started we were sitting in Yangzhou, China, which was Japanese-occupied territory.

SH: You were as far up the river as ...

AA: We was six hundred miles up. At that time, they had started pulling the Marines out of Shanghai. The Fourth Marine regiment was in Shanghai. The Old Man got orders to proceed down the river without a relief.

SH: So you are, basically, leaving that station to the Japanese.

AA: Right. But he said, first, before we go, he said, "We're going to have to unload that Navy (go-down?)" which was like a warehouse, had all our supplies and stuff. So it was pouring down rain, this was in November, so it was pouring down rain and snowing and cold. So we all had .45s on and we got a bunch of coolees. We started loading them coolees up, wagons of them, and pulled them down to the dock down there.

SH: Now this was before Pearl Harbor.

AA: This was just before, this was days before Pearl Harbor

SH: Okay.

AA: Just a few days before Pearl Harbor.

SH: Because there were some major operation, training exercises or something in November right?

AA: I think Pearl Harbor knew that war was eminent.

SH: Really?

AA: Now, the Japanese had control over the Yangtze River. No ships were allowed up the river at night. So the next morning, after we got to go down and put all this stuff on board ship, the old man started getting up steam. The Japs were across the river. Now the Yangtze is a big river. It's a huge river. They're way across the stream over there. So, he seen us getting up steam, the smoke coming up. So he hops off of his ship, he comes around, had a boat took him over to the side there. He comes down there to the pontoon, we was tied up to the pontoon, like a dock.

SH: Now this was in November '41.

AA: This was November '41. This was about November the twentieth. He came down and he asked permission to come aboard. So we said, "Okay." Because, me and another guy were standing by the gang plank to pull it in. The Skipper was standing there and the Jap said, he said, "You got to wait until I get my ship, get up steam, and we'll give you an escort down the river." The Captain said, "We don't need no escort." He said, "We're leaving within the hour." He said, "Well, you can't do that." The Old Man said, "You got two seconds to get your A double S off this ship." He turned around and told us to pull the gang plank in. So we pulled the gang plank in and he had to jump from there over to the dock. We went full speed down [to] Shanghai, all day and all night, and the Japs were firing at us on both sides of the river as we was going down.

SH: Were they really?

AA: Yeah. So we got into Shanghai, and a couple of days before we got there we had orders of who was going to stay on the *Wake* and who was going to transfer off. So what they did was they left a skeleton crew on the *Wake* and they got captured the first day of the war. Soon as we hit Shanghai ...

SH: Now where was the other ships?

AA: The *Oahu* and the *Luzon* were already in Shanghai. They had come down river ahead of us. They was tied up. So we went along side and tied up to them, so we started throwing our gear and our sea bags over to the ships. I went over to the *Oahu*. It was two o'clock in the

afternoon when we got into Shanghai and we immediately started throwing our stuff. So the Skipper said, "We're leaving at ten o'clock tonight. I'm going to give you your liberty until ten but whoever's not on this ship by ten is going to get left" ... So, we went ashore and hit the bars in Shanghai, and, I don't mind telling you, we all got plastered. So, I was so plastered that they picked me up and throwed me on the deck of the ship.

SH: Just like a seabag.

AA: I woke up about two or three o'clock in the morning, at night. These gun boats only had a three-foot free board; they were not built for the ocean. They had a flat bottom on it. ...

SH: Now where were you headed? Did you know where you were going to head out to when you left at ten o'clock at night? Did the Captain tell you?

AA: No, we'll tell you about that in a minute.

SH: Okay, sorry.

AA: But, anyway, we had the decks boarded up with two-by-eights planks bow to the stern to keep the ocean off, because a three foot three board is not very much, especially [on] a flat bottomed boat. So, I got up and all the hatches on the main deck were already sealed up. The only way you could get down in the crew's quarters, you had to go up a ladder and then you open up a hatch and then you went down. So I went up and over and got down there, and, my lord, those sailors were all over the floor down there. They were seasick. They were puking all over the place and I said, "Man, this ain't no place for me." So I went back up and I went up toward the bridge. I went past the galley and we had a crazy cook. I don't mind telling you, he was crazy. I asked him, I said, "Cookee, where we going?" "Don't ask me, don't ask me, I don't know where the hell we're going." "Well," I said, "Can I get a cup of coffee?" "Hell, no, you can't get no damn coffee," and I said, "Well, screw you," and I went up on the bridge and I asked the OD up there, I said, "Where we going?" We thought we was going to Hong Kong, and the OD said, "We're going to Manila." The Old Man didn't know where we was going until we got out to sea and he had sealed orders. So when he opened up the sealed orders, then, he set the course for Manila. During that period of time, we had kept tally

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please continue.

AA: Well, pick up when we left Shanghai, at ten o'clock at night, that's when we went out to sea, which I already covered that. The *Wake* had tied up in the middle of the river. At that time we left a skeleton crew on there. We left a Lieutenant, I think a Lieutenant, a Lieutenant Commander, a radioman, a chief, and they had a bunch of Chinese workman that stayed on the ship. They got captured the first day of the war. So we sailed out.

SH: Do you remember the date that you sail out of Shanghai?

AA: It was around the 26th or 27th of November that we left Shanghai. They hit Pearl Harbor on December the eighth.

SH: They hit Pearl on the seventh and Manila on the eighth.

AA: Right, this was about November the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh.

SH: Okay.

AA: They were pulling the Marines out and proud of that and they were still pulling Marines out when we left. They was couple of them presidential liners that was carrying the Marines out and one of them run aground and he never got off that, but, anyway. We had a Lieutenant named Kemp Tolly that we picked up in Hankow. Kemp Tolly was an intelligence officer. He was apparently observing the Jap troops movements, and so forth, up in Hankow. So when we went down the river there was no other transportation for him to get out. So we took him down the river to Shanghai and we took him all the way to Manila. So, Kemp Tolly, he asked the Skipper if he could navigate the ship to Manila. The Skipper said, "Sure." I don't know if you know much about Kemp Tolly or not, but I won't get into that at this point here ...

SH: Were you guys traveling together, just the two ships?

AA: Yeah, *Oahu* and the *Luzon*.

SH: Just alone, there are no destroyers?

AA: Nothing. Like I said, they were built for the river not for the ocean. About three days out, I had the watch on the bridge. It's the wheel watch and I told you that's what we steered the ship with and almost about, I guess, about five o'clock in the morning the ocean picked up and we got on the edge of a typhoon. We were having about twenty to thirty foot swells. When we went down in the trough, the *Luzon,* up above, couldn't even see our mast. That's how deep it was in there. The ship was hard to steer in that kind of a sea, because it was a flowing sea with one swell right after the other. So we got hit with one swell that turned the ship and you had no control over the wheel. The ship rolled almost fifty-eight degrees. Why it didn't go on over nobody knows. But Kemp Tolly somehow got a photograph of the kilometers and it showed that ship hit fifty-eight degrees. It flew the [Old] Man, the Skipper, and Tolly all the way across the bridge over there. The Skipper started hollering for the quarter-master to grab the wheel. Because he thought it was me, he pushed me out of the way, because I got on the wheel and the ship was going this way and my feet straight out, so he got the wheel and I crawled up to where I could hold onto something, but he couldn't do no better than I was doing. It was just uncontrollable. Then about, I guess, two or three hours later the sea calmed straight down, became emerald green, prettiest ocean you ever seen, completely flat, level.

SH: In just a couple hours, a few hours.

AA: Yeah.

SH: Unbelievable.

AA: Manila had already sent two mine sweepers to pick us up because they thought we were in trouble. They sent the *Finch* and another one of the mine sweepers. One of the mine sweepers broke down and had to get towed by the other one, but we made it. But between Formosa and the Philippines we ran into the Japanese fleet, which was on their way to invade us at Lingayen Gulf.

SH: Really?

AA: There was a Jap transport, ships all over the ocean. You could see the troops laying on the deck; you could see the artillery pieces on the deck. They had destroyers, with cruisers escorting them. They had fighter planes come off of Formosa, which is Taiwan now, and they flew over, they got so low you could see the pilot and the gunner in there. He circled the ship four or five times and they let us go on through. Now, Admiral Glassfoot was on the *Luzon*, he radioed that information to Pearl Harbor, Washington, Manila. They didn't do nothing about it. So we told them they was coming; four days later they hit Pearl Harbor. So we got into Manila Bay just hours before they hit Pearl Harbor. The Old Man sounded General Quarters about two o'clock in the morning, Manila time. We were all sleeping and everything. We come running up to the guns and said, "What the hell is the matter with the Old Man? Goddamn, he must be crazy." Some guy said, "Oh, hell, he must be drunk."

SH: Now had any of you gotten to go ashore once you got into Manila?

AA: We had one liberty. We didn't get another liberty until three-and-a-half-years later. [laughter]

SH: Did you make the most of that liberty?

AA: We sure did. Got everybody down on the quarter deck down there and the Old Man said, "They just bombed Pearl Harbor," and he said, "We're at war." He said, "Break out live ammunition and set conditions two, which is General Quarters. He said, "At daylight, you're going to see bombers." He was right. About ten o'clock in the morning, here comes about, I guess, there must have been about twenty-four or thirty-six bombers came over. You could see them, when they turn in the sun you can see the sun flashing off of them. They plastered Cavite. They tore Cavite completely up. They hit one submarine, the Seawolf [SS 197], was along side the dock. Another submarine had to be pulled off, because the dock and everything was all in flames, and the oil coming off of there was all afire and the water was all aflame, all over. They hit the [USS] *Perry* [DMS-17], which was a destroyer, he was trying to get out of the way; he was zig zagging, and one bomb hit that crow's nest on there and killed about seven or eight sailors. They straddled another destroyer, and you couldn't even see the destroyer with all the water splashing up, but he come crawling out of there.

SH: Now when they hit Pearl why did the boats stay tied up, like the *Seawolf*? Wouldn't they immediately go to some battle station?

AA: They really didn't have all that much time. Because about two or three o'clock in the morning, Manila time, is when they hit Pearl Harbor, about seven-thirty their time. That's when the war started. So, you really didn't have time to do anything because just about four or five hours later the Jap bombers were coming off Taiwan, Formosa, and they was bombing Clark Field and Nichols Field and that's where MacArthur lost all his damn planes. He lost his B-17 and he lost a lot of the fighter planes out there.

