

## **Interview of Wataru Misaka**

Interviewer: Okay, well, we're going to interview Wat Misaka today. Many of you that are watching this will remember him as the star basketball player for the university, especially on the 1944 team that won the NIT and the NCAA in the same year. Arnie Ferrin is still one of his best friends. But a lot that you don't know about Mr. Misaka is that he served his country right following his graduation, I guess. So, tell us about that. How did you first get inducted into the service? Let's go back to Pearl Harbor. Where were you when the bombs were dropped at Pearl Harbor?

Wat Misaka: Well, I was attending Weber State, of course, back in those days, it was still a junior college. I was a freshman and of course, I didn't have much to do with the general public because my mother told me, says, "I know you want to go to school after you get out of high school, but I can't afford to send you to any university. So if you want to go to Weber here in town," which is only a few blocks from where I lived, she said, "you could go there, if you could just find a way to pay for your tuition and buy your books. You can still live here with me and that will save you your room and board." So that's what I did, but I did have to find a part time job and so between taking a 20 credit hour class schedule and playing basketball and track and what not and working part time, I didn't have much time to do anything else but what was involved in the university. When the war broke out, of course, it was the same old thing. All of my pre-war and war days were involved with the university students and faculty and that university life. I didn't have too much to do with the general public, the public at large, which was, I think, a good thing.

Interviewer: Did you experience anything after the war broke out, did you experience -- being of Japanese ancestry -- did you experience any discrimination?

Wat Misaka: I think that there were many incidents, I don't know if there was any more or less than anybody else, but one of the things that really struck me was that, I went to school from the first grade on with a number of -- three other kids that lived in our neighborhood. Right after high school, all three of them enlisted in the service. One, particularly, his name was Lee Drainy, he ended up in the Marine Air Force. Of course, he's an officer in the Marine Corps, and every time he come home from a furlough, well, he would look me up because we were lifelong friends. Walking on the streets with a Marine Officer with an "enemy", as a lot of people like to think in those days, was quite an experience. He had to put up, more times than not, to be my friend. He never did shy away from that. To his credit, he stayed my buddy all the way. Those are just some of the unpleasant things that happened. Generally speaking, because of that university family atmosphere, I was kind of shielded from too many incidents. So I really can't complain too much about my treatment.

Interviewer: Now, then you were at the University of Utah in 1942 and '43--

Wat Misaka: Well, '43

Interviewer: '44.

Wat Misaka: '44, right, because I graduated from Weber, which, I graduated in the spring of '43.

Interviewer: Tell us about your first, how you first, you were, as I understand, you were drafted.

Is that correct?

Wat Misaka: Yes, I was drafted, but that was after we came back from Madison Square Garden where we'd won the NCAA basketball championship and that was a first piece of mail that my mother gave me as I stepped off of the train was my little greetings from the president inviting me to join the Armed Forces of the United States. They gave me a little over a month because we came home the end of March, the first of April. I reported at Fort Douglas to be inducted into the Army the first week of June. So I had about five or six weeks there.

Interviewer: And then what happened right after that? I mean, tell us about--

Wat Misaka: Well, I went to the normal, I thought normal processing at Fort Douglas and they put me on a troop train, headed I don't know where. Eventually ended up at Minneapolis where the military intelligence service language school was located, and I found out then that I was slated to go into the military intelligence branch of the service, which was still the Army. My class, they were gathering students for my class, which ended up being the largest class, I think, to go through the school. It was being geared toward the invasion, which they thought would come about the summer of '44, which would be just like, nine months after our class started. So that's what we were being geared for.

Interviewer: Don't worry about it.

Wat Misaka: I guess you can cut that part out.

Interviewer: They're going to edit this, don't worry about it. So, where did you go for basic training?

Wat Misaka: We went to Alabama, Fort McClellan, Alabama. We had a regular infantry-type training where we learned how to shoot the gun and the pistols and throw the hand grenades and

what not. I was a step ahead there of my class mates because, being a Utahan and been deer hunting all my life while I was in Utah, I really was ahead of a lot of my class mates who had never seen a gun before. So, it was kind of a fun time for me to show those guys up.

Interviewer: Were there other Nisei in your unit there in Alabama?

Wat Misaka: Yes, our whole, I think we had two companies of Nisei that were all in the school with me. They sent that whole class that was ready to go through basic down there at that time. I got to the school about June and we didn't go down to basic until about October, I think it was. So the rest of the time, we just spent later on at the school while they gathered the class that was to start, I think, like in December. So we went for a six-week basic military in the infantry basic draining down there at Fort McClellan.

