National Park Service (NPS)

Mariana Islands Wartime Experience through Oral Histories Fellowship
(WAPA 4170)
Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Alfred Santos Rios
July 23, 1994

Interview conducted by Steven Haller
Transcribed by Plowshares Media
Coordinated by Dr Jennifer Craig
Reviewed by Guampedia Foundation, Inc
508 compliant version by Michael Faist

This digital transcript contains updated pagination, formatting, and editing for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered. The original digital transcript is preserved in the NPS WAPA Collections and NPGallery.

This digitization was made possible through the National Park Service by a grant from the National Park Foundation through generous support from the Mellon Foundation.

The release form for this interview is on file at the NPS WAPA Collections.

WAPA Collections
War in the Pacific NHP
135 Murray Boulevard, Suite 100
Hagåtña, GU 96910
wapa_interpretation@nps.gov

Cultural Reviewer's Notes: Alfred Santos Rios died September 7, 2007 at the age of 83. He's buried at Pigo Cemetery in Guam. He was married to Amelia Blaz Rios and his parents were Vicente Leon Guerrero & Tomasa Santos Rios.

Interviewee: **Alfred Santos Rios**
Military Rank: Civilian, Guam
Interviewer: Steven Haller Hilton Hotel, Guam
Date: July 23, 1994

---01:00:13:00---

Q: My name is Steven Haller and I am here at the Hilton Hotel in Guam on July 23rd 1994 at 1:30 P.M. to record an oral history interview with Mr. Alfred Rios, who was a young civilian on Guam during World War II. This interview is being made by the National Park Service, War in the Pacific National Historical Park, in conjunction with KGTF Television. Mr. Rios, I understand that the National Park Service has your permission to make this recording and to retain all literary and property rights deriving from it, is that correct?

Alfred Rios: That's correct. That's correct.

Q: Well, thanks very much for taking the time to be joining us today and tell us about your experiences as a young man on Guam, I appreciate it.

Alfred Rios: Okay.

Q: When were you born?

---01:01:09:00---

Alfred Rios: I was born on February 27, 1924.

Q: Where were you born?

Alfred Rios: Here in Agana. Agana, Guam.

Q: What—tell us a little bit about your family.

---01:01:20:00---

Alfred Rios: My, my—I came from a family of eight. Ten altogether, my mom and dad, you know? Both my parents are, have passed away already, you know. My mom was born in 1898 and she passed away on May 2nd 1978 which put her 80 years. Eighty years at the time when she passed away. My dad was born in 1900 on May the 9th, 1900 and he passed away on December 31st, 1980, which also put him to 80 years old. So both my parents died at 80 years old.

Q: What did your parents do? What kind of work did they do?

Alfred Rios: My dad works for the government then. And then during the Japanese time he works for the Guam, **rather** the power plant, which is situated right in Agana also, you know. And my mom was doing all kinds of bakery stuff. She had **a** big oven in the back yard. We were situated right, right close to where the treatment plant is right now, where the hot dog stand's standing right now? Right around that vicinity. So, we got **a** pretty sized lot in there and a back yard. We had all coconut groves and the big oven, outside oven which almost the same like some people in ah, New Mexico, you know, that are using, you know, where you put in some lumber or some dead coconut leaves, you know, to start up the fire. So I, my mom was doing a lot of baking in fact during my growing years at school. School was right next door to our

---01:03:17:00---

house and my mom, just so happens she knew the principal of that school very well because the two of them actually grew up practically and because of that connection I have special privileges, you know, from the school to leave the school premises at least 15 minutes before the time comes up for recess time so that I can dash home and pick up the pastry that my mom had prepared so I can bring it over to school, you know, and peddle that. And I was peddling

some cookies or ah, rice cake, or some other pastries, you know, that my mother prepares, you know. And ah, that, that is during school hours, and then I have to head for home and put back whatever is unsold and give my mom the money. And then comes after school my mom will prepare us, the family with two other boys from around the neighbors, you
---01:03:21:00---

know, to go out also and sell the rice cakes or cake, you know, the pound cake, and regular bread, you know, like the French bread. So, we go down to, even down to Piti, the landing, landing area. But we used to take the **Sgambelluri** truck which is a solid tire truck and you know, going down towards that direction, the three of us. Actually two was hired by my mom. So then **there's three of us** would just put our stuff right on the back bed you know, and we jump up and we don't get off until we come to Piti Landing and that's where we get off. And then, coming back home, you know, and we started peddling our product.

Q: Would you peddle the pastries and your wares to some of the Americans that worked at the Navy yard there?

Alfred Rios: Yes. Right in the Navy yard, by the Fleet Landing. But we cannot go into the Navy, you know, the Navy yard because it's got a fence, you know, the fence around that area unless, unless there's a ship comes in, ah, special privileges without the, you know, the only time you can get in there otherwise you have no business being in there. So, ah, from there on clear up towards Agana. But we really do have a grand time and that was the growing years of my life and I really enjoyed every bit of it. It's something that I cherish it wholeheartedly and I'll never part from it.

---01:05:51:00---

Q: Did you—how much school did you finish?

Alfred Rios: I finish off the 12th year, but I attended **Balboa U** in San Diego. I went, my first trip to the States actually was in 1950 before the **Organic Act** was granted to Guam and I, I was in New York City on July the 4th 1950.

Q: 1950.

---01:06:12:00---

Alfred Rios: I hit New York City on July 4th 1950 and I was with one of my younger sisters then and I was taking her over to my other sister who happens to be, her husband was stationed over Newport, Rhode Island, so it just so happened that I stayed behind, in fact, I stayed over in a hotel, Holland Hotel over in Manhattan. By Woodstock they call it. And Manhattan College happens to be, a cousin, first cousin of mine was attending school there at the time. So, and Mr. Guerrero, Jack Guerrero, I have met him over there, too, at the same period of time. I didn't get to meet Mr. Salas who was attending school up at Fordham University in New York City. So all around that time, you know, we spent quite a time meeting with some friends over on Long Island. I had a very close friend, **John Quan ,** I'm sorry to say but he passed away really some time back, but a very nice fellow. We boarded the plane at the **Stratocruiser Pan Am** plane from here to San Francisco by Honolulu, Wake Island, Honolulu and then from there to San Francisco, and I took the other plane, Western Airlines, from San Francisco, the same kind of plane, **Stratocruiser** up to New York City. And it was a full moon at that time we were flying over. Oh, what a wonderful night.

---01:07:40:00---

Q: Sounds beautiful.

Alfred Rios: And I slept in a berth, you know, I rented a berth. At the time they have a berth, you know, inside the plane for $12.50. So I, I took advantage of that and from here to San Francisco and from San Francisco we got back—I got another one again, the same kind of privileges, you know? Can't go wrong with that.

Q: So take us back to just before the time the Japanese landed. If I'm right you must have been a teenager, about 17 years.

Alfred Rios: Seventeen years old.

Q: What were you doing around that time just before.
---01:08:13:00---

Alfred Rios: I, I was still in school at the time. It just so happened that I was retained twice before. I broke my arm on a ball game and we were operating a store in Anigua where the Ace Hardware is presently situated in Anigua, right around that area actually, right across that **area** is the Bradley Park and so that's where we normally played, you know, the teenage boys from that area. My parents were operating a store in Anigua so I, you know, the young persons usually look after me to go out and do something, you know, like going out to the ocean, you know, for fishing or ah, playing ball down at the Bradley Park and this Bradley Park actually was operated by the military and they do have the armory there which is guarded by one family. The father or the husband happens to be a police officer. And all along that period of time, you know, we were from that—all those games, you know, some of the local games that I participated in and I broke my arm twice. And because, you know, I stayed in the hospital I was retained twice.