SH: So you pulled the one submarine …

AA: So we pulled away the submarine, the destroyer, and some PT boats had already picked up steam and they was headed down Manila Bay, toward Corregidor, to get away from Cavite Navy Yard. The whole Cavite Navy Yard was in flames. They really tore it up on that first bombing raid. They hit the fuel supply. We had no more fuel, cause they hit the fuel and blowed it up. John Buckley's PT boats, he was the first one to go on down to, he was making knots going on down toward Corregidor. That's when the war actually started there, out in Manila.

SH: What was your ship ordered to do in this chaos?

AA: We was firing antiaircraft guns. But, see, we only had two three-inch fifty, [we] didn't have the range, [only] about twenty-five thousand feet, and they was bombing around, I would say they were bombing around twenty-eight, thirty thousand. Whenever one would drop down, we knocked down quite a few planes over Manila at that time, because you could see them hit and they would go over the land burning, flaming. So as soon as they got it under control, then we picked up the gun boats and we headed down toward Corregidor. We tied up in that little tadpole area, which is on the Manila-side of the bay. That's where we anchored during the war. We patrolled Manila Bay, South China Sea, and the whole area at night. Day-time we patrolled too. MacArthur had already been moved from Manila down to Corregidor. He established his headquarters on Corregidor. So, when MacArthur left, we was patrolling the channel, the north channel, and MacArthur left the north dock, and John Buckley picked him up, on the PT boats, and they took him down to Mindanao, which is down here. They picked him up and carried him down to a pineapple plantation down on Mindanao.

SH: Del Monte.

AA: Well, you see, they were going to take MacArthur out on a submarine. But he had claustrophobia and he wouldn't ride it. But when he got on that PT boat, he wished to hell he'd got on that submarine.

SH: I'll bet.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please continue, you were talking about MacArthur wishing he was on the submarine rather than this PT boat.

AA: Yeah. Well, see, during that time before he left, he left I think in February of '42. Bataan fell on April 9th, '42. We were already getting bombed and shelled pretty heavy on Corregidor and the other fortified islands. Fort Hughes, Fort Drum, Fort Frank, we were all getting plastered with two forty-millimeter artillery coming from the Bataan side and, also, after Bataan fell, they moved them over to the Cavite side, so we was getting in the middle.

SH: What were you doing, what was your ship doing?

AA: We were patrolling.

SH: Were you reporting what you saw? Were you engaging aircraft?

AA: No, no. We prevented the Japanese from landing back of the lines on Bataan. We busted up four or five invasions.

SH: How many of you are there?

AA: Two ships.

SH: Really?

AA: We sunk, what the Japs had was a tug boat and they were towing a bunch of landing barges in back of them. So what we did was we blowed the tug boat up and the rest of them was powerless and they was drifting. So we just circled around them and blowed them all out of the water. We killed them all in there. There's one book that tells of a soldier over there on Bataan and he said he thought it was fireworks out that night. We was blowing ships up at twelve or one o'clock at night. So that was our primary purpose, in patrolling in Manila Bay. They formed what they called the Inshore Patrol, and at that time, as soon as we got to Manila, Admiral Glasswood was transferred off and they dissolved the Yangtze Patrol. When they dissolved the Yangtze Patrol they formed what they called the Inshore Patrol. The Inshore Patrol was the gun boats, the mine sweepers, and whatever else they had out there, anything that had a gun on it, that was the Inshore Patrol. But, basically, we did all the patrolling. The mine sweeper, they didn't do any patrolling.

SH: What kind of communications were there for you out there patrolling all of the time and where did you get your fuel?

AA: Well, we had one ship load of fuel, and that was all, so we had to make it last. So, we cut back on the patrols. In the day-time we anchored over in that tadpole area and then patrol at night. We'd patrol with one boat at night to conserve fuel. That's the only time that we was patrolling so-to-speak. The time we was tied up in the tadpole area we used to go swimming off the side of the ship; we'd go over to Corregidor and play cards with the Marines. There was a machine gun nest up on top of Corregidor and we'd go up there and play cards with them until the bombers started coming over. But, see, after they hit Clark Field and Nichols Field and they had pushed us all the way back into Bataan, the Japanese didn't need many planes, because they could fuel at Clark Field, come over Manila about twenty minutes away, bomb, come back,

reload with bombs and come back. So, the air traffic over Corregidor was pretty heavy. Then when Bataan fell, the Japanese moved two forty-millimeter guns down Bataan. They had them lined up for about seventeen miles and they had a big balloon. This observation balloon was just out of range of our guns, we couldn't hit him. He was sitting up there and he was directing fire down on Corregidor. That's how they were so accurate over there. They had … hit Corregidor with so many shells that, that was the most heavily hit piece of real estate in World War II. … One day we was laying right off of Corregidor and planes hit them, artillery was firing. The whole island was burning. You couldn't even see the island through the smoke and the fire, and I said, "Man, I don't see how in the hell anybody will be living over there." But they did. They survived it. But if you see the pictures of the damage they done on Corregidor, you can see it. We was almost right off of Corregidor in the channel. The Japanese started firing on the Battery Geary, and what they did, they would fire a dud from there, then they would fire a live ammunition through, and they kept firing at that same spot until they broke through the wall, where the ammunition was at. Ninety-five-thousand pounds of black powder went up at one time. It blowed them, there was four mortars in there, sixteen [and] fourteen-inch mortars. Them mortars weighed more than a ton. I don't mind telling you they were bolted into concrete. It throwed one of them clean out to the South China Sea. It throwed another one out toward the golf course and another one they never found yet. But about, I think about eighty or ninety men left the face of the earth at that time. That was the end of Battery Geary. So, that was just part of the war on Corregidor.

SH: Were you able to watch and see all this from where you were?

AA: Yeah, we were still on the ship. We were still in the channel. We were tied up in there, and when they bombed Corregidor and they missed Corregidor, they almost straddled us down below.

SH: Were you camouflaged under there?

AA: No, we wasn't camouflaged.

SH: How did they not know where you were with all these planes flying around?

AA: Well, they did know where we was at. No question about it. The Japs also had some Filipino people who were spying on us and notifying the Japanese. But the Japanese knew where everyone of those gun positions was on Corregidor. They had gotten that information with workers working in peace time. So they knew that Corregidor was heavily armed. Fort Drum is another fort right off of Corregidor, in the Manila Bay. It had sixteen-inch naval rifles on it. Those guns did more damage to the Japs on Bataan than anything else. The Japs, the ones that survived, they said they were deathly afraid of where that sixteen-inch would go because it would clear acres of land whereever they hit. They would fire over the top of us, and rotating bands would come off, and they would come screaming down with the damndest noise you've ever heard. They went over the top and they'd sound like eighteen-wheelers on a wet highway. It shook everything when they come over, I'll tell you that. So, when Bataan was falling, we was in back of the Japanese lines in Manila Bay and we was watching the firing at night. Now, going across Bataan, I don't know if you know anything about the geography or not.

SH: Well, I've been studying the map here.

AA: Well, you see, you got from Manila Bay over to the South China Sea straight across is about nineteen miles. You got, Mount Samat is in the middle. Mount Samat is about four thousand feet high.

SH: Okay.

AA: We had Mount Samat heavily armed because we was looking right down the valley where the Japs were at. This is why the Japs had trouble trying to take Bataan. See, the Japs had fifty-five days to take Bataan, instead it took them four-and-a-half to five months.

SH: Because you are right up here on the top. You've got all this observation …

AA: Right. Just before Bataan was falling, we could see the Japs firing this way, right up and down that line. Our guns were firing this way, back at them, and that fire was so heavy that after a while the American guns started to cease to be. They just got wiped out. But they were just like a machine gun, they fire this one, this one, this one, by the time they got there, they started back over again like this. At day-light, we knew Bataan was falling. They started blowing up the ammunition dumps on Bataan, we could see the black smoke. We knew Bataan was falling, so, while the Japs, had broken through the lines, we would follow the Japs down to Manila Bay and we were firing on the Japs on the land over there, trying to slow them down. We fired all the way down to what they call Cabcaben, which we had a little old airfield down in. We kept firing all the way down to Corregidor. Bataan, at Mariveles, was in chaos, because we had all the nurses in Bataan down there and we had all the soldiers from Bataan back down in that little area. They was all trying to get to Corregidor. So, we took as many off of there and we dumped them in the surf at Corregidor and [then] go back and try to get some more. We got all the nurses off of there. There were no nurses captured on Bataan, and all the nurses wound up on Corregidor. Now, before Corregidor fell, we was taking the nurses out on submarines.

SH: Oh, you were.

AA: We had submarines coming in there and was taking them out. We had the whole Philippines treasury, it had been moved to Corregidor, and the submarines would come in and would load gold bars up on there and they used it for stabilizing forces, and then they would put as many nurses as they could carry at one time out, and then they took off.

SH: You were helping load the gold?

AA: No, well, I didn't load the gold on Corregidor because I was out on the ship, out in the channel. It was the soldiers there that loaded them up, but I know that they loaded them up.

SH: How did they get the nurses and the people moved? How did they get the people over from Bataan over to Corregidor? What carried them over?

AA: Every kind of a little boat, anything you could have imagined. Some of them even tried to swim across there.

SH: Did they?

AA: Yeah, it was a two-and-a-half mile stretch from Mariveles over to Corregidor. That channel there's a real strong current in there. When we patrolled it, we knew that current, the only way you could swim cross it was at ebb tide; when the tide was absolutely stopped for about thirty minutes or so, then you could make it across there. But you had to really paddle fast, otherwise, they got swept out to sea, they drowned. But it was total chaos down there, when they was taking out the nurses. We had a naval intelligence station on the rear end of Corregidor, down by that tadpole shape, we had a naval intelligence station down there. We had the only PURPLE machine in the East at that time. You know what a PURPLE machine was? Even MacArthur didn't have one. MacArthur was mad because we had it and he didn't. But, anyway, we kept them informed. But when they, the Japs, were taking Corregidor, we blew them tunnels up, and all the intelligence machines that they couldn't carry, we blew all them up. They took out all the intelligence personnel out on submarines because they didn't want them to fall in Jap hands, and then they took a lot of pilots out of there; they took some submarine people out. They took the important people out. The peons like me we were left. We didn't expect to get out anyways. They took them all out of there. But, when MacArthur got into that PT boat and they hit about an eight-to-ten foot sea. A couple of the boats even broke down. They had to jetsam and get over to the, any land the best way that they could.