Interviewer: And could you speak fluent Japanese at that time?

Wat Misaka: I could speak Japanese, it wasn't that fluent. I wasn't that great of a student. I didn't use very much of it at home, either, so my Japanese was fairly limited, and that's the reason why I was in the lower grades as far as the class was concerned. It seemed as though that's the way they determined where you would end up. Some of the students graduated just as a private first class, and others would be corporals and sergeants, and it's dependent on how fluent you were and how well you handled the language. We all went through the same training as far as learning about the military aspects of the Japanese Army and armed forces. The language part that you would use for your interrogation and translations and so on had to be learned before, and that's where you got your grade advances is how proficient you were in the language before you got to school.

Interviewer: So, what happened then after basic training?

Wat Misaka: Well, we came back to Fort Snelling in St. Paul and started up school. As I was mentioning, the school was primarily about the military -- the types of weapons that the various branches of the Japanese Army and Navy used, and about the aircraft that they had, and about their munitions types of bombs, and what not that they used so that we would be completely familiar with their munitions as well as their formations. You know, how their companies were formed and how many were in their squad and so on and so forth so that we would know their military break down, and it was very similar to ours, so it was fairly easy to learn.

Interviewer: Then what happened then after that school?

Wat Misaka: Well, as I mentioned before, our school, I think our class was the largest class ever graduated from that school, and it was just short of 400. We graduated and we were being groomed for the invasion. The way the graduates were doled out, I think, was depending on the requests that would come in from the various branches that were out there, including the foreign teams like the British. They had a lot of the British people fighting over in Burma, and, of course, they had Australian forces all over the South Pacific, so our interpreters and interrogators would be dealt to various Armies of the Allied Forces in order to try to spread them out to the most efficient manner. We were, of course, supposed to be assigned to the Marines and what not and head for the invasion of Japan that was to take place. We were all quite happy when we found out just before graduation that the war was over and, in fact, we were scheduled to go to Manila and that didn't change, but the surrender papers that the Japanese signed on the Battleship Missouri was signed when we were on the high seas headed for Manila. So that was V-J Day was quite a happy celebration for us on board ship.

Interviewer: So, when the victory in Europe, V-E Day occurred, you were still in the states?

Wat Misaka: We were still in school.

Interviewer: Then, you were headed to Manila when you heard of the surrender, and the bombs being dropped and what did you think? Did you know anything about an atomic bomb before that?

Wat Misaka: No, we didn't know anything about a bomb before that. Of course, it was dropped when we were still in Minneapolis, but we knew that the war was over before we shipped out, so it was a pretty happy train ride from Minneapolis to Long Beach, California, where we disembarked. So the only thing that we took with us was our knowledge of the language when we went to Japan, ended up in Japan. Some of us were not as fluent as we could have been, of course, played a very minor role while we were in Japan. They were used in all manner of places and duties, as you might expect, because everywhere that we had occupation forces, we had to have an interpreter there to transmit the ideas and so on.

Interviewer: Let's go back to -- you arrived in Manila on the boat, and then, tell us a little about what that was like.

Wat Misaka: Well, our whole ship was bivouacked in a knoll race track, which is kind of similar to what people went through in internment camps. They left their homes and they were staged in the race tracks before they went to the camps. We stayed in the race tracks in the Army type tents, squad tents, and we stayed there for about a month. In the meantime, about a week or so after we got there, a colonel came down. We didn't know who he was, but he was looking for volunteers to go set up camp and start to interrogate and classify the prisoners of war that they had up in these POW camps on Luzon, which was about 30 miles away from Manila. As far as I know, my friend here lived all his life in Box Elder County, north of Brigham. He volunteered

and ended up being the head of the interrogators and translators that worked in that POW camp, which ended up being I think about 130,000 POW's in that POW camp in their height.

Interviewer: Did he tell you any stories about when he interviewed?