---01:09:37:00---

Q: Do you remember the day the war started?

Alfred Rios: The war started on, on Ap—oh no, December 8. We were at the church at the time. Immaculate Conception and the majority of the people actually, as you probably may have known are Catholic here, so a lot of them actually were at the church at the time. And the church we were attending, I was over in Agana. This is not the cathedral. This is the second largest **church throughout the island** and that is situated over by, by Santa Cruz in Agana. Where the, where the—if you know the Bank of Guam? From Marine Drive you turn left into **Bank of Guam t**here, in the old **Bank of Guam i**n Agana, right around that area is where the church is situated before, and that's where we were at the time. And we, everybody actually dispersed in no time because there was some information being disseminated that Guam has been bombed by the Japanese.

Q: Did you hear bombs?

---01:10:42:00---

Alfred Rios: We saw the, we saw the plane that passed through, passed down, you know, went down towards west, west of the island but then finally we heard, you know, people were running all over. So we, when we came home, everybody was getting ready, you know? They pack everything. And it just so happened that a fairly brand new U.S. truck, no, no ah, sides, but other than the plain **bed**, you know? And it was driven by **one stateside** guy who happens to be connected with **Pomeroy Company**, the Company that was here on the island earlier, ah, they are responsible for drilling the **Apra Harbor.** See and this guy, I still remember the statement **he was hollering**. He kept on calling attention to the people, saying, "What are you waiting for rain or a bomb?" You know, he came off of the seat, you know, and he was standing by the side steps and he was hollering at us, you know, in that direction. So finally I went out, you know, **and he keeps** on hollering, come on, let's go, let's go, hurry up. What are you people waiting for? Rain or a bomb? He keeps repeating the whole thing, and he was, he was shirtless. Just a short pants, no shirt. But then we told him, ah, I came out and told him that, ah, ah, **Father, a stateside father came up to—was going to pick us up, you know, with his car.** We were very close with this padre here in Agana Cathedral, not Agana

---01:12:19:00---

Cathedral, ah, Santa Cruz Church, you know? So he came up with **his** car**.** I think it was a Plymouth, 4-door sedan. So we pack up everything in the trunk, and I sat down there in the trunk, you know, and we **headed** up **to** our place **in Radio Barrigada**. Our land is situated right now, as you can easily see, that it's right across the post office up in Barrigada. That happens to be our land. And the Navy condemned that land. And ah, **I'm still—as a side information**, I'm still waiting. I happen to be the administrator of my mother's land. That belonged to my mom.

Q: Maybe we can get back to that. I was—a little later on I'd like to hear a little more about your feelings about that, but why don't we try to just go chronologically—

---01:13:10:00---

Alfred Rios: So I, I stayed, I stayed on that ranch for that particular day until some message came to us that all of us would have to go down to Agana to be registered and at the same time to be given a band, you know, for identification, so the band is wrapped around our arm, here, you know.

Q: Okay, so you're up in Barrigada.

Alfred Rios: This, this, no we have to come down to Agana. That was the instruction we received, you know, that all of us **people** would have to—some would go down to Agana and right by the **Plaza de España.**

Q: So you didn't witness any fighting the day the Japanese landed? Or did you—

Alfred Rios: No, because the Japanese landed in, on December 10th, and that was early in the morning and we, we were already in, in ah, at the ranch, from December 8th actually. The first bomb that was dropped on the island, we took off from our home in Agana and head for the ranch and we stayed there. So the Japanese came in on December the 10th and we were in

---01:14:14:00---

Agana. But we, we know, we know several people who have seen the, **the invasion time** and came to us and told us that there was a truck, a fairly new truck that they found right sitting on, ah, on the bridge, on a wooden bridge that connects **San Antonio and San Nicolas** right by **Takano's store**. And the truck was facing the, front end facing the river and at the same **facing** the **Topsy Liquor store** is right next to that, you know. So this is what we got, you know, information from our close relatives, you know, that the Japanese have already landed and ah, and that ah, several people that happened to be found along the way during the invasion were being massacred.

Q: What did you see when you came back into Agana? What did you see and what happened to you when you came back down into Agana to be registered by the Japanese?
---01:15:26:00---

Alfred Rios: Well that was, that was—that was on the 10th when the Japanese came in, so we stayed on the ranch the 8th, 9th, and 10th, so when the Japanese came in, you know, that was on the 11th when we were ordered, at least for, for us, you know, we were ordered that we're supposed to go down to Agana was the day after the invasion.

Q: How did you get the word?

Alfred Rios: Some, some, somebody came to us, you know. I don't recall who was the person.

Q: Word of mouth by your friends, in other words not—

---01:15:58:00---

Alfred Rios: Yes, could be some relatives or friends, you know, that came by to the ranch, you know. Because a lot of people were all scattered around the area and on the ranch, so everybody was disseminating information about what's going on or what they have seen or what they have heard, you know, going around in Agana. So when we learn about that we don't have anything to say other than simply to comply with the instruction that all of us has to report down to Agana to be registered and at the same time to be given a band. And, and also to surrender all our guns and even machete. Anything that will harm anybody, you know, those things have to be surrendered. So my, my parents—my father had a gun then, but I don't seem to remember whatever happened **to it,** you know**.** He had a **Buckshot.** You know, but I don't know exactly what happened to that, whether they did turn it in or what. But the machete, we tried to conceal in the, you know, because that becomes very, very important for us in terms of cutting wood, you know, and for clearing up, you know, whatever needs to be cleared so that we can plant something for our livelihood. So that's something that we never did surrender—the machete, we never did. So right, right after that, the, the—I've seen in Agana, what I saw during that period of time is that the whole **Plaza de España was all practically** packed, you know, with people. Oh, my goodness gracious, it's just like people milling all over the place. And well, of course, a lot of them were simply—if I hear somebody talking it will be
---01:17:47:00---

among themselves but more on a whispered basis. If it's going to be a little bit louder than

they're probably talking to an interpreter, you know, like local Japanese who were here then. I have some relatives, you know, in Japanese, like the **Okada's** and the T**anaka's.** These are all relatives, on my mother's side. And they, if they happen to see anybody around that period of time most likely we might be talking on the same sound of communication, you know? But if it's just among ourselves then it will be somewhat like almost like a lip service, you know? Because we were so afraid, you know? So, all along that time we went back to the ranch and we started with our daily life of tilling the soil, you know, and planting whatever needs to be planted because right then and there we can't possibly use our money because the money we're using is U.S. currency but some, some stores that ah, I don't know whether they were actually **authorized to** open, but more or less in a silent type operation. And maybe they're only catering to possibly close-knit friends and relatives or what have you, you know? But we, we have tried obtaining something in that type of approach, too.

Q: With U.S. currency, you mean?

---01:19:30:00---

Alfred Rios: Yes. And people will take the U.S. currency any time without any question. The Japanese money at that period of time weren't exposed, you know, until later on in 1942**,** you know, or up to 1944 they were still using the Japanese currency. But in 1942 up to about October I stayed on the ranch and, my goodness, I started off with chickens.