SH: They took him down to Mindanao.

AA: They took him down to Mindanao, the pineapple plantation down there. They sent a B-17 from Australia up to Mindanao to pick him up. Now Mac said when he got off of that PT boat that he thought he was in a cement mixer. He never wanted to see another damn PT boat again as long as he lived. Buckeley got him down there.

SH: Now when Bataan is falling what are you doing?

AA: We're patrolling Manila Bay. We're still patrolling. Like I said, we were back of the lines in Bataan when Bataan was falling.

SH: Weren't you on the wrong end, if my geography is correct, weren't you on the wrong ...

AA: We was on the water. Japs were going this a way and we were steaming this a way. We were firing. We had three-inch fifty guns that would reach over there and we were firing trying to slow them down, because you could see the Japs soldiers going through there, it was that close.

SH: Really.

AA: When the ammunition dump started blowing up we knew then that was the end of Bataan.

SH: Now, were the Americans blowing up the ammunition dumps?

AA: Yeah. We blowed it up to keep it out of the Jap hands.

SH: Okay, that's what I wondered, if the Japs blew it up by their missiles or their shells.

AA: So, Bataan fell on April the ninth. Now, General King was supposed to surrender Bataan. Now, General King was from Atlanta, Georgia, and he was an expert on the Civil War, and the reason he surrendered on April the ninth was because Grant and Lee surrendered on April the ninth, the same time, so he deliberately picked April the ninth to surrender. But the line had already capitulated, anyway. So like the Jap General Homma told General King, said, "You don't have nothing to surrender." He said, "We already broke through your lines. We're ten miles in back of you right now." So Bataan actually capitulated that day but we call it surrender. But it wasn't no surrender, it fell.

SH: And then what?

AA: And then what? Then the war started on Corregidor.

SH: And you kept doing the same thing you were doing?

AA: No, after Bataan fell we couldn't operate. There was no purpose in patrolling Manila Bay because the Japs already had it anyway. So what we did was, from our anchorage there, from the Bataan side they couldn't hit us, because Corregidor went up like this and around and we was behind the rock on Corregidor. They didn't, they started shelling Corregidor. They were shelling it day and night, right on up until May, Corregidor fell on May sixth. They sunk us on May fifth.

SH: So they did sink your ship.

AA: They had sunk the ship. We had moved the ship from there, over to where Fort Hughes was, and we was anchored between Fort Hughes and Corregidor, because [of] the two forty-millimeter guns over on the Cavite side, we was using Fort Hughes as a barrier in there. They finally hit it with the two forty-millimeter guns, they hit it with the bombs, and that's what blowed it up.

SH: What about the other ship you had been patrolling with?

AA: The other ship? They sunk the *Mindanao*, the *Luzon* got captured. The Japs used the *Luzon* as a patrol boat themselves, and they used it the whole time that they occupied the Philippines.

SH: So when your boat was hit tell me what you did.

AA: Well, we had evacuated the ship, and we was over there at Fort Hughes with the Marines. We were on the beaches at Fort Hughes. We would make water at night and haul it over to Fort

Hughes. Fort Hughes had a water supply that was sort of like a swimming pool. They had a corrugated metal garage like over the top of it and they had a concrete top. Well, the Japs hit it and they hit it with a pitric acid bomb. The petric acid poisoned all of the water. So, Fort Hughes had no water. We couldn't have lasted another thirty days even if [they] hadn't invaded because there was no water. They had already blowed up the water supply, up on Corregidor, and that was the only one that could make water. During peace-time they hauled a lot of water from Mariveles over to Corregidor. But Corregidor did have some wells in there that they was pumping until they got blowed up. When they got blowed up, that ended the water supply. We made what water we could and took it over to Fort Hughes. We had about, I don't know, there must have been fifteen-hundred, eighteen-hundred men on Fort Hughes.

SH: How much water could you make in a twenty-four hour period?

AA: On the ship, we could make quite a bit.

SH: Could you?

AA: We had the small boats. We'd take it over there in five-gallon cans or drums, anything else we could fill up and take it over there. The only water left on Fort Hughes was a well that was brackish. It was unfit to drink, just brackish water. So during that period of time the only water was used was for cooking purpose. Nobody could get a bath or anything else.

SH: So how long were you stranded on [Fort] Hughes then?

AA: We stayed on Hughes until the surrender.

SH: And then what happened?

AA: That's when the Japs captured us.

SH: Did they come ashore? How did the surrender take place?

AA: Well, General Wainwright sent orders down, he said, "I'm going to surrender at eleven-thirty on May the sixth." He said, "Destroy all weapons above forty-five caliber." Over there on Fort Hughes, the right side of Corregidor, we started blowing up all the guns over there. We had fourteen, sixteen-inch mortars and we drained all the oil out of the cylinders and fired it, and that throwed it out of the carriage. We didn't have any weapons left but forty-five-caliber pistols. The Japs didn't want to honor the surrender, and they kept bombing and shelling us even after the surrender. So, the commander at Fort Hughes, he ordered everybody off the beaches. He pulled all the Marines out of the machine gun nests and all of us, we went up to the Battery Gillespie under the parapet, because there was no purpose to stay down there and get killed. So at night, the Japs came ashore. At night, after they came ashore, they went right through the mine field. We had a mine field on Fort Hughes and for some reason, very little of it blowed up. But in the mean time the Japs had throwed five gallon cans of water all over that beach, and they come in at midnight and they were firing weapons all the way up to the Battery Gillespie. So, the Japs got up to the Battery Gillespie and one of them went up to the main entrance and he showed a

flashlight in there, because there were no lights, and he told everybody to come out with their hands up. If they didn't come out he was going to blow them up. So we all came out of there and he marched us down to the dock.

SH : Was he speaking English, did he speak English?

AA: Some of them did, but most of them didn't, but, anyway, you went by signs. So they put us down by the dock on Fort Hughes and they made us all sit down in a row, and we sit there for four days. We got one can of Carnation milk to split between three people in four days, and that was our own rations that the Japs had captured. …

SH: No water?

AA: They wouldn't give you no water. They took a bunch of us down to the beach where the five-gallon cans of water was at and we had to walk across the mine fields, grab the five-gallon cans, and get the hell out of there before you got blowed up. [laughter] It was a mess.

SH: Did any of the mines blow then?

AA: No, for some reason they didn't blow. I don't know why. But we had the beach down there all mined. So the Japs kept us down there and after four days they moved us over to Corregidor to what they called the 92nd Garage area. I guess you know about the 92nd Garage area.

SH: I've heard of it, yes.

AA: Well, they had about eight, nine thousand of us in that 92nd Garage area down there. So they moved us over there and ...

SH: What did they transport you on?

AA: They had like Liberty boats. They could only take so many at a time but it was a short haul across there. So, they would run from this dock to that dock over there, I guess, probably [in] about ten or twelve or fifteen minutes, no more than that anyway. They would unload them and then come back and get another group. So, eventually, they got us all over there. So, we was on the 92nd Garage area down there from May the tenth or eleventh until about the twenty-sixth of May. During that period of time, at the 92nd Garage area, they only had one water line for eight to ten thousand people. They had no latrine facilities, and they had machine guns lined up. It was kind of a saucer shape, it went down like this but went up, so they had their guns on top. The only food you could get on there was what you could scavenge and find, if you were able to get out of that 92nd Garage area and go up toward the tunnels where there was food, canned goods, and so forth in there. Well, during this period of time dysentery started running rampant. The guys were dying like flies down there, with no place to bury them. It was the worse mess that I have ever seen in my life. I would never want to go through that again. But anyway, ...

SH: What were you personally doing at this time? What were you doing?

AA: We doing? Nothing. Trying to get some water, if we could, because that one water spigot was lined up. It would take thirty-six hours, twenty-four to thirty-six hours, if you were lucky to get up there and then you could only fill up one canteen. That was all the water you got, and you were lucky, if you got any, and it didn't rain. But the ocean was there, we did get out into the water and get a bath. But the Japs then said, "Draw a line across there. Cross that line and we're going to shoot you." So you didn't dare go very far out in that water, but at least you could get cooled down 'cause the sun was baking you. Guys were trying to make shade out of anything they could get with sticks and stick it up. It was just like the pictures you've seen of the Civil War. But all those men down there with all those shanty shacks was just the way it was on the 92nd Garage area. Same difference, same thing.

SH: Did you manage to stay together with your crew, or were you all just mixed all in, or …

AA: We stayed pretty much together but it wasn't no fault of the Japs. The Japs didn't care who you was, or what you was, or where you come from. They throwed you all in the same melting pot.

SH: What about your officers from your ship, were they separated or did they stay with you?

AA: No, at that time they were down at the 92nd Garage area with us, all of the officers. About May sixth to about May twenty-sixth, that's when they moved us off. When they moved us off the 92nd Garage area, they lined us up and put us on an old freighter and they took it down to Manila and dumped us off in the surf, down there in Manila, 'cause the ship couldn't get [out of] the very deep water, he had to stop. So they throwed us all off [and] said, "Everybody out. We don't care how you get out. You jump in the water." They said, "You're going to get off." If you couldn't swim, it was tough, clothes and all, they throwed you off. So we got on the beach and we had sand and everything in our shoes and we tried to sit down, and they wouldn't even let you take your shoes off to get the sand out of it. So they marched us from the pier down there, all the way across Manila to Bilibid Prison, and at Bilibid Prison we had so many guys that some guys were sleeping under the electric chair. [laughter]. There was no, absolutely no space left at Bilibid Prison they had so many in there, and at that time, I ran into Captain Smith and some of the other officers in Bilibid and that's the last time I seen him. Now, none of [the] officers survived. The ones that didn't die in Cabanatuan, they died on the Hell Ships, they got blowed up. But none of our officers made it.

SH: How many of your crew survived?

AA: It's kind of hard for me to say because part of us was in Umeda in Osaka, and part of us were over there in Fukuoka in another camp in there. So we had, I guess, we must of had twenty or twenty-five sailors off the *Oahu* was in the same camp. … Tim Markley was a gunners mate, he wound up in Mukden in Manchuria. … Now he survived up there, but now how many of the rest of them died, I have no idea.

SH: What was the ships compliment, how many?

AA: I guess, we must have had, oh, seventy-five to a hundred, on each one of them gun boats. We had about five officers.