Wat Misaka: Yes, I've talked to him several times since then. Of course, I've known him as long as I can remember -- we used to play. His father was an avid baseball fan and we used to have baseball teams at intermountain. They had a baseball team up in Corrine and we had a team in Ogden and there was a couple in Salt Lake and so on. So I'd known him ever since we were playing baseball when we were young. Anyway, he said that he was the only one that would volunteer and the colonel gave him a rifle and a pistol and a Jeep when he reported, and he says, "I'm putting you in charge of getting a telephone line set up between our headquarters here in Manila and the prison camp, POW camp." He said, "You'll have to make arrangements, and I have given you authority to do that, you will have to make arrangements to string their phone line for you and to dig the post holes and whatever you need and so on." "If you have any trouble," he says, "this is the reason why I've given you this .45. If you have any trouble with the native help that you might get, you have my authority to shoot them." He never did, of course, but he just put him on alert that it was kind of dangerous mission, especially since he looked Japanese and the Filipinos didn't care for the way that the Japanese troops treated their civilians. So he strung this line, and that was his first duty and he got that done and he kind of became head. They did finally recruit a number of other interrogators to go up to that prison war camp to start to classify and the staging of all of these prisoners -- get their name and addresses and where they were from and their families, and so on, and their name, rank, and serial number and information so that they could go ahead and process these POW's. Many of them were there for war crimes trials. In fact, I think most of them were, there weren't that many -- not all of

them were executed -- but there were many of them that were. Like I said, I think the population of the camp was 130 or 160,000 in its height and they brought POW's from all over the South Pacific to Luzon.

Interviewer: Did he ever say what the attitude of those prisoners were and were they cooperative?

Wat Misaka: Well, he found quite a variety. One thing that was kind of interesting on a personal note, one of the prisoners was a son of a man that ran a trading company in Ogden. He was the one that was importing Japanese goods to sell to the local Japanese people before the war. He was corresponding with his father, of course, and his father knew this fellow very well because his father was one of his main customers being up in, most of the rice and other Japanese goods came through these types of companies because they wouldn't come to Smith's or anything like that that we have now. These trading companies imported nearly all of the Japanese goods – rice, and fish, and canned goods, and things like that. This fellow showed his father was a very acquainted with this fellah. His name was Tenaki and this son was in this prisoner of war camp, and his son tried to gain a little bit of influence by letting him know, "Hey, you know, he's an American citizen and shouldn't be in the camp and all that." When he let his father know Tenaki's son was in camp, his father says, "You treat him well because his father's a good friend of mine." And he did, that's all he needed. He said he had the power to put a green or red tag on each prisoner's identification card, I guess, to denote whether they were free to go back to Japan or whether they had to stand war trials, war crimes and trials. So they put the green tags on this fella's because he was obviously not involved in any war crimes and he sent him home. His main interesting side light that I always like to tell about is he got to know some of these general officers quite well. In fact, General Homma and General Yamashita, the two highest ranking

generals in the Japanese Army, were in that prisoner war camp. He visited them almost every day and he was telling me that General Homma, he would take cigarettes because they didn't have any cigarettes and he'd take cigarettes and things because they didn't have any cigarettes, and he smoked, and General Homma didn't smoke, but he had a sweet tooth for chocolate. So he'd go to the PX and get some candy bars and take them to him every so often, so he got to be a big favorite of General Homma. They knew that they were now going to get out of that camp, that they were going to be executed. They said, "Don't mind about that," because he said they were, the generals and they lost the war. They couldn't go home anyway. They knew that they were going to be executed. General Homma wrote a nice personal letter with his personal stamped seal on it kind of thanking him for his services, and he wrote a little poem on there for him in Japanese denoting that. I think it says something about that he was doing his duty and was not guilty of any crimes, but that he's ready to go to the gates of hell and so on. General Homma was actually a graduate of Oxford in England before he went into the service.

Interviewer: So he could speak English?

Wat Misaka: He could speak English, and all of this little note that he wrote to him, with his seal on it, it's all written in Japanese. It was kind of a nice memento that he got. Later, they have a memorial or shrine or something in Japan for General Homma since he was the ranking general, and he asked him if he would like to have this little document that he'd given him, and they said, "Well, if you can send it over, we're glad to take it." He said, "If they're not that interested then he will keep it himself." He thought that it would be important enough for them to come and get it personally. Well, he was in Japan at the time when he wrote to them and was visiting them. Anyway, he got to know quite a few.

Another person from Salt Lake, a Utahan Nisei that was at the Luzon POW camp for a few weeks with Jerry Suduki, he was the proprietor of the Mikado restaurant downtown. His father ran an American-style restaurant there for many years before Jerry converted it to a Japanese style restaurant after he came back from Japan. But he there for a couple weeks helping to process POW's. He went up to Japan from Manila, with us at the same time, but when he got to Japan, he got assigned to the Sugamo Prisoner of War Camp. So all of his overseas activities were restricted entirely to POW information gathering and so on, translation and something else. He had a lot of interesting stories to tell about his experiences there at Sugamo in Japan, too.