Q: Okay. So, Mr. Rios, you stayed on your mother's ranch then until what time?

Alfred Rios: This is, I stayed alone up to around about October of '42 when my dad came up to our ranch and informed me that the officials in Agana were looking around for all well bodied people to start working at the base, you know, and clearing up the Naval air station **or Brewer Field**, or the Antonio **Won Pat airfield** now. That was the first air base that we started working. And it just so happened that my dad, about 42 years at the time, so I said,
---01:20:56:00---

okay, Dad. I'll go down to Agana and I will substitute for you. You can stay at the ranch and, you know, take care of the things that I've raised already, you know. And I'm telling you, I got so

many chickens and pigs, my God, I was having a can of biscuit, with this can, practically every single day I got eggs, fresh eggs every day. That's how much, how many chickens I got at the time. And every time I crawl up on my chicks, you know, regardless of the time of the day, oh, they all come congregate and it makes me feel good.

Q: Now that was enough—was that more than enough for your family.

Alfred Rios: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: Did you barter the rest?

Alfred Rios: We never barter, really because the chickens and the eggs were always taken down to the family, you know, and of course, all the people at that time, everybody's raising pigs and chickens, you know, and not **to mention** the few cows that they have, you know, with them, you know, but mostly chickens and pigs because it's so easy to handle in terms of

---01:21:59:00---

making, you know, taking, taking them for food. You can easily prepare that. But it is going to be a cow, that's quite **a chore**. **It takes up to** two days by the time you get something out of it. So when I went down to Agana I started working for the manganese mine. That's when they took us and all the Agana people, able-bodied men, were taken up to **Mount Tenjo**. This is right around the vicinity of Nimitz **Hill**. And that's where I started working, digging a tunnel to **locate the manganese** and at the same time cleansing out the manganese that are mixed up with some of the rocks, you know. It has to be taken out from the tunnel and we wash it outside, screen them properly and make sure that we take **out** all the rocks and leave the manganese in there. So that has to be piled up in a certain area, you know, away from us, and at that time I was with quite a number of women working, washing all the rocks, manganese
---01:23:09:00---

that mix up with little rocks, you know? Then from there I was taken to work in the tunnel and this is, this is very funny in a way because the tunnel was somewhat about maybe 20 plus feet down and there were three of us supposed to work in that tunnel and we know the man, the

supervisor, Japanese supervisor, you know, that handles all those things and we called this **hada kei di [Phonetic],** you know, like you go in that hole at 8:00 or 7:30. If you can finish up what you're supposed to do down there in the hole in, say 1:00 or 2:00 you can come up. But you see, what we normally do, actually we pull the tape. We pull the tape, you know? We know exactly how deep that hole is in there, so when we come down there, all of us knew about—a few of us working in there. So we pull the tape, it says foot and a half, you know, **pull it down and then** set it up. So we might be in there, in that hole for a whole week and you'd be the same depth because we never go further down. [Laughs.] So **we** keep doing that every single day. Pulling tape, you know?

Q: So you always got away with that? The Japanese—

Alfred Rios: Oh, yes. We never disclose what we're doing down there. And, you know, the hole is something that goes down and then it twists, you know, like this way.

---01:24:37:00---

Q: But you were still bringing up manganese, I assume?

Alfred Rios: Well, we weren't supposed to bring up manganese from that hole. We were just supposed to, just to dig the hole so we can locate the manganese. So all the manganese mine is all on the other areas, you know, bigger tunnel like a gold mine back in the States, those are the places where they chop down a big chunk of manganese, you know? The hole we went **through**, you know, we found small **bit of manganese** in there, you know, but we, we were checked down there. About after maybe a week or so the supervisor came down with his flashlight, you know, and was looking around. And found this little, little bit of manganese in there. So they ask us to shovel that and bring it up, you know? So we have to improvise something and bring
---01:25:30:00---

down like a sack and somebody will be pulling it from up there, you know, pull it up. But we never go deeper. We may have dug a little but not precisely the way we were supposed to accomplish down there, you know, because I think we were told to dig at least two feet every

single day. So what we'd been doing all along was something, we would pull the tape, like this. So that's part of the gimmick that we did up there in the hole. Then they transferred us over to the bigger mine and we were pushing the cart up. And those were the heavy load because the big chunk of manganese, blue-black, and heavy. They got it in the cart, you know, and we push it up, up to where **we're** supposed to **pile**. And from there, I guess they haul it up. I was never, got involved with hauling it from there to the truck and then the truck down to **Piti dock,** you know, where they loaded up the ship down there. I was never involved in that.

Q: When you were working for the Japanese at the, in these manganese mines, did you have to stay there the whole time, or was it just an 8 hour job and then you went home?

Alfred Rios: No, once we finish up, you know, reporting that we have done our share, really, in terms of the assignment then we went up, you know, we'd come out of the hole and there's a little space right outside that parameter, the mine parameter where we set that up purposely for relaxation.

---01:27:10:00---

Q: So you had to stay in a camp?

Alfred Rios: No. No camp at that time. No camp. So we just went over there and looked out in the afternoon. You know, we looked up towards the harbor and it was so visible. The harbor is right down here where you can see everything's moving down there in black and white. And one afternoon is when we felt that **Tokai Maru** was torpedoed out there.

Q: Yes. Describe that for us.

---01:27:38:00---

Alfred Rios: Well, it was, exactly the time is something that I'm not sure. That's about 3, 2, 3 or 4:00 in the afternoon when that thing came about, you know? But we, we felt the jolt, you know, jolt in movement and we looked down and there was a time when the ship—in fact one of the ships was towed into the break water, or glass break water and they set it up there, I think, in

anticipation that it will be considered safe, you know? But I think the submarine captain out there in the harbor must have known about the movement of that ship, you know, and then they torpedo. Actually it came up again a second time and even split the break water up there, the glass break water and hitting the ship at the same time.

Q: You felt the concussion. Could you see the spray or smoke? Could you see the second torpedo? What did you see from a distance?

Alfred Rios: What we saw in there was that when we felt that concussion, you know, we looked out and we saw that this big object out there in the water, you know, this, like coming down. But we, we didn't, I don't recall seeing any smoke then. Of course, you know, the first thing that got into mind, we wanted to take care of that kind of information and keep it to ourselves. We cannot be **toying** around with that kind of information knowing full well

---01:29:19:00---

there might be Japanese around, or some, you know, somebody might be looking **out** for the Japanese **and might have overheard us saying** something like that. So the first thing that comes to mind **actually**, **we** just **took**, what we learned from being there that very moment, **took off and kept that to ourselves, you know**? When we left that place we don't discuss anything after that because **[laughs] we might get beat up, what have you, just for that.**

Q: Let me clarify. When you were working on Mount **Tenjo** in the mines, after you got finished with the day's work, were you allowed to go home?

Alfred Rios: Yes. Yes.
---01:29:58:00---

Q: And were you paid for your work?

Alfred Rios: Well they pay us but this is the money that we have no use, though, because the store that we usually use that will be two places. One is the, they call it the **koree [Phonetic]** in Agana. That particular store used to be like **an** ice cream parlor, operated by the Mayos. The

Mayos family, see, and they have that snow cone **joint** —**during Japanese times** [pause]. Well, we normally would go straight home from finishing our project up at the mine.