SH: When you walked from Manila Bay to prison, how far is that?

AA: I'd say somewhere between three and six miles.

SH: Were there people along side of the road as you walked?

AA: Yeah. The Filipino civilians were lined up on both sides of the street, and if they tried to throw us any food a Jap would kill them. He would either bayonet them, or shoot him, or bust him in the head with a club. The Filipinos even defied that and still throwed what little bit of food they could that we could get. Now, if we tried to pick it up they'd bust us in the head, and they wouldn't let you have it. So we'd have to take it and hide it the best we could and keep on walking. They had Japanese officers riding horses and they were riding up and down the streets on both sides. They had these big sabers, and all that crap on them and they would run and herd just like a bunch of cattle. If anybody got out of the line, they killed them, and they didn't play around either.

SH: When they first came on at Fort Hughes what did they look like? Did they look like the enemy you thought they would be? You had seen Japanese when you were up on the Yangtze Patrol, you had already met ...

AA: See, we had witnessed the Japanese atrocities on the Yangtze River.

SH: You had seen those yourself.

AA: … We was tied up to the pontoon in Hankow and the Japanese freighter was tied up at the next pontoon over and they had collies unloading it. On this particular ship, they was unloading a lot of salt. So they caught this one collie with a handful of salt. So they tied him up to the piling with a rope. See, the Yangtze had tides in there. The land was way up here and the long wood pole here and the pontoons here. They tied him up over here at low tide and they would sit up there and shoot at him. They'd pick an ear off; they put it in the arm; they'd shoot him in the leg, and when the tide come in they just let him drown, if he was still alive, if they hadn't killed him. So we knew the Japanese were pretty vicious people. We had no use for them in China, we had no use for them in the war, and we had no use for them today, either.

SH: Tell me about your experience in the first prison you were in, in Manila there.

AA: Well, they kept us in Bilibid, it was almost like a transfer station. I was in Bilibid about eight or ten days, I guess, and they took us out of Bilibid and put us on freight cars, and they had us packed in those boxcars. So many was in there that when one died he couldn't fall. They locked the doors and [soon] they had a hundred-and-thirty-five degree heat. It was just like being in an oven. Guys with dysentery and everything was messing all over themselves and the odor was so foul and so bad, it was sickening. And if a guy died, he was just left standing. So, they took about, I guess, eight, or ten, or fifteen hours, or something, to go from Manila up to

Cabanatuan. … I think it's about seventy-five miles, I'm not sure. But those little, old, bitty boxcars and that little, old, bitty engine didn't go very fast. Then we got up to Cabanatuan, we got up there late in the afternoon. They took us to a school yard and they put us all in the school yard. … At that point, the Japs gave us a rice ball for food and there was water in the school yard, so we filled up all the canteens with water in them. So the next morning they marched us down to Cabanatuan Camp Number One and Cabanatuan Camp Number Three. Now, that's about a ten-mile march from there down to Camp One. Camp Three was about three miles further down the road. Camp Two had no water, so the only ones that stopped in Camp Number Two were left there overnight [at] the most, then they went on down to Camp Number Three. Camp Number Three they had about seven or eight thousand men in there. They had it separated off. We had the Marines, we had the Navy, and we had the Army.

SH: So they separated you.

AA: Yeah. Actually, there was no wall separation but the way it was laid out in there, that's where you stayed. Water supply in Cabanatuan was terrible. It had one spigot that was on that one end up there. It would take you about twenty-four to thirty-six hours to get a canteen of water. Then the only other water we ever got was if it rained, which very seldom it ever did rain. … I was in Camp Three until November 1942. … I would say, we got into Cabanatuan around June the fifth, fourth or fifth or sixth, in there, from Bilibid, during that period of time we lost about fifteen hundred men. [They] died of dysentery and cholera, pellagra, whatever, you name it. We was losing men, at first, around forty or fifty a day.

SH: How did you take care of them? Were you allowed to bury them?

AA: They would, all these latrines were open slit trenches, and the flies would grow in there, and that's where the dysentery would come from. While you was trying to eat, there was so many flies that you couldn't keep them off your food. You had to go around, put your arms around just like this and try to keep them off. I'm not exaggerating. The air was so full of blowflies, red, big blue-looking, green-looking blowflies that you couldn't keep them off you. You didn't scare them, they'd attack you. So, we would bury the dead, and you couldn't go very deep because you hit water. So, you'd get about three, four feet down and you'd hit water. All you could do was throw them in the hole and cover them up. A lot of times at night the dogs would come up and dig them up, you had to rebury them again. So, I was thankful that I survived Camp Three.

SH: Were you assigned jobs to do? What were you doing?

AA: What was you doing in camp? Nothing. [laughter]

SH: But as Americans, did you organize yourselves somehow? You said the Navy was kept separate, did someone say, "Okay we're going to play bridge today?"

AA: Oh, you could walk around the camp. They didn't bother you about walking around the camp. You could walk around the camp. They had an open galley and they had these great, big, round, iron pots to cook rice in. They had them set up on bricks, lined up, maybe about eight, or

ten would have fires under it. They would take a detail out of camp, march you over to the woods and make you cut firewood to stoke the galley up with, but that was the only time that anybody ever could [go] out of that camp was then.

SH: During this time, even when you were on Corregidor, did you expect to be rescued, or have Americans come and re-supply you then, or did you know it was unlikely, because you had seen the fleet? What were your expectations? Did you think the Americans were coming right away to rescue you?

AA: We always had a feeling, a lot of rumors around camp about the planes and ships that were coming. "They'll be here in a matter of a few days, just hang on," and that kind of stuff. There was a lot of scuttlebutt going around, none of it was accurate. We all felt that we wouldn't be in there very long, but we had no idea of how the war was progressing because we had no newspapers, no radios. We had nothing, so we couldn't tell where the American forces was at.

SH: How did the Navy decide who were to be on the different details? Who had KP, who did the cooking?

AA: … The ones that got the cooking jobs, you could say, was the lucky ones, because they got more to eat than anybody else. They had, you wouldn't call it a barracks, it was made out of some kind of nippa, palm leaves. It was about fifty or seventy-five feet long and they had bamboo slats down this side, and they had an aisle down the middle, and they had bamboo slats down this side, and then up on the top, about four feet up, they had another row of bamboo slats, platforms, same thing on the other side. Well, that was where we was sleeping, inside those mostly. We had a barracks leader; we would appoint, say a chief. We had appointed a barracks leader, so-to-speak, okay, he was given two wood buckets and he would assign a detail to go down to the galley and they would fill these two buckets up; they had it figured out that a bucket of rice would feed so many people. You would line up and you would get maybe a third of a canteen cup of rice a day. In the evening, you could get another third of a cup of rice. The servers, we would only let them serve one time, and then we'd put another server in. The reason for that was to keep them from packing the rice. I seen many a fight where a guy tried to pack a cup for his friend and, boy, he got clobbered.

SH: Really?

AA: No packing was allowed. You got so many dips with that canteen cup and you better not try to pack it down, and that's how tight rice was in there. That was how the whole camp was fed. Each one of these little barracks or shacks, whatever you want to call them, had so many men, they had so many buckets, they had to make do with what they got. Now, once in a while, they, later on, the Japs would take a work detail out and they would shoot a caribou. They would bring that one caribou in, and that caribou had to feed seven thousand people, so they butchered him up and there weren't nothing left. They boiled anything they had and put the pieces in there.

SH: Now did the Japanese have their own food sources?

AA: The Japanese lived across the road. They had their own camp, their own barracks, across the road. They had their own cooks over there.

SH: I was just curious how they did that. Now, did the leadership of the barracks rotate as well? Did that job rotate?

AA: No. We had the same leader in the barracks I was in, up until I left Cabanatuan. I didn't stay in Cabanatuan, but about, maybe, seven or eight months.

SH: So then where did they send you?

AA: Took me to Japan.

SH: Took you back down to Manila to get the ship.

AA: They lined us up [on] the road and they counted off so many people and they said, "You go that way." Whatever you could carry in your hand, that's all you could carry. They marched you back down to Cabanatuan village or city, whatever you want to call it, loaded you on the box cars, same way, packed you so tight you couldn't breathe, hauled you down to Manila. We spent one night in Bilibid and then [they] marched us down to the docks. Then they loaded us on the "hell ships." This particular ship was the *Nagata Maru*. So, there was fifteen-hundred of us loaded on that ship. We sat out on the dock all afternoon. They let us stand there [from] about ten o'clock in the morning, out of Bilibid, and we sat on the dock until dark. We was watching the Japs load their own people. They were taking a lot of the wounded that got shot up on Bataan and Corregidor, they was loading them, they were taking them back to Japan. They had a lot of Japanese women and children and civilians they was taking back to Japan. After they all got loaded up, they throwed us down in the hold. That was a nightmare. … The hold I was in had approximately seven-hundred-and-fifty people. They were packed so tight in that hold that everybody couldn't sit down at one time. The only latrine things were, at first we didn't have any, you just went in your britches, wherever you could. Then they finally gave us some five-gallon cans, couple, or three, five gallon cans for seven hundred and fifty people. Well, it didn't take them long, they were overflowing, running all over the deck. Stepping and sliming, and [the cans] they had a little wire to hold onto, so they would let a couple of us go up on the top and they would put a rope around that wire and pull it up. A lot of times that wire would break and it would slosh all over everybody down below them. That started the fight. That night, the first night in there, it was so hot you thought you were in a shower bath. Everybody had short tempers. You touch somebody and they were ready to fight, and all this stuff in there. So we had one sailor, guy by the name of Bigelow, he got up, he hollered out, he said, "When it gets too rough for the Skipper, it's just right for me." He said, "Everybody just settle down." That quieted them down. You didn't have any light down [there] at night and after, we was on the ship for nineteen days. You got one spoonful of water and if you spilled that spoonful you didn't get none. You got one little rice ball once a day, or once every couple of days.

SH: How was that dispensed?

AA: They'd send a bucket of rice down there and you'd have so many people, say we had ten in a group, you would get that much rice for ten people. Then, you'd sent back the bucket and they'd refill it so everybody could get a little rice ball. At night, you could hear guys screaming, and you could hear a thud or something, and a guy got murdered.

SH: Really?