Interviewer: This prisoner from, the POW from Utah, was he was a US citizen but fighting for the Japanese?

Wat Misaka: Yes, there was quite a few them like that that. Of course, if you're born in the United States, you're automatically a United States citizen. A lot of these people -- well, this particular person, Temaki, he had graduated from University of Utah in electrical engineering and couldn't get a job, so he went to Japan. That was just before the war, so when he got to Japan, he was looking for a job and got drafted into the Japanese Army -- didn't have a choice. So here he was in the Japanese Army fighting for Japan against the United States. It's kind of a quirk that happened.

Interviewer: That is interesting. Is he still around?

Wat Misaka: I don't think so. He'd older than I am, so it's very likely that he's not around. There are a number of others, there were a couple of fellows I never met them, but they were pretty good athletes. They went to Granite High School and graduated from Granite High School and they went to Japan and were visiting or something just before the war ended, but they got drafted

in the Japanese Army. They were, I think, sent to Burma were fighting in Burma for the Japanese Army. So there were a number of Nisei that got caught in that web.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Are there any other stories that this fellow told you about, this experiences in that Japanese POW camp in Japan? That you want to relate?

Wat Misaka: He was telling me about General Yamashita, he was actually the most famous, I think. He was the one who was the general in Burma. So he came to the Philippines just shortly before the war ended, and he said, "You're supposed to be an expert in talking to generals like Homma and himself, but your Japanese isn't very good." So it shows you his Japanese was better than mine, but he wasn't an expert.

Interviewer: When you left Manila, then tell us about what happened to you.

Wat Misaka: Well, I remember the ship ride from Manila to Tokyo was very rough. We followed on the wake of a hurricane. They had a hurricane in the South Pacific then, and so it was a very rough ride. I can remember that it took us a couple days to get up there and I know at night, we'd be bouncing around on the waves and the ships would be -- the screws would come out of the back and so it would raise a racket. We got to Japan and we stayed in the first place that we got to, we landed at Yokohama and we were taken to, not the Dai-Ichi Building, but the NYK Building. The NYK stands for Nippon Yusen Kaisha, which is a Japanese shipping line, and it had an office building right there on the main street that goes from the Tokyo station, where we disembarked from the Tokyo station. Re rode the train from Yokohama to Tokyo station and walked, I guess, about a block, carrying the duffel bags up to this corner of this main street. There's a street that runs kind of around the palace, and that is a big wide street and that street around the corner wash the NYK Building and just down a block from the NYK Building

was Dai-Ichi Building, which was MacArthur's headquarters. Most of the orders and what not emanated from the Dai-Ichi Building in Tokyo. A lot of the people from my class ended up working in the Dai-Ichi Building in various capacities, like a friend of mine that I went to school with, he was a roommate at the University of Utah. One of his duties was to take the daily newspaper and translate the editorials. He had to have the editorial translated into English on MacArthur's desk first thing every morning, so that's one of the first things MacArthur read when he came to the Dai-Ichi Building in the morning. That's what the newspapers had to say, because they had to keep close tabs on the type of information and what was going out to the general public, and that was his duty.

Interviewer: How long was this after the surrender that you were there, while this was going on?

Wat Misaka: Well, let's see. The surrender was, when was that, in August?

Interviewer: August of--

Wat Misaka: We were in Tokyo in November, so it was just a few months. There were other people. There's ATIS -- Allied Translating and Interrogating Service -- they were the people that distributed the interrogators and translators to the various companies or whatever that needed them. Requests would come from the troops, like I went to the air base when they needed translators at the air base, so the request would go from the air base to ATIS, and ATIS would try to determine what kind of people they needed and who was available and they were the ones that had control over where the translators went. I don't know if they were an arm of the service that was, I think, designated particularly for that service or what, but they had control of that. They sent us out to diverse places and that's how I got assigned to this US strategic bombing survey. That was headed up by the Navy and they had to plan that they needed so many interpreters and

translators for each team and they had so many teams designated to go to the particular areas, and I think they must have had more than one form, more than one objective. The objective for my team was to find out what the effect of the strategic bombing had on the morale of the people, and I think that there were two or three other objectives that the Navy had as far as the bombing was concerned, but that's all I knew about it. My team had, I think, half a dozen interrogators, and a number of Jeep and truck drivers and other personnel to take care of our lodging and our food and all that while we were on this. It was about a three-week trip for us to take our team and interrogate the people on the strategic bombing effects. ATIS had control over all these people and they're the ones that sent and they determined that after I went on this Navy program that I would go to the air base there, Yokota, as an interpreter for the officers, wherever I was needed in their daily work. Yokota Air Base was a small air field and they were converting to be a large, one of the main air fields for the Army to land their planes, because the B-17s took a longer landing field than what was available in Japan, and so they had to build a couple air bases with a longer air strip to allow for the B-17s to come.