Q: Now, as well as working in the manganese mines, I understand that you did labor over at Orote, the air field on Orote Peninsula. Is that correct?

Alfred Rios: Yes.

Q: That was later on?

Alfred Rios: Yes. Later on.

---01:31:28:00---

Q: Was that around the time the Americans were beginning to return?

Alfred Rios: Yes. But that, that comes in later because from manganese, they pull us out. They—I think they consider the completion of the **NAS (Naval Air Station) Agana** is considered top priority, I would imagine, so they pull us out from there and we attended the project up in Barrigada. So my shift up there in the airfield was from sunset to sunrise. And boy, there's a whole slew of people actually were involved in cleaning up the area. And there was a couple of bulldozers then that belongs to the U.S. that were confiscated when the Japanese—and several trucks, you know, just a handful of trucks were available. But most of the people that are doing all the hauling of rocks, and the combination of rocks and dirt, were hauling that from, let's say the length of the airfield is like this, up there now, so we were picking up all **the**
---01:32:33:00---

pile from this side, this side of the base, and dumping it over on the other side which is about maybe a good mile, possibly more than a mile. So we're dumping it on cliff side on this side of the air strip. So I worked there for several months, you know, doing the same thing until finally an old man spotted me who happens to be operating the compressor. This is the man that operates the jack hammer, you know? So when he spotted me, I don't know, maybe we're related in some sense. I'm not so sure, but I still remember his name then, Jesus Perez

[Phonetic], a tall guy—person, and he spotted me and, you know, being possibly a small guy compared to him, walking the width of that air strip with that **muku,** we call it **muku**, in Japanese term, I guess we call it **muku**, and this is a **bag,** and we got a pole, you know, maybe about four by four, one person in the front and one person in the back, and hauling the cart, you know, on that tarpaulin, or not tarpaulin a gunny sack. So, this guy spotted me and, oh my goodness, must be about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, and he approached me, you know, and said, you know, I think it's best, I take you and let you work with me over at the compressor site. I said, "If you think it's alright I would appreciate that," you know? He said, and you're going to involve yourself in less work, you know, rather than what you're doing now. That's too heavy for you. He may have known who my parents are and possibly that was the reason why he kind of felt kind to me, you know? So he took me in and once I started the **compressor**

---01:34:36:00---

all you need to do is be checking the oil here and there and they have big pots right close to where that compressor sits. This is the continuously boiling hot tea. Hot teas right around there. And so we're always drinking hot tea throughout the night. And I worked with him for several months again until they finally **come for** us again. The announcement came one early evening before we started back onto our regular project there, we were told to corral, right at the west end of the air strip, because a truck will take us out to the ship. So we became a stevedore again. And so we went to—not one single parent from all of us knew that we were taken away from the air strip. Our parents knew, definitely for sure, that we went up to that place because we informed them. But insofar as being taken out of that site nobody knew about it. You know? So, I still remember I was wearing a white shirt and a dungaree pants
---01:35:54:00---

and my mother made pants for me, you know, that my mom sewed—the first day when they took us out to the ship, tsk-tsk-tsk-tsk. Boy, was a huge ship loaded with nothing but Army guys, Army—Japanese Army, and a lot of sacks of cement. But you see, the cement is inside a bag, but outside that bag is, they call it like wheat, you know? Dry wheat. And God, it's so—it tears up your skin holding that—so that's exactly what happened. Putting it on your back, my shirt got pulled all over—first day it was gone. My shirt is gone. And so we were unloading that first, you know, because that happens to be on the top side of the ship, and so we have to remove that

while the Army continuously like ants, they're pulling out on the ship, went down the gangplank. So we didn't know where we were going to sleep that night, the first night. We took for granted that we're going to—this is going to be where we're at, you know, **when they sign us through.** So possibly round about 1, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning they took us down the gangplank and we settle in a barge. So the barge is tied to the ship and that's where we slept with nature hovering over us, you know, all throughout the morning. So every 7 o'clock they would call upon us, you know, and we have to go up the gangplank and start working again, 7-8 o'clock. They gave us a bowl of rice, you know, and water. And sometimes hot tea.

---01:37:40:00---

Q: So things were—sounds like they were getting a lot harder on you as the war progressed?

Alfred Rios: Oh, right after we finish unloading all the cement and all the **other war, you** know, ah, supplies, war supplies as well as food supplies I was assigned down to the bottom—the hatch—right at the bottom there by the shaft. And that's where I found a stack. My goodness gracious, a stack of the anti aircraft bullets—shells, you know, the shell. And everything is covered on the front and I thought it was loaded. And the first thing I got into my mind, I says I'm gonna break up this ship. You know, that's what I was telling this companion of mine down there. I forgot his name. I said, I'm gonna climb up to the very top and I'll start kicking all these things down **and banging it** against the shaft. And the shaft, my goodness gracious, is twice the size of that door with, you know, that's how big that shaft down there. So all the shells I was kicking down it was like a bowling alley. It was just like a
---01:38:43:00---

bowling alley. It sounds that way. And nothing breaks except the plastic cover. But I was determined when I first saw that stack **down there,** I said I'm gonna break this ship up. [Laughs.] It had no powder. No powder inside, only empty shells. They were going to use them, maybe they get it out and put the powder in and use it for the anti aircraft. Yes.

Q: Weren't you afraid you were going to blow yourself up at the same time?

Alfred Rios: Yes. I said that, because I'm going to break up the ship and I don't care what

happens. That's what I said.

Q: You must have been working hard.

Alfred Rios: I was somewhat delirious in a sense. Who wouldn't be pooped out working day, even up to night time, 1 o'clock, 4 o'clock, and then to rest, you know, for just a couple of hours then you're up again until **such** that everything's cleared on that ship, you know? And believe you me, that was the hardest part of my life, being exposed to nature out there on that barge. And all of us are local boys from Agana. I don't know, for some reason, they always picking on us. Maybe because we came from the city and the interpreters **up there are giving us fingers, pointing to us to take us out there.**

---01:40:03:00---

pick on us, you know, take us out from there. That's how we worked down there. Then they took us from there again, when we finished that project, that's when we started working over there building fences at the Orote Point.

Q: Tell me a little bit about some, what happened to you then. Wasn't that the first time—well, you saw, of course, this submarine, the American submarine, but this was the first time you began to see American airplanes come over?