AA: They started killing each other. Then they would try to drink the others blood. Then they was licking the sides of the ship for moisture, tried to get moisture. Some of them tried to drink their own urine, and don't let anyone ever tell you you can do that, 'cause it killed them. The only way you could protect yourself, there was four of us, we'd put one guy in the middle and the others would surround him; he would sit down for maybe an hour, then he would get up and another would swap places. If anybody, at night, came near you, you clobbered him. If he tried to bump you, you clobbered him. You hit him with anything you had; a canteen cup, a canteen, anything. If you didn't, you'd a get yourself killed. We was on that ship for nineteen days. I don't care what they thought about death marches, but they ain't nothing compared to those hell ships, and I mean absolutely nothing. We lost about, I'd say, between fifty and a hundred people died on that ship.

SH: Did they take care of the bodies? What did they do?

AA: We hollered up to the Japs and say, "We got a dead man in the hold," and they would lower rope down, tie it on his legs, and yank him up and throw him over the side. Now, we don't really know how many people died on that ship because there was no records kept. Nobody knows who those people was, cause nobody had any records. Now, we got to Japan and we got into Moji at night. It was freezing and pouring-down rain, and cold, and they got us off the ship and they had us lined up in the rain. The Japs were counting off. Meantime, we was freezing. The Japs corpsmen took one look in that hold and they refused to go down there and get the dead out of there. So we had to get some guys to go down there and pick them and take them. We left, I don't know, twenty-five or thirty-five people on the dock. The Japs said they'd take care of them. They were sick, they couldn't even walk or anything. The Japs said they'd take care of them. They killed them, must have, because we never saw or heard of them guys again neither. After that, a Jap officer counted off, he said, "Too many men missing." In pigeon-English, he said, "Where other men, other men where?" We said, "They're dead, where do you think they are?" "Oh, they got to be somewhere." He counted again, and he rubbed his fingers, "We got to find where these men are at." We said, "You better get up on that ship and see if you can find them 'cause we don't know where they're at." He just counted them off a third, or fourth time. In the meantime, we're standing there, we're freezing, soaking wet and cold as hell. Finally, after a while, he give in and he had another Jap officer, who was taking control of us, so he was trying to count out to give him so many men, before this guy would accept it. So, this is where part of the haggling that was going on there, but, finally, they put us on a Pullman coach and that was the only time, well, they put us on a second time, but they put us on there; they had the guard on each end of the coach; they had the windows all blocked off and [shades] pulled down where nobody could see in, or out. They took us from Moji up to Osaka.

SH: Now the four men that were in your group on the Hell ship, did you stay together?

AA: Yes.

SH: Were they from your ship?

AA: Some of them was, yeah. But, anyway, they took us up by train to Osaka. I don't know how far it is from Moji to Osaka. It's a pretty good ways. So, we got into Osaka ...

SH: Did they give you clothing and food and water when you got ...

AA: Only, on the Pullman they gave us what they called a *beno* box, it's about as big as a cigar box, and in that box they had a little bit of rice, a little bit of fish, and a little bit of seaweed. I guess that's what they sold to civilians for lunch. They gave each one of us a box of that and they give us water. So they treated us pretty good on that Pullman coach until we got to Osaka. So we got up to Osaka and they marched us from the railroad station in Osaka down to the camp [named] Umeda Bunsho. It used to be an old hat factory and they had converted that, they knew we were coming, they had converted that into a prison of war camp. We got in there about four o'clock in the afternoon and, of course, you went through the same crap. They lined you up; they counted you; and they had them counting, and counting, and recounting. Then one of the officers got up on his soap box and he was telling us the rules of the camp, and all of this crap. How they gonna kill you if you try to escape, and you had to bow to every officer, you had to bow to every Japanese, and failure to bow from you got your head knocked in. So, that's what we started Umeda Bunsho with, it was about, I think, we started out with about seven hundred, seven hundred and fifty people. This was [from] in November '42, now, by March of '43, we had already lost one third of the camp. That was due to pneumonia, dysentery, and no medical treatment what so ever. If you got sick, you just died.

SH: What did they have you doing, what was your work?

AA: Well, in Osaka they had us doing stevedoring work. We were unloading freight cars and ships, barges, everything that came into the City of Osaka we handled it. No matter if it was coal, sand, cement, wood, whatever it was, we unloaded it, and we loaded it.

SH: How closely were you guarded? Were you guarded by military or civilians?

AA: They had, two military guards would take each detail out. See, we worked, I guess, in about fifteen or twenty stations around Osaka and details would go, maybe twenty-five, or thirty-five men. The soldier would be at the head and the soldier at the rear. Then we had civilian guards, that worked for the railroad, that was on each side and they marched you back and forth.

SH: Did they supply you with food and water?

AA: We got, I'd say, fairly good rations at first in Umeda. We had plenty of water in Umeda. We had one room, that was like a wash room, must have had about ten or twelve spigots to where you could wash your face and hands and shave, and then they had a great big, like a big sauna bath that had water, was heated from the outside, and would come in through pipes. You

could get maybe twenty, twenty-five men in that pond, in that bathtub, whatever you want to call it. The water just kept re-circulating, the same old water, so you got a bath from somebody else's bath, from somebody else's bath, from somebody else's bath. [laughter] That was the way it was. The only thing that kept us alive was we did handle food in those box cars. When we handled food, we stole it, and that's the only way that we survived, 'cause the rations they had us on, I would say, was less than seven hundred calories a day, and with the work we was doing, you couln't live on it. That's why so many got sick and died. January of 1943 Osaka was cold. I mean, it was below freezing temperatures, it's cold. So, about four o'clock in the morning the Japs came in there, and they were screaming and hollering, "Everybody out. Everybody out." We said, "Can we take a coat or anything?" "Nope, everybody out." So, I had a tee shirt on and a ragged pair of dungarees and they marched us all the way across Osaka to some damn big park. We stood at attention from the time we got to that park until about five o'clock in the evening, all day long, waiting on some damn Jap generals and he got on his soap box and he was going to honor the Japanese and American dead. Meantime, he was killing us. I was so cold, that when they said, "Move," I couldn't move. A guy had to shove me off. That's how cold it was. We had guys that freezed and fell right over on their face. I … almost got pneumonia or pleurisy, I almost died from it. We did get, some of those guys did die when we got back to the camp from the cold.

SH: So they marched you then back.

AA: They marched you back, all the way back. They did some crazy things.

SH: Did you stay in this one particular place the whole time, or were you transferred?

AA: No, we stayed in Osaka from, we got there Thanksgiving Day of 1942. I know it was Thanksgiving Day, the day we got there, because I remember it. We stayed there until March of '45, in the same camp. Then the B-29s started bombing. They started bombing sometime late 1944, early '45. They bombed this whole city of Osaka, they had it all burning. It was flatter then this desk when we left there.

SH: How did you manage to survive the bombings?

AA: How? We were just lucky.

SH: What did you first think when you knew they were American bombers who were making it all the way to Osaka?

AA: Well, we knew when the bombing started that the war wasn't going to last very much longer, 'cause, see, they checker-boarded Osaka with those B-29s. They had a spotter plane start a fire down here, and then everybody got lined up by that fire, so when they went down this a way here and did [that] another group [would] come like this way. They burned that whole city of Osaka down. They had about, I'd say, two-hundred-and-fifty B-29s was hitting that place at different times.

SH: Did the Japanese use you to put out any of the fires?

AA: You couldn't even put out … [those] fires, they tried to. The only fire equipment they had was buckets of water, trying to throw [on] buckets of water. But, see, all those buildings in there wasn't built very strong. We done them, actually, I think we done them a favor by burning them down, because we killed the lice and the rats and everything with it. We also killed the civilians with it, too, but, now they built it back up to a modern city.

SH: Have you been back to Japan?

AA: I was in Japan, yeah one time. I stayed in the Navy, … I was on an oil tanker, and we were hauling oil out of Arabia, up to Athens, Greece, through the Suez Canal and back. The last trip we loaded up and took it to Yokosuka, Japan. We unloaded it in Yokosuka, Japan, and then went back to the States.

SH: We've jumped way ahead, so let's go back to March of '45, are you sent to another place now that Osaka is flattened?

AA: Yeah, well, you see, after they bombed us out, they couldn't work us, because they destroyed the railroad station, they destroyed the docks, and there were no trains could maneuver in and out of there, so they couldn't work us.

SH: Could you tell by the amount of work that you had prior to the bombings, the [US] planes getting there, was there getting to be less and less work, less ships getting in, less supplies coming? Had you been able to tell that at all? Were you beginning to get hopeful that pretty soon the Americans would be able to get to you?

AA: There was no force to get to you in Japan. Is that what you mean?

SH: No, I thought since the Americans were starting to control the seas maybe the Japanese weren't able to ship anything into Japan or get it out. You didn't notice that in Osaka.

AA: Well, it no doubt effected the Japanese population, because they were already on skimpy rations anyway. The Japanese people were already starving anyway. We was unloading a car full of rice one day and the boxcar happen to move and it was over a street and the door was open and the Japanese women were all down there and they were "chow chowing", you know, just begging you to throw [rice]. So we opened up the rice and throwed it out there to them. Of course, by the time the Jap guard got wise to what we were doing, he stopped us from doing that, but in the meantime, we did give them quite a bit of rice. But they'd sweep that rice out of the dirt or sand, that's what they was eating. They were starving. When they got bombed out they couldn't work us. When they moved us out of Osaka, the civilians almost killed us, 'cause they were so mad about the bombing, their houses were burned up, their kids were killed, members of their families was killed, and, I guess, you couldn't blame them for being mad, and they blamed us. There was nothing we could do about it. But the Jap soldiers did protect us from the civilians when they marched us out of Osaka, down to the train station, and they took us over to Tsuruga, which is directly across the island on the Inland Sea.

SH: Now the civilians, as you were going along, were they throwing things at you, were they yelling?

AA: Yeah, they were throwing rocks, spitting at you, cussing you, and everything else. They were mad, and, like I said, I guess you can't blame them. But, see, that's the bad thing about war because [of] the innocent. So, anyway, they bombed the camp down and they moved us over to Tsuruga. Tsuruga is directly across the island from Osaka. See, Osaka is right in here, right up in here, and Tsuruga is straight across over here on the Inland Sea-side. We went through Kyoto. We never bombed Kyoto, because it was an art city, I guess, you might as well say it. But no military amounted to anything in Kyoto, it was a cultural city, so-to-speak. We went through Kyoto over to Tsuruga and they took us by coach that time. We formed a camp over there in Tsuruga.