Interviewer: And did the B-29s land on those fields?

Wat Misaka: I don't think the B-29s came to Japan. I think the 17s were the largest, the 17s and the B-24s were the largest planes that came to Japan. The 29s stayed on Guam, I think.

Interviewer: When were you assigned -- you were assigned to go into Hiroshima?

Wat Misaka: That's right, USSBS -- United States Strategic Bombing Survey -- the team that I was on was to go and spend one week in Hiroshima and one week in Yamaguchi, which was the capital of the neighboring state, and one week in this city of Hagi, which was on the Japan seaside. I think Yamaguchi and Hiroshima prefectures were on the southwestern tip of the main

island, and Hagi was the main town on the northern side of Honshū, south or southern end of Honshū. There wasn't much bombing there and there wasn't too much bombing in Yamaguchi, but that was done purposefully to get an idea of what kind of bombings that were different and what kind of effect that they had and the morale, which was just one of the divisions of this survey. I don't know the other targets they had as far as trying to get the information to see how effective the strategic bombing had been. Of course, we know from history it couldn't have been much more effective because they wiped out everything that had been targeted, like Tokyo. I remember when we first went into Tokyo, this one area, when we went there, it was at night and there were no lights -- completely dark, except they had a few emergency lights strung up. The whole section of town was just flat with this incendiary bombs, and there were no buildings standing. It was mainly residential area, so the business buildings may have been reinforced concrete and brick, and that might have withstood some of the incendiary bombings, but the wooden homes, they were just all burnt to the ground. It was quite an eye-opener for us to see all of that. Of course, when we went to Hiroshima, the bombing, the effect of that atomic bomb was an even greater devastation. There was nothing left there except a few charred tree trunks.

Interviewer: Yeah, before we get into Hiroshima, while you were in Tokyo, did you have any interaction with any of the local citizens there as far as their attitudes or whatever?

Wat Misaka: I stayed pretty much with the military. Of course, during working hours, we were pretty much restricted to our own troops and our activities. I didn't go out much at night. They told us it probably wasn't a good idea to, especially by yourself, so I stayed pretty much in the barracks where we were. The people in general, there were very few incidents. There were a couple of parks and railroad stations that seemed to attract the unsavory type of people, you know, the ones that would like to steal your money if you had any or whatever. We particularly

were warned against going there after hours, so I stayed away from there. The government, our government, had confiscated some of the amusement parks or whatever, not amusement parks, but one park was a large place where we could play softball and for recreational purposes and after hours and on weekends, we could go check out some softballs and baseballs and bats and gloves and stuff and have ourselves a softball game and they had tennis courts there and even swimming pools. So it was a pretty good place for the GI's to go and spend the weekend away from hob-knobbing with the enemy. There were others that didn't mind going out and visiting and mingling with the natives, and they all had a good time, most of them that I know of. A good time meaning that they enjoyed themselves and they found good company to spend their time with. So I kind of stayed with the GI's.

Interviewer: By "good company," does that mean girlfriends and that kind of thing?

Wat Misaka: Well, yes, or people -- a lot of them worked with other Japanese in their daily work. You know, like this friend of mine, he wasn't that great in translating the newspaper, so what he did was he hired a Japanese person that was fluent in English to help him do his translations. So he got to be pretty good friends with him. That kind of accident interfacing was done in almost all walks of the activities that our translators were involved with, and there was quite a good, I think, and fruitful relationship that sprung up.

Interviewer: So, cooperation was kind of the main thing. I mean, the Japanese citizens were cooperative?

Wat Misaka: That's right, and I think that's part of their national psyche is to try to be cooperative and I think for that reason, we didn't have many responses in our questionnaires that were negative. I think the Japanese, you'd ask them these questions and they would try to answer

those questions in the manner they thought you would like to have them answered, not be controversial in any way. I think that's part of their national psyche to be that way, and so, these surveys I don't think actually got what they were looking for, precisely.