---01:40:31:00---

Alfred Rios: No. This is the time, the first time that we were down there, at least for myself—I'm sure that there's a lot of people working there, but in terms of the Agana boys, you know, men that were being assigned to that area, that happens to be the first time and I think we got there to the site possibly between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning and so we start building the trenches, you know, right on the apron of the airstrip. So I think the reason for us building that, if I'm not mistaken, is that they're going to use that as a defense mechanism for the pilots and for, you know, anybody working with the planes, you know? At least they can have that kind of a safety--**[Unintelligible -- Cross-talk] but instead of us using it—and this is about 10**

o'clock, possibly, in the morning the church bell from Sumai [Phonetic], which is not far from where the air strip is, you know, the air strip is up in the hills on the plateau **positioned and then Sumai** is right down below, you know. So the church is situated down there. This is the civilian church. So they took the bell. That bell came from there, and they set it up at the east end of the air strip, Orote. And that was the bell that they continuously ringing, you know, because they spotted a plane, an American plane. So what happened there, this is about 10:30 and we can see from there clear up on a plateau, we're here in Agana there was dog fight going on all over, you know. And everybody knew, you know, that **Americans are going to be**

---01:42:12:00---

most like any time. So, during that moment we, before we head for protection we went out to the first coconut tree. A friend of mine hit the coconut tree and we were the first ones to hug that **coconut tree you know,** in anticipation of being safe. But then all of a sudden, my goodness, a lot of the other men came over and start pushing up, pushing up, you know? They started from the bottom and they're pushing us up, you know? So, when the time comes and when we couldn't even touch our feet on the ground I said, "Let's get out of here." **So we went over to where the** natural holes, you know, like caves. All natural caves right by the cliff on Orote Peninsula. And there is where we found two pilots—Japanese pilots—inside. And I told this friend of mine, I says, "Don't, stop talking too long," like **this one** of these two might come out here and start banging us or might shoot us, you know? Just stop talking a lot." Finally he keeps on talking **Japanese** you know. I feel a little bit disturbed in a sense that my goodness I
---01:43:17:00---

might be a participant in something that's not of my own doing and be killed in there, you know? Who knows? Nobody will know that. So finally one of the pilots came up by the entrance, you know, and starts slapping my friend. And I said, I just remained silent and I was hoping that no further injury will be imposed upon the two of us, you know, other than what my friend had received up to that point. But we saw, I saw about five or six Japanese fighter planes took off from that little air field and just as we were, just as we came up from that cave, maybe possibly about 5 o'clock, one Japanese fighter plane came down and I can, I can see the plane was in flame already up in **the air. Tried to** make a landing right there. It's coming in this way, facing east, you know? But there was a lot of pot holes already in the air strip, and because all the

planes, the bomber, this is a Japanese bomber, parked over on this side of the—this is an apron on this side, the air strip is this way. So all these bomber planes that were there were all pot shot, you know, by American planes. They almost landed down there. **They started strafing all over the place.** And so those planes are actually out of commission right then and there. So this plane that came down in flames, which I saw about three tankers, water tankers, that came over and they start spraying water, you know, on top of the plane. And they took the pilot out. They brought the pilot out of the cockpit but he is also in burning condition. So the water touches

---01:45:13:00---

all the gas, you know, coming out of the plane, these flames started to spread all over under the plane and it becomes a big flame up there on the air strip. And we finally head up—there's only two of us. At least nobody was there other than the two of us. So we start jogging a little bit faster until we hit, hit the far end on the east side of the air strip and that's where we found the rest of the men already on the truck, ready to head back home. And just before we got to the truck they, we heard somebody was hollering that there's a plane again. Now this is past 4 or 5 o'clock already, 5 P.M. And so everybody jumps off the truck. We weren't there yet but just approaching, you know. Then we jump off and one of the guys broke his arm. Oh, my gosh he was in, must be in such excruciating pain, you know? Nothing to care of him in there. But everybody, everybody that jump off of that truck, they all head for that Manzanita trees around—they are so abundant situated around that area. And then are some banana trees,
---01:46:25:00---

you know, so everybody took the banana trees, take them, maybe just to hide their body. Or the Manzanita trees, you know, plenty, you know. The Manzanita tree has a lot of small berries in there, you know. And so it's so, ah, thick that you might not be seen from up in the sky, you know, if you happen to be looking down onto that tree, might not be able to spot anybody. But it's a very, very bushy type tree, you know, with a lot of leaves. And so we finally took off from that area and we head for home and that was probably past 6 o'clock when we actually took off from there and we never returned. They never bothered us. We continued—from there we report again up to, up to **NAS (Naval Air Station) Agana.**

Q: Well, what happened to you during the invasion itself?

Alfred Rios: Come again?

Q: What happened to you during the invasion itself?

Alfred Rios: Oh. Ah, during the invasion.

---01:47:29:00---

Q: Where were you, where were your family?

Alfred Rios: We were—my parents were occupying one tunnel or trench down there by the police department now, where the police department is situated. One of the holes in there we were occupying. And from—this is possibly two, maybe three weeks before the actual invasion took place. So we were in that hole and every single day I had to dash over to our house to check the house, you know, the status of the house. What I did over at the house during this period of time, I dug a hole under the house because the house was double deck, you know, so I dug a hole in there and maybe about five plus foot down and the width is about maybe two and a half to three feet width, and that's how deep it is down there. So I put some **ifil wood, 2 by 4 ifil wood down there and then I put something like roofing tin on top, and**
---01:48:47:00---

then put some kind of clothing that I use in there. And the purpose for me setting that actually—we got a big U.S. flag that came from the Elks Club. We—my family were connected in practically all parties that are going over at the Elks Club. This is the **BPO [unclear]**. And we were always invited over to this club by the former Mrs. Johnston. Mrs. Johnston was a very close friend of my mom, so that's how we were so, became so close to friend—you know , before the war and right through the war time as well. And so I folded up the U.S. flag and I wrap it up and put it on top of that roofing tin in there on the floor and then all the **saints (statues)** that my **grandmother** had, you know, at the house, I took it all down there and I set it all right in there together with that. The first thing I got into my mind is that this will be safe because all the different saints that I put down there, this will be safe altogether. So I put up the

roofing tin on the top again, a 2 by 4 rather than **putting roofing tin**, then throwing sand on top of it. Up to the floor. So I had the assurance that nothing's going to, you know, happen to that. So, like I said earlier, I'd been checking the house from time to time, practically every single day. And one day when I came there, one morning, I was riding my bike. I just threw my bike right in the front yard and I saw a bullet, you know, must be about 200 pound bullet, you know, that drove right up under the ground on the road—the road maybe at the time is something like

---01:50:41:00---

made out of rocks and maybe they pound it, you know, the rocks, like coral rocks. And they put it in there and that makes the road for that particular area. And so that bullet actually drove in, or came in from this side—[filming interruption.]

Q: And, Mr. Rios, go ahead, please. You were saying that you were preparing—you were safeguarding some of your family's valuables by burying them under the house, and a dud Naval shell ends up right next to it, is that right?

Alfred Rios: Yes. This shell didn't explode but it came in from one side of the road and then it sticks out on the other facing the house. And when I saw that I was terribly shaken, you know? I said, my goodness gracious, you know, it's facing there. So I immediately, when I
---01:51:32:00---

came back to the, to the tunnel, you know, the cave in Agana, I told my parents, you know, there's something **cooking in there**. And then they have a submachine gun nest, right next to the house, which is right on a U-turn, you know, because the roads wind this way, and then it goes this way and the bridge is right next to us, you know, a cement bridge. So they have this, they set up the machine gun nest right there by a few Japanese army. I don't know how many of them. Maybe possibly 8 or 10 of them. By seeing those army guys in there I knew full well that that place is gonna be unsafe because the planes bomb to use that as a target, you know? And I've seen the **Grumman plane**, just flying by, you know, not maybe about 6,000 feet about sea level, when they're combing the seashore. You know, I've seen those. Just coming, you know, just come in and go. So, the following day when I came there the army people were still in their own regular spot. That shell that I found under the road still unexploded, but then the machine

gun—rather the airplane, there's several fighter planes that came from the west, you know, and they're just dashing right **through** Agana going north and east, you know, and they were strafing, machine guns were going, like my goodness, like millions of them. So I hid under a table. I didn't risk going down to the basement, so I just got caught right on the top side and I went under **the ifil table,** you know, thinking that that thing will save me somehow.