SH: What did they put you to work doing?

AA: Same thing, unloading ships and freight cars, stevedoring work.

SH: Did you notice more and more American bombers coming over? In Kyoto, Tsuruga, could you tell from there?

AA: You could, over Tsuruga, before they hit Hiroshima. On the other side of the mountain, one night it was pouring-down rain and the B-29s come over and they burnt the camp down and they burned the whole city down and we ain't even seen the first plane. I was sleeping on a platform right above the door, and you could hear the bombs coming down. We knew from the sound of the bombs that they was getting close. One guy said, "What did they hit?" I could look out over there, I said, "They just stuck it right into the mountainside." [laughter] About that time a whole rack of bombs come right through the roof. I took a dive off of that. The guys were already down there by the door trying to get out of there and I landed right on top of them. In a matter of five or ten minutes the whole camp was in flames, nothing was left. In five or ten minutes that whole building was a roaring inferno. So we hit the guard gate, the Japanese guard wasn't going to let us out, so we knocked him out of the way, and we knocked the gate down and we got out of there. We were running up the road and sounded like all hell we went up the road and bombs were still falling. The whole city was burning. Everywhere you looked you thought you was in Hell. Fire was all the way around you and there was no way you thought you was ever going to get out of there. No matter which way you turned you run into a wall of fire. The nose cones, see, those incendiary come down in a cluster, they busted them about, I don't know, three or four hundred feet in the air, and they had that big iron base and, when that broke loose, it would hit the street and it would knock a hole in there about ten feet across and about five or six feet deep. One of them things hit you, it would flatten you out like a pancake. One guy was running up the road, we was all running up the road, and the Japanese soldiers were running down the road this a way, and one had his fixed bayonet on. So he was running with his fixed bayonet, he hit that one guy and it went right through his arm. So he pulled it out and he kept on running, and the guy kept on running. The camp was right [along] side the canal that run out into the bay, so I went back to the bridge. I figured if that fire got any closer I was going to jump in that canal and start swimming down toward that bay. Looking off of the bridge, the camp was already burned down and the civilian houses over here were all in flames, and there were a bunch

of Japanese women and children across the canal. They couldn't swim, they couldn't get across, so there was eight or ten of us POWs, we jumped in the water and brought them across to safety. Word got around that we had saved these people and one Jap said, "Well, why did you do that?" We said, "We're Americans. We are not going to stand by and watch innocent women and children burn to death." When the fire died down a little bit and they tried to round us up, they took us up to the railroad station, that was the only place they could put us. Because everything else was burnt down, so they didn't have no place to put us either, so they put us inside the railroad station. A funny thing happened, and I say it was funny but in the overall really it was serious. But outside the door was the Japanese *benjo,* that's a Japanese craphouse, bathroom, they don't have bathrooms. They had a slit trench and it had wood floors in it and it had been condemned. So this one guy he decided he had to go, so he opened the door and stepped in, he wound up, up to his armpits in the crap. But that doesn't stop there. He crawled out and the Jap soldier punched him with the bayonet and told him to go inside, the rest of us was inside. He tried to go in there and we throwed him back out, because he was so filthy and stinky and the Jap soldier punched him with he bayonet and throwed him back in. [laughter] This went on for about ten minutes, he was bounced back and forth, so, finally, the Jap told him to go find some water and get cleaned up. [laughter]

SH: Did he ever forgive you guys?

AA: [laughter]

SH: You have seen the worst of human nature and the best.

AA: Well, you had to have a sense of humor in order to survive.

SH: For certain.

AA: Even though you got a little bit of a laugh out of it, you would still feel sorry for the guy. At that time, it was funny.

SH: You were laughing then, too?

AA: Yep. We laughed at that time. It was the only time that we laughed.

SH: Here's the city burning down all around you.

AA: [laughter] A couple of days later the fire had burned out and we only got out of the building, it was a three-story building, you only got out of there with what you had on. All of our mess kits and spoons and everything were burned up in there. They put us down by the dock down there. They laid us out on the concrete, because there wasn't any top over it because it was bombed out. We had this Jap guard, we called him, "the Emperor." The reason he got his name was because he was immaculate. He comes everyday, white gloves on, fresh pressed uniform, boots and leggings all shined up, and he wouldn't hit you unless he had gloves on because he didn't want to get contaminated. We asked the Emperor if he would take us up to the camp to see if we could find some spoons and stuff to eat with, and everything. The camp, inside the

door, and I was sleeping above it, down below was all the crappers, slit trenches, about ten or twelve of them down there. The building burnt down and the ashes settled over the top. We knew where it was at, but he didn't. So, we got to picking at him and made him mad to try to chase us. When he tried to chase us we went right there and we jumped over, and he went right down in it. [laughter] He went right down in. He tried to get us to pull him out, but we said, "Emperor, you stink." He got out the best way he could, but when he come back, and got cleaned up and everything, he beat the living hell out of every damn body that was on that detail. Whether he was innocent or not, he just beat the hell out of all of us, but it was worth it. [laughter] It was worth it. We stuck our necks out a lot of times that we could have gotten our head chopped off, because to hit a guard was an automatic death sentence. Down in Osaka, we was unloading a boxcar full of rice and we had had a civilian guard that got shot up, down, either in Singapore or in the Philippines, and his arm was paralyzed, one arm. He had a wood stick shaped like a sword. We called him "the Indian" because he looked sort of like a damn Indian. We was paying him off to get us a newspaper. We was stealing the rice out of the boxcar and we would take it outside the railroad station in loot bags, [what] we called loot bags, and then we would pass it over to him, and he, in turn, would give us a newspaper. So we would give him about a half a bucket of rice at a time. So, one day, the rice season was almost about over … [and] me and a marine named Baker, a corporal, we loaded a bag of rice. [It] weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds. So we had this workhook, stick the workhook in the bag and flip it up on a guys shoulder, and he would take it and stack it on the dock or wherever he was going to take it. So the Indian said, "Today, no rob *Bu*," which means, "no stealing today." We said, "Indian, we're hungry, we got to have some rice." "No, no, not today. You ain't going to steal nothing today." So we unloaded that end of the boxcar and we was working on this end and we were down to the last, maybe, twelve or fifteen sacks of rice. He was propped up right in the middle of the door, in the middle of the boxcar. So, Al Ritchie, who was with the 31st Infantry, he said, "Throw this bag high, I'll get that son-of-a-bitch." So, me and Baker threw it almost to the top of the boxcar, he grabbed it, almost like a football, and he throwed it. He hit him across the stomach and the chest, that drove him all the way back down there, and it busted his head open when he hit; he went out like a light. He broke about four or five ribs, and he was out. He was a civilian. A Japanese soldier was outside on guard. He was outside the door, he was watching the rest of us. So I went outside and I told the Jap soldier, I said, "Your *tomapocha* is *bioky*" That means, "Your friend is sick." He said, "*noniee*," that means "What." I said, "*Hi*" "*Hi*" means, "Yes." I said, "*Bioky*" and pointed at him. He went in there, and he was flaked out there, he wanted to know what happened. We said, "A bag of rice just fell on him. The guy tripped and fell with the bag of rice, and it accidentally hit him, dumped him." So, anyway, we didn't sleep for about a week after that because if they had known we did it on purpose, they'd a killed you. So nobody talked. Everybody said the same story, "Well, I was watching and I seen him trip, and he tripped, and the bag went right at him." So the Japs bought the story. About four or five months later, he came back to work on the detail, Indian was in the boxcar, and he said, "You guys hit me on purpose." We said, "Indian, you're our friend. We wouldn't do nothing like that to you. You know that. We're friends." "*Nigh, nigh, nigh*, you did that on purpose. But you can steal what rice you want to because you ain't going to hit me no more." [laughter] We committed more sabotage that never been known, not even this government knows how much sabotage we did in there. We disarmed a whole shipload of fragmentation bombs. We was unloading this ship of bombs and we told the Japs, "We're not supposed to be handling ammunition, we're at war." We said, "It was against the Geneva Convention." They

didn't know what the hell the Geneva Convention was, they didn't give a damn about the Geneva Convention, "You're going to unload the bombs." So, we had a Navy ordnance man in there and he said, "Unscrew the nose and in there is a thing that looks like a candle, it was about eight, ten, twelve inches long, and about as big around as a little broom handle." He said, "That's what detonates it. Pull that out and screw it back. The bomb is a dud, it won't never go off." So as we was going over the water from the train to the ship and when we went down the dock, we just dropped these [fuses] in the water. In the first one, the guard wouldn't get out of the boxcar. So we disarm one bomb and I throwed it at that Japs' feet. Just throwed it down like that. He jumped about three feet high. He said, "You know that's going to blow us up." We said, "You ain't suppose to be in it in the first place." It got him the hell out of there. So then we could do what we wanted to. But we disarmed that whole ship load full of bombs. Whereever they dropped them they sure as hell didn't go off, unless they replaced them fuses, and if they had caught us, it would have been death. … In Osaka they had wagons, which they call a "*baraki*," and they would bring in airplane propellers on these wagons and we would take them and load them on the box car. Well, as soon as we got inside the boxcar, we just picked it up and shoved it into the wood, we bent the prop. We bent the prop on every one that went in there. Strange thing, the Japs never did kick it back. We took a car load of aviation fuel, aviation gasoline, and we had work hooks, about that long, that had a steel hook about three or four inches long, and we just took the hook and punched one hole in the bottom of each one of those fifty-five gallon drums. When that train was pulling out, you could smell gasoline all over that station. There, again, there were no kick backs. … We noticed the civilian railroad employee and [as] he was lining the boxcars up he was writing something and sticking it in like a card. It had a little frame on it and he'd stick [it] down in there. So, we asked him, we said, "Ohsan, what are you doing?" He said, "Oh, these here are routing slips and this tells us where the boxcar is going to go and what's in the boxcar." So, we said, "Geez, you're smart. We'd never heard of nothing like that in America." So, after he left, we switched them. We pulled them out and we switched them. Wherever them boxcars went, someone had one hell of a time.

SH: Now was this something you talked about doing or just something, individually, you would decide to do this?