Interviewer: All right, now, you were sent to Hiroshima approximately three months after the bomb had dropped, and were you one of the first US soldiers that were in there?

Wat Misaka: No, there was an Army camp that they established at the outskirts of town. The center part of the town was fairly flat, and so that was a very good target to bomb, and that flat part was just completely devastated, like I said before, the only thing left was some charred tree trunks. They had a few reinforced concrete type buildings that stayed intact. Well, intact -- they were standing, but the doors had caved in and the roofs were kind of imploded and stuff like that, but the rest of the buildings were just all flat and the bomb was quite a horrible thing. Some of the people that we interrogated were residents of the town, but they didn't live or were not in the center part of the town when the bomb went off. It seemed like some on the outskirts of town, they had a few hills and things, and the hills shaded the bomb. It was supposed to have detonated a thousand feet above the ground, I think some of these hills still shaded the explosion so that if you were on the leeward side of that, you wouldn't get any of the radiation and so you would be safe from that. Those people that weren't, even though they were miles away from this center of town, if they got any of that radiation, it burned the skin off of their faces and bodies and it was quite a horrible thing to see. I noticed, I remember this one lady brought her child that had been burned, but not from the radiation. I guess she was, they were in a building that was hit by the explosion, the forced explosion caused the building to partially collapse and some of the timbers were set on fire, I guess, that's why the baby was still crying from the fire burns she received when the timber fell on her. They were selling stories about these people that had got a

dose of the radiation and they were kind of burning up and so there was a stream that goes from the town and a lot of the people were just running and jumping in the water because they were just kind of burning up. Of course, that didn't help any to put water on burning flesh, doesn't seem to do any good. It was kind of a sad thing for us to have to talk to these people. Luckily, a lot of the questions didn't bring up that sort of reaction, so that part of it helped, but we were supposed to set them at ease so that they wouldn't be too fearful of the questions we were going to ask them. We were supposed to kind of set them at ease before we went into our interrogation. Some of the stories were hard to take.

Interviewer: Now, I know it's been a long time, but can you recall some of the questions you had to ask and then what some of the responses were?

Wat Misaka: Well, the questions were really very ordinary type. Things like, "Have you ever been bombed before, or a place where you have been bombed before? The bombing experience that you had, what sort of things happened to you, and if anything happened to you directly," and things like that. Of course, most of the people, well, they might have been in cities, but most of them weren't directly involved in any kind of bombings, so their answers were not too distasteful because of that. I was really quite surprised at the manner of the questions because after it was all said and done, I really couldn't see how important those answers would be. Of course, I'm not a strategist, a military strategist, so I wouldn't have any idea about the importance of something like that, but it sure seemed to us that we spent a lot of money getting information that really wasn't very valuable.

Interviewer: How many questions did you have to ask? Do you remember?

Wat Misaka: Boy, I don't remember. There were quite a number. I'll guess there would be maybe 10, 12 pages.

Interviewer: Of questions?

Wat Misaka: Of questions, yeah, like, there might have been 8 to 10 questions per page.

Interviewer: What was the most unusual interview that you had? Did you have one that stands out?

Wat Misaka: The one that I remember was this lady with her child with the burns.

Interviewer: Who was still burned?

Wat Misaka: Yeah. But, some of these people remember the experiences of their friends and what had happened to some of their friends. Of course, none of these questions were in our questionnaire. There would be something that they might volunteer while we're just chatting with them before the interview and they tell us about, you know, it was kind of like the big storm after Christ was crucified, after the bomb was dropped. There was kind of a big, I don't know if it helped with the rain or not, but there was a big rain storm that followed the bomb. On top of jumping in the water getting rained on didn't help, these people that got a dose of the radiation.

Interviewer: Were you concerned about any radiation exposure yourself?

Wat Misaka: I sure was. There was a curfew on the whole city, no one was to enter the city before 8:00 in the morning and you had to be out by 5:00, and no one would be allowed in the city unless you had specific business in the city. They had gates on all of the roads coming into the town, manned by our people, our MP's. We had to go through checkpoints going in and out every day, too. I don't know if you remember seeing, it was one of the main pictures in *Life*

*Magazine* showing the main part of the city that had been bombed. I recall in one of those pictures, the building that we use for our office was one of the few buildings that was standing. It was, actually, I found out just a few years ago that I had taken my picture standing in front of this building and it had a sign and I couldn't really, it was in Japanese. The sign was denoting that building that we were using for our office was the police station for East Hiroshima, and it was one of the few that was still standing after the bomb.