---01:53:13:00---

So when I left that place, when the sound disappeared already I came down and I went straight home. I go to the tunnel. So the following day, this is about the fourth day when I came there I went back to check the house again, I found that the house was **turned** into **a** swimming pool.

Q: The swimming pool? I mean that's just—t**he whole**?

Alfred Rios: Even, even the machine gun nests next door was also torn to bits. I think the plane, the American plane got them. You know, so was the house, too you know. They dropped that bomb in there during the war. Because the river's right next to the house. See. Not far from the house.
---01:53:59:00---

Q: How about the valuables that you had?

Alfred Rios: Everything is gone. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing saved in there. And before, when I went back there and I reported to my parents that the house, there's no house anymore. Everything is lost. And I even mentioned that the Japanese machine gun nest was also gone. No more in there. And so that, those period of time, **throughout** the night, oh my gosh. The constant shelling from the ship. My gosh. It, it's so penetrating, you know, that we feel somewhat unsafe because we felt that the canyon, were flying so low that bombs will hit just anybody. So we decided to leave the place. And in order for us to go up to our place, **see from Agana up to Mataguac, Yigo - where Yigo is,** the church, about maybe a mile and a half is where all the lot is located on this side of the church, right on **the main street**, right up Marine Drive, the church on this side, so our land is probably a mile and a half to two miles further inland towards that direction. So we stayed there. When we left Agana we stayed there for

maybe possibly a week, when they finally, the announcement came to each and every ranch up there that we have to leave for concentration camp.

Q: And did you end up in a concentration camp?

---01:55:31:00---

Alfred Rios: That's where we ended up, going up on more than—almost, well, it just so happened that halfway between that distance from where we started out to the concentration camp, I think possibly where **Mangilao** is located now, we **parked** over there for about a couple of days, maybe almost a week. We build up a big open ranch, you know, like a ranch type and all the people actually from—who wanted to share that all stayed in there. We got a little water running in there. But we had to also abandon that area in no time because the shrapnel that was flying all over the place after dropping the bomb over **NAS Agana right now, it** reaches that area, these pieces of shrapnel. And my goodness, some that's too hot—brilliant hot when it reaches that area. You know? Pieces of different sizes, different shapes. And so we decided to leave the place. And that's when we started from there down to camp
---01:56:32:00---

Manenggon**. When we** all landed in Manenggon with oh, the people were sick. Some people were sick. And but the Japanese, you know, this army guard that's guarding us, you know, from **Mataguac** to Manenggon, **there were times when** people were kind of slow moving because of some sick people, you know, that they were taking, you know, **manhandling,** and the Japanese, I don't know whether the army, but they're all wearing the same uniform, you know, some but, ah, ah—disturbed because of the slowness of our movement and they wanted us to **[unclear].** Some people got **clobbered by the butt**, you know, the gun, pushed by the gun. But just the bottom side of the, you know, pushing people, but afraid that somebody might get killed, you know, just from not making the move faster. But how could we move faster? We were going up on a hill towards **Radio** Barrigada at the time from M**ataguac to Radio** Barrigada, just a big hill back over that area. And the ah, rocks were all protruding out of the ground and so it's rough, very rough. And I don't know. They call that the ***batanga* road [Chamorro word],** because it's so rough and that's where we went through, you know, before we come to that first stop in Mangilao, and from there over to Manenggon. And we came to Manenggon. Now, some reason

again, they were looking for all the Agana people, and so they took me. I guess I got included for a project over on **Asinan** in back of **Chalan Pago** and that particular

---01:58:13:00---

project actually would involve digging trenches again or trenches for protection for those Japanese, you know, who were there, and the holes that we're building all facing this side, right out to the water, right in the northern part, you know? From there, **Chalan Pago** and up that way. And so one afternoon there was some Korean, or we call them **Choson [Phonetic].** The Koreans were called **Choson,** the ones that came in from Japan, you know, to work for the Japanese here and so quite a number of them were there as well as us from Agana, men. And one afternoon we spotted a plane. My goodness, it looks like that plane—I could see it right above us, you know? It doesn't move, when we saw that plane, all we hear is a small sound. And I said, my goodness, that's a plane up there still, still in the same position. I said, what the hell is it doing up there not coming down? And finally when that plane move a little away from us the shelling started from the ship. And I said, God, that's a spotter plane there.
---01:59:19:00---

So that, those **shelling i**nvolved—one of our friends, I forgot his name, but there was a coconut tree that's bended, you know, it grows this way, goes this way and then up. So the guy settles his body on, on the, on the side where, where the trunk goes up, you know, so he set up right there thinking that maybe that might give him some protection. But it just so happened he got hit by shrapnel in the stomach, you know, because **he** was facing this way. And the shrapnel hits him, phew, and he died right then and there. So, that was in the daytime, in the afternoon. So, nightfall, they call us up to unload the truck with rice, biscuit cans and all this stuff for the Japanese armies in there and maybe some for the Korean, too. So that was about early evening and it was pitch black night and that kind of rain, like, you know, the rain like what's going on, it's raining now because it's July. So, the—we were working on that truck for possibly almost an hour and it just so happened that the area where we're digging up this hole there's like a hump from where we are situated down below, you know, like a hump. So we had to develop some kind of a stairway for our protection going up and down, you know, in that area. **So around** about one hour after working, doing—unloading the truck a flare came down from the plane, and the flare spotted us all over the place. **We couldn't hide because the**

---02:01:08:00---

because the flare was all over the place and **said, oh this plane,** this thing's gonna kill us in here. So after we finish up with unloading, the following day they told us what—on the other side of the, of that tunnel, instead of facing that way, face that way, face the wooded area. So that's when we started digging that hole towards that way. But that only took us about a couple of days working in there because the pilot of the **Grumman plane** came one afternoon and he was zigzagging over in that area because there's so many ridges over there. The plane has to be doing this way, you know, come down to low level and then climb up. So he spotted these two Japanese running into the little ranch in there and right on that ranch is right, like on top of a mound, **fresh corn** right around that ranch, and right in back of that ranch, actually is where the river is going around there. This is what they call **Chalan Pago river, and it came from Ylig, it's connected with Ylig.** Well anyhow, when the plane returned after spotting these two Japanese army, he threw, must be a 250 pound bomb or 500 pound bomb and hit
---02:02:27:00---

right into that doggone little ranch and turned the whole place into a swimming pool. No corn, no rice. Right then and there. So the **interpreter**, I forgot his name, part German, I think his name is Fritz, they were calling him Fritz—tall guy, maybe as tall as you are—and **with**, you know, white complexion, ah—

Q: This is the same guy you were talking about before?