AA: In camp we had one saying. We was united in camp. We had one saying, "The only good Jap is a damn dead Jap. If we're going to help him on his way, we're going to do it." The freight yard in Osaka and the [other] station was called Sakarajima, the railroad track come in, two sets of railroad tracks come in down here,… a dead end here and a dead end here, and here they had a turntable, they didn't use switch engines, we was the switch engines, you pushed them with your shoulders. We pushed them boxcars all over with our shoulders. So we put that boxcar on that turntable and you would turn it so it would go off of that track and go down this track. So, we told the guys, we said, "As soon as that starts to turn, shove it." We did that, the boxcar went right off the track. It took them about three or four weeks to get the equipment down to get that boxcar back on that track. Every time we'd get a carload of heavy equipment, like lathes and stuff, we'd get down to the turntable and we'd dump it. They would scream like hell. "We don't know nothing, somebody said push it, we pushed it." We committed a lot of sabotage. But there was one that probably hit the records. In this freight yard, the track was here and warehouses was over here. The English prisoners were working in a different camp, was working in that warehouse over there. Well, we knew there was sugar in that warehouse and we figured, "How

we going to get to that sugar?" So, we had been getting the newspaper from the Indian and giving it to the damn Englishman over here. We told the Englishman, "We need some sugar. How about passing some sugar over?" He said, "Oh, I can't do that, the Japs will beat the Hell out of me." We said, "What the Hell do you think we been doing? We been running the [same] risk giving you the newspaper. What's going to happen to us?" We said, "We're going to hit that … sugar one way or the other." That Englishman said, "If you do, I'm going to tell the Japs." So, I had a work hook in my hand, I said, "You son-of-a-bitch, you open your mouth, I'll split your head wide open with this hook. We ain't kidding." So I said, "You better stand clear." So, we put him on his way. We had a coolie shack right across the track. Everyday we would watch that guard. They had a guard would come down, a civilian guard working for the railroad station, you'd say a security officer, what we would [say]. He would look at the lock. The lock had, over the key hole, it had a piece of metal, that you pulled aside, and he would inspect that and put it down, and he'd write something. So we watched him [for] the exact time of day he was going to be there. So Baker said, "I'll pick that lock." So we lined up three empty boxcars across the tracks, civilians couldn't see through here. Baker picked that lock and in less than five minutes we had six hundred pounds of sugar, [we] went across out of that warehouse and took it over to the shack. We had already dug a hole. We put it in the ground, covered it over with boards. So we were hauling sugar into camp, in loot bags, everyday. So one day there was a tidal wave that came over there and that tidal wave covered that whole freight yard under about eight feet of water. So when the tidal wave left, the only thing we had left of the sugar was the damn bags, empty bags. [laughter] So we run a lot of risk in there. We'd committed a lot of sabotage in that place that the world will never know.

SH: I am glad you are talking about it.

AA: Well, we done a lot more then that. The elites were starting to move all their furniture out of Osaka, up to the hills, or wherever they were taking it to get it to safe keeping. But we loaded it. [We] had this great big, nice, expensive cabinet with glass in it, we just took it and slammed it right into the deck and busted it into pieces. We took a sewing machine, slam, you could see parts all over the place. Wherever that boxcar went, whoever opened it, boy, he was in for a big surprise.

SH: They probably thought, those Americans, can't they load anything?

AA: He was in for a big surprise. But that was only just part of it. We had one Jap called, "Dick Tracy," civilian guard. We was loading boxes of bolts … about two or three [feet] long and weighed about a couple of hundred pounds, because it was all heavy-duty steel, metal, nuts and bolts and everything. The stack was way up here. So Dick Tracy was always sneaking around trying to find something to pin on you, so he was down below. We went around there, took the box off, and we missed him [by] about two inches. He jumped about three feet in the air. When that box busted open, he went and started hollering. We said, "I don't know how it fell off of there." [laughter] If it had hit him, it would have killed him. We did a lot of things over there that I wouldn't even want to make it known today, because someone would want to try to lock you up or something.

SH: Do you really think so?

AA: So, I wouldn't get into a lot of stuff we pulled over there. The government never knew how much sabotage we done over there. How much damage it done during the war? Probably very little. But at least it gave you the satisfaction of knowing you was doing something.

SH: You're over in Kyoto now when the war is coming to an end.

AA: We were in Tsuruga. Well, after they burned the camp down, they moved us about two miles up the dirt road. There was an old brick factory there. So, they moved us into the yard of that brick factory, and we was sleeping on the ground, and there was no way we could have made another winter in Tsuruga, because this was here in July and August. I asked the old Jap guard, "If it gets this cold this time of year, how cold does it get in the winter-time?" He said, "It snows twenty-seven meters deep, and nothing comes in and nothing goes out," and here we are sleeping on the ground, no clothes, no nothing. I say we would never have made another winter. The A-bombs is what saved us.

SH: Were you aware of that, were you getting your newspaper, did you know about the bomb?

AA: We didn't know anything about the bomb until it went off. When it went off, we knew something big had happened.

SH: Did you?

AA: Now, every morning at ten-thirty you could look up in the air and there was one B-29 would come over Tsuruga. He would come over here, and he would go over the bay, and he would circle, and he would go back over the mountains, everyday at ten-thirty. We'd call him the "Grey Ghost" because you couldn't see him. The only time you could see him was when he banked and turned, and the sun would flash off of him. So I told the guys in there, I said, "You know this guy is coming over here, the last two weeks, every morning. He ain't coming over here for his health. Something is going on." So the last time he come over there, and this was a day or so, a couple of days before they dropped the A-bomb, he dropped one bomb and there was a cotton mill right across the street, right across the road from where this brick factory was. He hit the dead center of that cotton mill, just like he had surveyed it. I don't know how many people, Japs, were killed in there, but a lot of them got killed in there because they just blowed the whole place apart, one bomb. So, after that he didn't show up no more, and then, shortly thereafter, when they hit Hiroshima, every time the air raid would go, the Japs would go crazy. They were running like rabbits, scattered in every direction and everything. You could hear the radios, they were blaring, blaring, blaring. We knew something was going on.

SH: The papers that you were …

AA: We didn't know what had happened, we knew something big was going on down there. But that's all that saved us.

SH: Then what happened after the second one was dropped?

AA: After the second one was dropped, that's when they surrendered.

SH: But then what do they do with you?

AA: Well, after the second one, when they signed the [Potsdam Treaty].

SH: The surrender's not signed until …

AA: He signed that Potsdam Treaty. We had an old man inside the camp as an interpreter. Now, he was a pretty, nice, old Jap. He said he used to run trucks and vegetables from Salt Lake City down to San Francisco before the war, so, he knew how to speak English. He could speak good English. They had told us, "No work today." We couldn't figure it out. So, the next day, they said, "No work." So then the third day, they said, "No work," we said, "What the hell's the matter? Something must be wrong," because they never let us off. We was working fourteen days out of fifteen. About three strands of barbed wire was separating the road from where we was at, and a Japanese man was walking down the road; he had a newspaper in his hip pocket. We said, "Ohsan, shimbun oris mus," that means "Let us see the newspaper." He said "Ah so ka," which means "All right," and he threw it in. We got it and run inside that brick factory and Baker had been fooling around with that Jap language, and he could read part of it. He made out something about Potsdam and a treaty. So we started putting two and two together. We never heard of Potsdam, we didn't know where it was at, but "treaty" we did know. He came in to camp the next morning so about fifteen or twenty of us surrounded him. We said, "The war is over, ain't it?" He started shaking his head, "No, no, the war is still going on." We said, "You're lying." We took that newspaper and shoved it under his eyes and we said, "You're a goddamn liar. There it is." Then he said, he got scared, he said, "Yeah, the war is over." The night before, most all the Jap guards had left, so we was there almost by ourselves. B-29s, no, three Navy planes came over, and they were flying by the camp. After that, we put on the ground, out here, in rocks, we spelled out "POW" because there was no roof to put it on. He was flying over and we thought he missed it. He went down and then he turned around and come back, and he come down; he started wagging his wings. So, the next day he came back and he throwed out a canvas bag with a string on it and it had some coffee and some cigarettes in it. He had a note and I still got that, and he told us who he was. He was flying off a Navy plane carrier … and he said, "Sorry, I don't have steaks, scotch, or Lana Turner's." Then he said in the letter, he said, "B-29s will come over and start dropping food." So about a day or two later, here comes the B-29s over, and they got real low down and they started pushing … these platforms of food out, and these fifty-five gallon drums with parachutes on them. They come sailing down all over that damn rice field out there. So that's how the war ended for us.

SH: How did you get from the camp? Are you safe to go out? How do you do this?

AA: What we did was, we moved out of the brick factory. We went down toward town and there was some barracks that the Japanese Navy had been using. So we threw the Japs out and we took over them barracks, and, then, we started rounding up food and moving the food from the rice patties down to there. We built a flag pole and we took the parachute material down to a Japanese woman in town and [we] had it drawed out [a flag] and asked her if she could make it, and she said, "Yes." So, she made the flag and we gave her a lot of chocolates and food and

cigarettes for her labor. We run the flag up on the flag pole that we had already made. They sent, later on, an Army sent some captain down there to the camp. He said he was there to evaluate the men for travel and so forth. We said, "We don't want no evaluation, we want to get the hell out of here." They loaded us up on a train and took us all the way to Tokyo. We got up to Tokyo and General Icklberger was on the dock, and he wanted to know where we come from. We told him, and he said, "You should have stayed put." We said, "We've been 'put' for three-and-a-half years. We want to go home." So they separated the Army from the Navy and the Marines. The Navy personnel, they took us and put us on the battleship *Iowa*. We were on the battleship *Iowa* for, I guess, a week or ten days. They give us new dungarees. Before we went on the *Iowa* they had a delousing station on the dock, so they made everybody strip all their clothes off and they threw them in the fire, and then they shaved your head and sprayed you with some kind of chemicals to kill any lice, because we all had lice. Then they give you some new clothes to put on. Then they took us over to the battleship. They give us some money on the battleship. The paymaster did give us an advance, or something, I don't know, four or five hundred dollars. They treated us royally. So then they took us from there, after the surrender, and flew us over to Iwo Jima. So we stayed on Iwo Jima one night and the marines were still fighting the Japs on Iwo Jima, you could still hear the rifle fire all over the place out there. So, we stayed there one night, until they could refuel, and then they took us down to Guam and put us in the naval hospital in Guam. Then we were down there about thirty, or forty days, to fatten us up. Then they loaded us on the cattle boat, which we called the cattle boat, it was a troop transport was what it was. We went from there, it took us another thirty days to get to San Diego. We got to San Diego and went into the naval hospital in San Diego. After we went through all the examinations there, they determined, "Well, you might be able to go home." So that's when we left.