Interviewer: Yep.

Wat Misaka: I remember it was interesting that the doors, instead of caving in, were kind of blown out. I guess that's the way that the explosion forces were working on the buildings.

Interviewer: Did you see other than that little girl that was burned, did you see any other citizens walking around with burned faces and hands and stuff?

Wat Misaka: Well, we would see someone. Only the minor ones that we would ever see, of course, all of the ones that were burnt badly were in the hospitals and things. I did never go to the hospital, so I never did see much of that. One day, we spent outside the city interviewing people that lived outside the city. I think it was the north west part of the city that we went to, but there was a big hill, I guess, in between the epicenter and that part of the city, so that town was not demolished or anything. It stayed pretty intact. In fact, my mother's brother, younger brother, lived in Hiroshima city, but way to the outskirts east of town. I visited him a couple months after that. I think it was in the spring of '46, the bomb was dropped in August of '45. Anyway, in the spring of '46, I did visit him and he said he had very little damage done to his house. He said part of the roof got knocked down, but other than that, he said his house with stood the blast quite nicely.

Interviewer: This was your mother's brother, did you say?

Wat Misaka: Yes, my mother's younger brother. She had two brothers.

Interviewer: So it was your uncle--

Wat Misaka: My uncle.

Interviewer: --that was living in Hiroshima.

Wat Misaka: Right. He had a wife and he had two kids, one son. His oldest son was 18 or 19, and his daughter was very young. She was like 3. In fact, they came to visit a couple years ago. Of course, that's been a long time since I saw her. Like I say, she was only three back then and that was in 1946, and so, and I think when they came here, it was a couple years ago, and so that's like 60 years.

Interviewer: Well, that's an interesting story. Elizabeth, have you got any questions?

Elizabeth: I'm curious. The bombed out places like Tokyo or Hiroshima, where did these civilians, the ones that survived, go? Their homes were flattened or burned out.

Wat Misaka: That's a good question. I don't know exactly. I think, of course, a lot of them had relatives and I think that's where most of them ended up is going to their relatives or to make shift hospitals because they had to have lots of medical care in the hospitals. So, when we went to Yamaguchi, the next week after we were in Hiroshima, I didn't see hardly any results of any bombing there. In fact, the people were just like people living out in the country. They seemed miles and miles away from any war, so the questionnaire in the survey had very little value, I thought, although I suppose they did have some bombing there, so some of that strategic bombing. All of that would be strategic bombing

Interviewer: You know, the US fire bombed most of those Japanese cities prior to the atomic bomb.

Wat Misaka: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you go into any of those cities that had been fire bombed.

Wat Misaka: Well, Tokyo.

Interviewer: Just in the Tokyo, that was completely destroyed.

Wat Misaka: Part of the towns of Tokyo was completely destroyed. Some areas, they had millions of population there, but some areas had very few people living in them because there was no place to stay, I mean, live. The buildings were all, you know, foot or two high was the highest kind of any rubble that they had there. I didn't see it myself, but there was a B-29 that had been shot down that was just outside of the out skirts of the city. This fellow was saying "I can take you out there." Well I didn't have any interest in seeing an old crashed twin engine bomber. People were, well, like I say, they're different. I'm American so I cannot understand their philosophy of life, but they kept going, living the best they could. They didn't seem to have too much resentment about what had happened. Just kind of took it as a matter of course, that that was fate.

Interviewer: That's what amazes me. In there your time in Japan, Tokyo, Hiroshima, you never heard a negative or derogatory comment about the Americans.

Wat Misaka: Well I heard some, but all in all not very much compared to -- yeah, very little. One of the things that kind of surprised me was that, you know, all of the propaganda that we had during the war that their soldiers were butchers and so on and stuff. Well, the Japanese