Alfred Rios: Yes, Fritz. So he told us, he spoke to us in Chamorro because his mother must have been Chamorro **from Rota or Saipan**, I don't know. But anyhow he said I think we'd better go back to the camp. We'd better stop working in here. So ah—no. Before that happened, incidentally, this is one night before we unloaded the truck. One dark night I was **called upon with another guy** to fetch water from the river and for **the Choson** because they have a different barracks for the **Choson** and they wanted, what they **asked** us to do is to get some water for drinking for these people. And so we **what happened when we found out** about that**, we** took two cans of—this is the kerosene can like this high, you know, maybe a 5 gallon container—two of

---02:03:45:00---

them. So what I did—we had to fetch the water from the river, I wash my—I dropped my feet in the water and I wash it. [Laughs.] So the other guys says, what's the matter with you? Wait a minute, so we don't know what this guy's going to do but they're gonna drink water, they're gonna drink the doggone dirty water because I washed my feet in there. So we took water into the ranch and they **asked** us to wash their feet. That's the first thing they told us. Get the water and put the feet out, four or six of them. They guys start pouring water on and washing, you know, but I don't want to use all the water because that's the container what I got, you know, I'm carrying. I don't want to use too much water in there because I wanted them to make use for **drinking [unclear].** So, we left the place, after washing the feet we left the place and that was the following night and we started to unload the truck. But then the following day, that's when they bombarded that ranch and right after that the interpreter told us that we'd better go back to the camp. So on our way to Manenngon camp, walking, there was a **big clearance**
---02:04:59:00---

with this grass they call ***Watson*** **[Phonetic]** grass. ***Katson*** **grass**. They're all about the same size. They must have used that clearance for planting but they must have abandoned it for quite some time because the grass was all at the same level. So apparently it's been cultivated for something. So all around that area, maybe this is about almost an acre and a half clearance. All around that area were these ***pago*** **tree.** They use these for rope. The people use that for rope, ***pago*****, the bark**, you know. Anyhow the plane came down. My goodness, **the pilot** and the cockpit was open and his bandana, you know, that's tied to his neck was outside the plane and he **dipped** that plane down like this. A lot of the, lot of the men disappeared. They hide. But quite a number of us stood still right there in the middle of the clearance. And so the plane, you know, just passed by tilting the plane this way and went up this way, you know, and I saw the bandana, see. I'm afraid, you know, to pick my hand up because **the interpreter**, might do something, **bring** harm to us. So after the plane left, you know, it just never did return, but he tilted the plane down to see us all around. But we're all in different uniform. No uniform—Japanese, except the interpreter that went in to hide himself. So he found us. There was some of us still in the open field. He came out saying, my gosh,

---02:06:22:00—

those American people really know you. My gosh. The American pilot even knows you people here, you know? That's what he told us. **I said they won't believe that**. He's not going to believe that, but we don't want to say it out loud. And so we head for the camp and everybody was talking, just gosh, don't you know the Americans are going to come in sooner or later.

Q: When did you first see your first Americans then?

Alfred Rios: Well, we were at the camp and every morning there's nothing that we can do other than to go out to hunt for food, whatever it may be. A lot of the people, my goodness, the breadfruit is about that size, they still want to take that, you know, because there's some meat inside but it's not the right type to take, you know, or to harvest. It's not harvest time for that. But people would go that far in getting that and also the coconut that has fell down on the
---02:07:20:00---

ground for so long and they start to **develop the meat inside** and all—that is the edible—everything's edible in there. So we **crack that out,** take that thing, too, you know, eating it at the camp site. So whatever—we even get coconuts as well and that we found and breadfruit, whatever breadfruit that we can find around the—the whole place was so, was so ah, like, like a **pig drove and came** into the area and converted the natural landscape of that area into something that people may have been tramping all around the area. Like they have gone through it, you know, up and down. So it's not the same as natural setting when we first went in there. So everybody knew exactly that everybody was out looking for food. If it wasn't for the Japanese taking us from one end to the other we might not encounter food shortages here because, frankly speaking, and you can question anybody of my age or older, people, whatever we cleared out, whatever plants that we planted we always harvested real good. The weather was so temperate then. Honestly. Everything we planted—I don't care what. Fish are plentiful. My goodness, all we need to do is just go out and scoop the fish. The birds and all the flying objects up there, my goodness, they're so plentiful. So the fowl and pigs, we got so many of that. But it just so happened that when we are being moved, people are being moved, so

---02:09:04:00---

what can they take along with them? Just a handful. Some 98 percent or 99 percent were left behind. And you cannot go back there and touch them because you don't know whether there's any Japanese people in there already. So those are the things that confronted us toward our daily life in here. But even during my time, actually, in staying at the ranch, I could possibly figure out that we're going to run out of food because every time I harvested two seasons of planting corn and when I, when I know that two 55 gallon drum dry corn, that would last, my whole parents, you know, oh, for at least six, seven months. Or even 1 year's time. You know. What we did in there is to make **some line with people** will gather their special type rocks in the woods, pile them altogether with all kinds of wood, throw it in there and burn it up, and throughout the following day you'd have lime. And use that lime to cook your corn, your dry corn. Boil that and then once you boil, put the corn in, then cover it up, put it away, following day you can start getting that corn out and start cleaning it up and making **your tortillas or if**
---02:10:19:00---

you make the soup out of it or whatever you want to make out of it. So I considered ourselves pretty much stable in terms of the food. Of course there's a lot of things that we are so accustomed to eating, but those are the things that are imported. But things that we can safely consider ourselves safe in terms of the food that we can possibly find easier, it was alright for that period of time. And a lot of people were being disturbed throughout the whole period of time because they were being moved away from their natural setting by the Japanese because they wanted to convert that area into something else. These were all the things that had been—but when we went over to the concentration camp, I'm telling you, nobody has any food or water, other than maybe a handful.

Q: When did you see your first American?

Alfred Rios: Right in July 21st. These must be the Army guys, the 77th Division. Everybody thought it was the Marines, but then I think they probably met somewhere along the way, if I understood this correctly. They were supposed to meet, you know, at a certain location. The Marines started out from Agat, Marines came—the Army started in Agat and the Marines came up from Asan area. And I think they were supposed to meet somewhere along the way

---02:11:46:00---

and that early morning, around about 10 o'clock possibly, in the morning, we heard people running back in the camp. They'd been outside already, as usual, but as I said earlier, hunting for food. And they encountered some—a few Americans along the way, so they were hollering carrying the Camel cigarette, you know, and some chocolate candy, and everybody was jubilated by that information. So everybody came out in big drove from the camp, they all wanted to see the Americans. So a lot of them, army guys or Marines, came up to the ah, camp over there and we were told that we're supposed to start getting ready to head for another place, over to Mount **Tenjo** where I worked for the manganese, right around that area. So that's our first stop in terms of our, my area, you know, **the people from Yigo and Mataguac**. Some people went clear down to Agat, but our family still stayed up there with a
---02:13:07:00---

very close friend of ours, **the Ploke family. John Ploke**, a former Navy man, family here. So we stayed up there at **Mount Tenjo** and some Marine guys ask us to work in the galley there. So we decided to stay behind and work for the galley and this is the 14th Reinforcement Battalion. So all during that period of time we were up there, and I'm telling you, it was a Marine Corps, you know, they have this little tent, you know, it was kind of long. So we set that up for the rest of the family and for myself, I build up a bunk, just a dirt bunk, you know, where I could settle my body and put that cover on top of me and I can sleep there and not to move, though, because you know, get wet down there below. So I'm sleeping on a dry area, it's alright with me, and I cover myself with that Marine—I don't know what they call that—I forgot the name of it. But it's like a blanket, you know. Shelter cover or something like that. Something like that, and that's the one I was using there all along. So well, several nights after settling up there they, I gathered that the Marines were complaining that somebody's stealing food from the galley and the galley was all secured, you know, with this Marine type, like the—it's a nylon type material that they wrap around the whole structure, and we put all the supplies and the food supplies in there and the cooking area as well. So finally they found out, you know, the Japanese actually coming down during night time to

---02:15:10:00---

steal the food. And they had, I don't know how many of them, up on the hill there, and one night Marines said, I don't know how many Marines went up there, and **so they uncovered** their pack of Japanese and they killed each and every one of them. Whoo, my goodness, about six of them got killed up there and they brought the bodies down and one guy by the name of **Edward Aflague, well** he was asked to dig the hole, not too far away from the galley, because the soil is kind of loose and dug the hole and buried those people in there, you know. So finally we decided that we must leave that place. So we head down to the cemetery where, the Anigua cemetery right now, just before you get to the governor's office, the cemetery on this side. That's where we actually stayed for quite a while.