SH: So, where was the *Iowa* when the surrender was signed? Was it in the bay?

AA: It was in the bay.

SH: So you literally were there when the surrender was signed.

AA: No.

SH: How wonderful. Were you topside?

AA: Well, we wasn't actually in the bay at the time when they signed. The ships were all over the harbor and, I think, at that time they must have already signed the surrender. It was pretty close to the time in there, because all the ships were in there and hundreds of planes were still flying over. The Army, they flew them down to Okinawa. They had a mishap going down to Okinawa. They had this plane loaded up with POWs and somehow the bomb bay door got tripped and it dumped them out, about fifteen or twenty, down there, killed them all, and I don't think they were found.

SH: That's awful.

AA: But that's what happened. The Army, they flew, from Okinawa, they took a lot of them to Manila, and then from Manila they flew them to the States. So that's how they got back over there.

SH: Had you had any contact with your family? Did they know where you were, that you were alive or dead?

AA: Yeah, about 1944 the Japs let us write one or two sentences to send home. It was like a little postcard. I've still got one at home with postmarks and everything on, it folded over. You were allowed to write two lines on them. If you wrote anything else they wouldn't send it. So I just put on there, "I am fine. I am working," and signed it. They got it, and I got, I don't know, I guess, maybe four or five letters from home, after that, that come through the Red Cross.

SH: Did you get Red Cross packages in your camps?

AA: We got some Red Cross packages, but not very many, and it was later on, down the road, I don't know, late '44, early '45, somewhere in there. We did get a Red Cross box apiece, that's the only time we got any Red Cross boxes. Found out later that the Japs had all the Red Cross boxes in the warehouse and wouldn't give them to us. So that's the way them people are. That's the only thing we got. The Japs came in there one day, and they were supposed to have a Red Cross official, and the Japs told us to spruce up the quarters in here, they're going to take some pictures. So they brought an old phonograph in there, that wouldn't work, and they made everybody get around it and they took the picture and showed the families back home how well they was being treated. … Then they lined us up in the room, this room had about forty people sleeping in it. It had a wood platform on that side and a wood platform here, an aisle in the center. So we had a table coming down the side which you eat off of, so they put everybody on the benches and we sit down and then they brought in some rice. They give us a half a bowl of rice and they brought in some empty bottles. Made it look like beer bottles or ketchup bottles, or something. They stuck that in there. So half of the rice bowl was empty, so when they took a picture we turned the bowl around, so the hole, the slice that was out would show up in there. After that, the Japs put them pictures on a little bulletin board they had down there in the passageway and we stole them off the board and I got the pictures at home and I rephotographed them and got negatives. They're the only pictures I know of that ever got out of Umeda Bunsho. I got eight or ten or twelve pictures, a lot like that.

SH: Were you aware of the ships that were sunk in Manila, the Hell ships that sunk before they ever got away? Did you know that people had already died being sent to Japan?

AA: No, we didn't know how many ships got sunk after they took us. Like I said, we were the second group that left the Philippines. Now what happened after that, we didn't find out until after the war was over.

SH: I didn't know if you had heard.

AA: No, we didn't know anything about that until after the war was over. Then, after we analyzed the situation, we considered ourselves pretty lucky that they took us to Japan in '42,

rather than '43'and '44 when all them ships got sunk. We lost over five thousand men on those Hell ships that went down to the bottom of the South China Sea. Yep.

SH: You said you stayed in the Navy, did you ever, before the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor began to meet, did you ever connect with anybody that you had been in camp with?

AA: Yeah.

SH: Before that, did you?

AA: Yeah, we had a chief in the Navy, named Hookum, and I run into him down in the Charlestown Navy Yard when I was stationed down there. He was a Lieutenant Commander. I had lunch with him and his wife. He had gotten married and had a baby and all this, and I run in to four or five of them, scattered out, over a period of time. Some of them stayed in the service, some of them didn't.

SH: Why did you decide to stay in?

AA: Well, when I enlisted in the Navy, I enlisted and I said, "I was going to stay twenty-five years."

SH: Did you?

AA: When you first went into the Navy, in the Depression days, at least you had a paycheck, you got three square meals a day and you got clothes to wear and a roof over your head. I didn't have any education to amount to anything, so if I had left the Navy, what kind of work could I have done, that would give me the benefits I had in the Navy? That's why I stayed in. The most I would have got, out of there, was probably common laborer work, or something like that, because I had no education.

SH: When you came out of the camps and you came back home or back to the States, they brought you into San Diego or San Francisco?

AA: San Diego.

SH: Did you get a leave to come home?

AA: Yeah. We got three months leave.

SH: Three months.

AA: Three months.

SH: Did you come home to Macon?

AA: Yeah. Then I was ordered back to Charlestown Navy Yard and I shipped over down there. Of course, all of our enlistments had expired anyway.

SH: I was just going to say, had they automatically re-upped you?

AA: Yeah, I stayed. A lot of the guys didn't stay in, you'd be surprised, like you see all these people at this convention here, I've been attending these conventions for years. … We used to have large crowds, but, you see now, over the last few years, they've been dwindling. We are losing men everyday. Whether or not there will be any more conventions, I don't know, because a lot of us are not able to travel. You can see them in wheelchairs and [with] crutches, sticks, and everything else. There ain't many of us left. So whether or not they're going to try to have another convention, I don't know.

SH: When you re-upped what rank were you then?

AA: When I re-upped I was third class petty officer, and then I made second class, then I made first class, then I made chief. When I retired out, I retired as a warrant officer. That's how I went up the line.

SH: You went right on up.

AA: That's how I went up the line.

SH: What did you do during Korea?

AA: What did I do? I was a supply officer. I was a paymaster.

SH: Were you stationed state side or on a boat? Were you on shore duty?

AA: I was stationed at Georgia Tech for about eight or nine months and we decommissioned that V-7 unit they had up there. Then I went down to Charleston Navy Yard and I was running the commissary, working in the commissary down there. When I made warrant, down there, they automatically transferred you. They transferred me up to Bayonne, New Jersey. I worked up there, we was pickling those ships, we were taking inventory of what was missing and replacing them in case they had to go back into action again. Then I went from there, I became the paymaster on the USS *Chickaskia*, which is an oil tanker. It's the biggest oil tanker the Navy had at the time. We was hauling oil from Berain, and Saudi Arabia and all that, through the Suez Canal over to Athens, Greece and over to Singapore. Then we … went from there to Yokasuka, Japan. We unloaded some oil, but something happened before we got to Yokasuka. I was in the Persian Gulf and one morning I got up to get a cup of coffee and going up to the officers quarters, I was going to go get breakfast, and I had a severe pain in the chest and it pulled me over onto the floor. We had a doctor, who was a 2nd Lieutenant, I guess, just out of medical school. He said he didn't know what to do. He said, so he got on the phone, I guess some communications, and the Navy at that time had no way to get me out of the Persian Gulf. So he said, "There's something wrong with the lung," so he says, "You're going to have to stay in bed until we can get you to the hospital." Well, it took them two months to get me up to Yokasuka,

Japan. I went in the hospital in Yokasuka and they x-rayed me and all and the doctor said, "You have a spontaneous numo thorax. I said, "What is that?" He said, "You got a hole in your lung. Your lung is collapsed." He said, "I don't know if it's going to come back up or not." But he said, "I can't do anything for you here." He said, "Where you going from here?" I said, "We're going to San Francisco." So he said, "When you get to San Francisco, turn [yourself] into the naval hospital in Oakland, California." So I went over to Oakland, California and I was over there about two or three months. [As a POW] I got hit in the back of the head in Japan and it knocked vertebrates out. I had severe headaches, added on top of the lungs, the doctors said they didn't know what was causing the headaches. So they had doctors from all over the West Coast brought in there and they all said they couldn't find nothing wrong with me. "The only thing wrong with you is you just seen too much war." They said, "We don't know what's wrong with you, it must be in your mind." I said, "Doc, I ain't dumb, I know when my damn head's hurting," and I said "It hurts." He said, "Well, we're sorry but we don't know what's causing it." So they wash my lung out and they run it through the laboratory and they come back negative. So a couple of weeks later, they washed another lung out, again, and it come back negative. Then they were pumping my stomach out. Then they were washing the lung out again. The doctor told me, "We want to run one more test." He said, "If this test comes back negative, you're going back to duty." I said, "I'm ready to go back to duty now." The damn test come back positive, TB [tuberculosis]. So they shipped me down to the naval hospital in Corona, California, which was a TB hospital. I stayed there for two-and-a-half years. My feet never hit the floor except to go to the bathroom. The doctor said there was no known cure. He said, "The only thing you can hope for is the bed rest will arrest it." But he said, "After it gets arrested, I would advise you not to do any physical labor or anything, or anything that's going to put strain on that lung. So at that time they had just started operating on lungs. Here I am, in the bed here, and they're bringing these guys from the operating room all bloody. … I had a spot on the lung and the doctor come in there one morning and he said, "We got an experimental drug. We don't know what it's going to do, but it will do one of two things, it will either kill you, or you're going to get well." He said, "Do you want to take it?" I said, "I'll take it Doc. I can't stay here forever. I'll take it, regardless of what the outcome is going to be." So, I took it and in thirty days time it come back negative. So they kept me out there two or three more months on that medicine and it came back negative. So, what this drug was is, it's called Isonicd and PAS, and what happens is the TB germ has got a casing on it, like a wax casing around it. That's why no medicine could get to it to kill it. So the PAS is sycilic acid. Now that dissolved the wax on the germ and the Isonicd is the drug that killed it, and they still use that today.

SH: Wow, you were the first guinea pig.

AA: Yeah, they still use it today. I seen [in] the paper the other day where there's new strains of tuberculoses out now, and they ain't got no medicine for it, that will kill you. He said I was lucky that that germ didn't hit the artery. He said, "Because if it did, you would have been dead, boy." Well, that's the best I can do for you.

SH: Well, I thank you, sir, with all my heart.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Elaine Blatt 12/6/2007
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/22/2008
Reviewed by Austin Andrews 5/19/2008