people were told the same thing about our soldiers -- that the Americans were butchers and don't ever get taken alive because, you know, they would murder you and things like that. Of course, when, after the war was over, a lot of these people that had been told those kinds of stories would tend to disbelieve those because of the kind of treatment they received after the war was over. I think the same thing happened to a lot of people that found out all this war propaganda -- well, we weren't. That's the whole thing. My class was the largest class to go through that school, and yet, people that got trained in that school were just some of the main people that had to interface with the public. The training that we received and all of our predecessors received was strictly military. All we learned about was what makes up a company and what makes up a division and what kind of weapons did they have and things like that. What language and what customs that we knew was what we learned from our parents or what school we went to, Japanese school, after regular school while we were growing up. So our training was very meager, and as far as dealing with the psychological problems or things like that, absolutely no training at all in that area. We had to have a lot of luck on our side to come out so well, but I think that after my class graduated, and after the war was over, the students that went to the school, the school continued on for a number of months afterwards. They had a number of graduates coming out of the school after the war was over, and their curriculum had to be changed to target some of these things that they were going to encounter, you know, things like how the government works and what we were trying to teach them to do as far as the government. This one friend of mine, when he was going to school, he was in the geology, so they used that to target him into an area where he had to interface with people that were trying to teach them how to deal with the geology under government, the geological surveys and things like that. He had to use the training that he had received going to school here as a student in

geology at, I don't know, I think he was going to UCLA or something at the time. Thing like, well I was in engineering, but they never use that as far as how I would be useful in the occupation. I'm sure that a lot of the training that students had followed us received were geared toward you know, how they could be used in the occupational forces. I don't know what kind of subject matter they may have been involved in, and that area, but they had to have something like that because we were involved in everything. Like in voting and how to gear their government to a democratic type of electoral process and things like that. How did we do all of that and turn people that were our enemies into our greatest allies, you know, that's kind of a miracle. That's where I really have to take a back seat to my friends that had this experience to be called on to help into this smooth transition in the occupation. A lot of my friends stayed over there. They got discharged in Japan and stayed over, worked in civil service continuing on and worked at what they were doing when they were in the service to help in the occupation. Of course, it wasn't all -- some of that was selfish. They made pretty good money, a lot better than money in the services, 21 dollars a month being in the service or whatever it was. To be in the civil service over there, to help in the occupation, many of my friends stayed there to do that.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Unknown Person: I just wanted to know, about the Luzon camp and the generals. Were they actually tried and executed in the camp? In the POW camp?

Wat Misaka: I'm sorry, could you speak a little louder, please?

Interviewer: The question was, these officers that were executed in the Philippines. Were they executed right there on the spot, did you witness any of that?

Wat Misaka: No.

Interviewer: Or your buddies ever did.

Unknown Person: I just wanted to know what the process was. They were tried, what is that, a two week process and then they were executed? How long did they stay in the camp till they were executed?

Wat Misaka: I think it was not a, you know, a couple days. It was like months, especially the generals that took months for those. I don't know which one, General Yamashita and General Homma, the two top ranking, one of them was hung and the other was shot with a firing squad. How they determined which way they would die, I don't have any idea. I think that was the same way in Tokyo at the Sugamo prison. These trials went on for months. You know, it wasn't -- they tried not to make it be a sham, you know, kangaroo court type of thing. I can't believe that there was a real justice, what could they base that on. I know as far as the Japanese generals are concerned, they knew they were going to get executed regardless of what they did or didn't do. That didn't have anything to do with it, I felt.

Interviewer: Did you ever come across any American prisoners of war, either in the Philippines or in Japan?

Wat Misaka: No.

Interviewer: Never did.

Wat Misaka: I never did, although my buddy said that we had some American POW's, I mean prisoners in there. Some of them had done some very, you know, dastardly things like killing civilians to gain money or whatever. So some of our, I guess you have millions of soldiers, you're going to have a few that

Interviewer: So in the Japanese prison camps, there were, for the 160,000 Japanese, there were some American prisoners of war or Americans that had--

Wat Misaka: Yes.

Interviewer: --disobeyed in some fashion and they were kept there, too.

Wat Misaka: Yeah, they were kept there, too. I was surprised. I didn't know that until, well, just a few months ago when I was up there visiting my friend up there in Brigham City. He happened to be talking about it and he told me then he had some American prisoners in that camp with him.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Wat Misaka: I think, you know, the 160,000 Japanese, there were probably less than a thousand Americans though. I do want to emphasize that not me, but my friends -- I just can't give them enough credit for what they did over there.

Interviewer: Well, it was quite an effort when you consider that Japan has become one of our best allies ever since the war.

Wat Misaka: That's right.

Interviewer: Now our industry is just about taken over, lot of our industries there, you know.

Wat Misaka: Well, they certainly are industrious people.

Interviewer: Wat, thank you again.

End of recording.