Q: Now I understand, you mentioned earlier, and you described the jubilation, I think was your word, that you felt when you first saw the Americans.

---02:16:30:00---

Alfred Rios: Well, the first oh, yes. Indeed yes. And every—I came over to the school, the public school, at the time in Yona, and when I got there, there was quite a number of military people there—Army, and then I saw some Guam boys riding in the jeep. **The jeep stopped down**, and the machine gun is right in the center facing front, you know. And so these Guam boys were hollering and saying come on, join me, come and join, come join. **Let's go and hunt these Japanese.** So I went over to the jeep and I asked these guys, I said, do you have any papers? Do you have any papers **actually of you joining this thing? But** what if you get killed in there? Nobody knows what the hell happened to you. But if you do have papers, let's say from the Commanding Officer, those things come to my mind. I say, the Commanding Officer signs something for my participation, if something happened to me at least somebody knew about it, you know? Maybe some of my family will be getting some kind of compensation. But with nothing like that, you just volunteer and jump in, oh, I'm not joining you guys. So, **I say, [unclear]**. I said, no I cannot join them. If I see the papers and know what the paper says, you know, and somebody's going to sign it, fine. I want to make sure that somebody is going to get something because I don't know whether I'm going to come back. I'm going into the jungle looking for, oh gosh. **You know, they can't tell** what would happen to you, and in the absence of any document what in the hell would my parents **have any lean to?** Nothing.

---02:18:06:00---

Q: Now I understand that in spite of the jubilation that was felt at the time of liberation you have some mixed feelings as a result of the Americans coming back on the island and having to take over acreage at Barrigada. Could you just talk about that before we end the interview?

Alfred Rios: Yes. Well, you see, the majority of the people's feelings right then and there actually was that the Americans came back to liberate us from being oppressed. And for that very reason our arms were wide open, and we wanted to let the Armed Forces do whatever they pleased in there. And that's definitely the thinking of the people. And the Navy and the
---02:18:53:00---

Army might be all over the place and the Seabees and what have you. So it was alright. No mention, whatsoever they were going to hold onto the land. Nothing came to our mind that that will be the final analysis of, of them settling at a certain place.

Q: No mention that they would hold the land.

Alfred Rios: No. No. No mention whatsoever. So when we're finally settled we, we stayed up in **Sinajana.** That's where they resettled **the civil service - the** first government started building up those houses, you know, one bedroom or two bedroom and with thatched roof but all the sides actually are wood, you know, flooring wood and everything, and you got your water and everything. But really, that land also belongs to somebody, and they knew who were the owners were around the area. But it just so happened that the military took full command of that area and I don't know whether these people, they are **the rightful owner and are they being** compensated for that. I don't know.

Q: Was your family ever compensated?

---02:19:57:00---

Alfred Rios: My family was situated up **in Radio Barrigada** across the post office and at the time when they confiscated the land we actually moved out of that place in September of 1953.

So that **was the September 1953** where our house is situated. Our ranch before that year was situated on another lot which is much bigger than that where we were staying, further inland. And that has been condemned already a long time, before they actually—because we have three pieces of lot, 22/34, 22/36—that's one and that's two. So we got three pieces of land up there. And so we were compensated at least something like $2,000 some dollars in 1953, so they hang onto that first land which is much, much bigger than the two pieces of land since then, because there's still some military operation up there, **radio communication, Radio Barrigada**. That's where part of the land, on that side. And the family wanted to fence in all around the area and that includes the house where we were staying on. Well, they
---02:21:15:00---

compensated us slightly over $2,000. So we moved from there over to Dededo and the civil government offered us either we move into Agat or Dededo, and we decided to take Dededo for the simple reason that my father's brother has been a resident of Dededo, not necessarily on the site we're in now, but their land is situated in Dededo somewhat further down from there. So that's why my dad said that we should move to Dededo instead of Agat. And that makes it all the more closer to Agana, too, you know. And so that was all. And I finally joined this organization developed by the former Commissioner of **Barrigada**, the Land Owner's Association of Guam and I found out from that association that—[tape changes].

Q: Mr. Rios, it's 50 years after World War II, and it's a long time since the very interesting and important and moving events that you described. In closing, I'd like to ask you to say a few words to the youngsters, I guess in your family, or the youngsters on Guam about what those years meant to you and what you would have them remember; what you would want to pass on about that time.

---02:22:52:00---

Alfred Rios: Okay. Along that line, what I would like to impart to the younger generation, especially from my immediate family, is that I sure wouldn't like to see them experience something like what we have gone through throughout the wartime because everybody will tell them, if they do become interested in knowing, that it was a horrible moments of our life here. Although we, at times, feel somewhat comfortable but that happens to be so sporadic in a sense

that there wasn't anything going on but we still have that feeling in our hearts that our lives are still at stake any given time of the day or night, and because of that feeling it's bound to aggravate anyone's mind, every single day and night. And I sure wouldn't want to see—I hope that our younger generation will not ever experience anything like that. As far as, well, war to anybody actually is a horrible thing, and I think everybody will accept that. There's no two ways about that. And we went through this era and I know that it was quite an experience and I kept reminding my kids from time to time, you know, that it was really a terrible and a horrible moments of our lives here on Guam. Although among our own people
---02:24:39:00---

we somewhat have that feeling of mutual understanding that we wanted to make sure that we come to the rescue if there's anyone from our immediate family or even close friends, or friends afar, if they need something we'll always be the person to provide whatever there is that's needed, you know. And the mutual understanding is so much that we, we would like very much to continue on with that plan. That's the kind of legacy that I'd like to leave behind. The understanding among ourselves. Everybody was so united that maybe the reason for that, actually, is that we were being reared since before the war. A lot of our time is somewhat dispensed with doing something for the church. Whether go to the church in the morning or some go to church in the evening, and a lot of activities, actually, is revolved around the church affairs. And maybe all because of that, and they have something to do in terms of our, the way we conduct ourselves during the war era. You know, we have something here, we can still give it to them. Even if you just started the fire early in the morning, somebody next door will see that fire's going on and they can always go over there and pick up one or two pieces of that fire going on and they start their fire here, at this other house. That was the way how we felt, and we have, we have a good catch from the sea, we always spread it around every single one. When we have something, like we kill a pig or we kill a cow, we always have to divide this and give it all to the neighbors, too, and that's the kind of practice that I sure would like to see continued on. Because I think that is engrained in our culture, you know, Guam as Chamorro's. [Begins to cry.]

Q: Thanks very much, Mr. Rios for sharing your feelings so eloquently. Thanks for taking the time to be with us today.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF SESSION]